

wsqn

- Connecting local meetings



August 2024

Contents

Changes	p. 3
Report on Area Meeting, 20 th April	p. 4
Report on Area Meeting, 3 rd June	p. 6
Report on Meeting for Sufferings	p. 8
Scotland considers a single charity, The Friend	p. 10
Update on Book of Discipline Revision	p. 10
What does membership mean to me, poem	p. 12
Newsletter from Local Development Worker	p. 14
Report on QCIIR 15-17 March	p. 17
Ashworth School	p. 20
Quaker Concerns	
Gender-based Violence	p. 22
Peace and Reconciliation	p. 25
Climate Change and Sustainability	p. 28
Experiment with Light	p. 30
The Lamb's War	p. 32
The Ballad of George Fox	p. 33
Book Reviews	
For thy great pain have mercy on my little pain	p. 34
Sacred Nature	p. 34
A Jade Fish	p. 36
Kindlers: Quaker Worship: Reflections & Explorations	p. 37
Forthcoming Events	p.38
Local Meetings	p. 40

Frontispiece – one of the paintings from EwL Retreat

For Quakers in Britain, change is in the air and on the agendas of Britain Yearly Meeting, our Area Meetings and in Scotland, General Meeting. Together we are engaging in prayerful discernment about our future. In times of change, truth and trust liberate us to move on adventurously.

Currently, we are seeking to understand the issues faced by Quakers now, and the implications these have for the future. Facing this truth is a solid base from which to move forward. But once we have identified what needs to change, and planned how to re-organise to the best of our ability, accepting the truth that we are fallible and will make mistakes requires us to be flexible in our approach to bringing about change.

Our faith reminds us that we are a people led, and as such our journey is as important as the destination we aim to reach. It provides an opportunity to walk cheerfully together, trusting one another. When we step out in faith, we rarely know the exact path we will follow and the issues we will have to deal with along the way, but doing it anyway is an act of trust - trust in ourselves, trust in each other, and trust in God. We may be on the cusp of taking such a journey.

It's scary, I know, but when we have doubts and fears, I think it helps to remember that in our decision making, as in our worship, we are not alone. May we be conscious of the Presence in our midst, and may we follow the light that it brings to our seeking the way forward and following it.

Elizabeth Allen, Assistant Clerk to Meeting for Sufferings



Report of West Scotland Area Meeting, 20 April 2024, in Dumfries. Jan Lethbridge, Dumfries

This was my first experience of a blended meeting from the room itself. I gather that last year's equivalent event was marred by problems with the technology, and since that can make or break the success of a blended meeting, I'm happy to say that this year's Area Meeting in Dumfries suffered no such difficulties.

Clerk Kate Gulliver, her Assistant Clerk Jay Wilkinson, and the wider tech team are to be congratulated on providing a very smooth and enjoyable experience for those attending. (There was one minor hiccup early on, which necessitated a repeat of the opening words from Quaker Faith & Practice, but this was put down to our old friend, User Error!)

The Agenda proceeded as expected, with a small addition from Nominations Committee who had met for the first time the previous evening. Visitors were appointed to 'visit' the single applicant for membership, which can now, of course, be done online. Three deaths were recorded: Isabella Dovaston, (Ayrshire), Alison Brown (Glasgow), and Barbara Baird (Castle Douglas).

Barbara was remembered as someone who "seemed able to accept what she couldn't change". This struck me as being a most advantageous quality to possess today, when there is so much evil and horror that we know about but cannot change. Is it a natural disposition, or can it be learned? Certainly it would be most beneficial for our individual mental health.

These reports prompted a question as to whether deaths of non-members can or should be recorded. The previous day several friends from Dumfries Meeting had attended the funeral of Jim Behan, who had been an important part of the Meeting for the past seven years or so. The Clerk responded that Jim's death can indeed be recorded if the appropriate information is provided. An invitation to send a representative to Ackworth School's AGM, led to a wide difference of opinion. One friend felt that it was really nothing to do with us, (and, perhaps reading between the lines, would demonstrate principled support for Quaker Schools, itself something of a contentious issue.) But almost in the same breath, another friend offered to go! And if my notes are correct, this offer was accepted.

Treasurer Bronwen Currie presented a very clear report, from which a couple of things stood out for me. Two-thirds of the £60,000+ raised by the sale of Wigtown Meeting House had gone towards work on Glasgow Meeting House roof. Of the remaining £18,000, £14,000 was to go to Britain Yearly Meeting, and the remainder to Area Meeting General Reserves. Then, of the £200 per

head required by BYM annually, to keep the show on the road, we last year contributed £176 per head. Apparently, many Meetings' contributions fall similarly short.

Before lunch, the Southern Cluster Meetings, Castle Douglas, Dumfries and Wigtown, gave short reports. The Dumfries Clerk used the Meeting's relationship with the late Jim Behan over the past several years, to illustrate the Meeting's spiritual health. Jim, a lifelong Roman Catholic, discovered Quakers in his eighties. He was welcomed among the meeting, appreciated the silence and the freedom of thought expressed, without in any way compromising his Catholic faith. In turn he showed Dumfries friends how easy it could be, for two such apparently disparate faiths to come together in love and trust, and find a harmony.

Wigtown Meeting friends were pleased that their meeting house had been bought by Crossroads, a well-known charity which provides personalised, at-home care for a variety of individual needs. They now meet in a Church of Scotland hall, less comfortable than they had been 'at home' so to speak, but promising improvements. Average attendance is 3-8, they read Advices & Queries regularly and plan to start discussions again. And, please note, they particularly welcome visitors.

Numbers attending at Castle Douglas wax and wane, especially on Sunday when visitors are not uncommon. The Wednesday Zoom Meeting is more stable, and includes three regulars from other Meetings - the beauty of Zoom! There are signs of future growth, with both book groups and discussions in the pipeline, and hopefully a summer cluster gathering.

Dates and patterns of Area and General Meetings for the next couple of years were given out, and Dumfries now feels able, after today's technological success, to be the default setting for April Area Meetings to come, if necessary. The afternoon session was taken up with a consideration of Susan Brush's concern regarding the Quaker position on Palestine/Israel. Mercifully, this was conducted as a worship-sharing exercise, so no discussion or comments about other contributions, simply placing ones views in the centre of the meeting, where it is respectfully heard, and remains.

Ostensibly, the actual concern revolves around wording in the letting agreement, which groups wishing to hire a room at Friends House have to sign. In my experience, most people never read the Terms & Conditions, so I'm not sure how this saw light of day. But it did. The offending sentence included the words "... Israel has a right to exist And Palestine a right to self-determination..." Eventually, it was discerned that this should be removed and replaced by "We recognise the common humanity of both Israelis and Palestinians, their right to safety and shelter, and to live free of violence".

But in truth, most of the comments/observations were about the far greater issue of the conflict itself, rather than this, minor, but perhaps ill-considered, linguistic faux pas. It is not easy to report on the contributions made, some of which were emotional and clearly difficult for the contributors themselves to make. I will highlight some words and phrases that stuck with me and ask that readers accept them with the same worship-sharing mind-set in which they were delivered:

The concern was forcefully presented, beginning in 1948 with the massacre of a Palestinian village, and the British Forces' complicity in this. Both Palestinian and Israeli histories have always contradicted each other - each side needs to understand the other.

Other Comments included:

No equal footing for the two sides, what is happening almost amounts to genocide.

Healing and Peacebuilding work is going on through BYM.

Where will the results of our deliberations today be delivered—who will hear them?

Lettings policy can and should be revisited—sentence should be deleted.

Comparison with the Irish troubles - boundaries differentiate unhelpfully for cultures/traditions.

People rather than states should be identified in the wording of the lettings policy.

Some material presented as fact is disputed.

We must be thankful for our freedoms - all have rights, all lives matter.

Do Quakers really have any significant influence these days?

Area Meeting by Zoom – 3 June 2024

Bronwen Currie, Islay & Jura

Twenty-five Friends representing every Local Meeting in West Scotland gathered on 3 June for Area Meeting by Zoom. After opening worship and the usual very friendly roll-call (everyone waves!) we turned to membership, and were delighted to welcome Dorothy Moodie of Argyll Local Meeting into membership.

We then remembered the Friends who have died recently – James Behan of Dumfries Meeting and Peter Christy of Ayrshire Meeting. We remembered the many roles Peter had undertaken in his long association with the Area Meeting, including his commitment to the work towards a single body for Quakers in Scotland, and the generosity, kindness and commitment he showed

as a trustee up until the end of last year. We agreed to ask Nominations Committee to find Friends willing to work together on a testimony to the grace of God as shown in Peter's life.

Nominations Committee had brought two names to join the planning committee for the next Enquirers' Day – Laura McMurtrie and Zem Moffat – and we agreed these names. We also agreed to send the name of Elaine Millar to Britain Yearly Meeting as our first representative on Meeting for Sufferings. Nominations are still looking for an alternate. We noted that Sheila Semple has agreed to convene the new Elders and Pastoral Care group, and we thanked Anne Macarthur and Jenny Kime for their service as Pastoral Care Friend and member of Nominations Committee respectively, as they have asked to be released from these roles. Then we noted the names of eight Friends who hope to attend Britain Yearly Meeting in July, either in London or by Zoom.

After a short shuffle break we heard reports from Elaine Millar on Meeting for Sufferings and from Laura McMurtrie on the AGM of Ackworth School. Both these reports are published elsewhere in this WSQN, but briefly both had encountered issues which were either challenging to the body (in the case of Meeting for Sufferings) or made them reflect on why they were there (Ackworth) and gave us all food for thought which we might take up in the context of Scotland-wide consideration.

With not a great deal of time left we turned to the questions circulated by the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group's Community Group. It was clear that most of our Local Meetings are considering this paper and sending in their own responses and it may be that it is at Local Meeting level that responses are most relevant. Nevertheless a number of reflections were offered, including on the question as to whether we need a "middle level" of gathering to deal with some issues, and we think that, once the Community Group has assessed the responses that come in by the end of June, we will need to come back to this at a future Area Meeting.

Finally we dealt with a couple of financial matters, one of which was a decision to make an extra donation to Friends World Committee for Consultation in support of our Friend Edie's attendance at the World Plenary in August, before agreeing dates and venues for Area Meeting for the rest of this year and 2025. And thanks to inspired clerking and minute-writing we closed with worship and said goodbye just minutes before our goal time of 9.00pm.

Meeting for Sufferings Report, 1 June 2024.

Elaine Millar, Representative.

This was the last meeting of the triennium. During opening worship, 28:7 was read. I reproduce it here, in full because its challenge was relevant throughout our business:

“Have you anything to declare?” is a vital challenge to which every one of us is personally called to respond and is also a challenge that every meeting should consider of primary importance. It should lead us to define, with such clarity as we can reach, precisely what it is that Friends of this generation have to say that is not, as we believe, being said effectively by others.’

This report offers a flavour of our discernment – for the full agenda and minutes go to the Quakers in Britain website, via this link [Papers and minutes | Quakers in Britain](#).

Registering Quaker Recognised Bodies – Quaker Concern Over Population

There is a long and diverse list of Quaker Recognised Bodies (QRB), where registration of each group requires adherence to a set of criteria. Quaker Concern over Population (QCOP) first formed to highlight the pressing **relevance of population in the drive to live sustainably**.

QRBs are required to re-register periodically and on the whole this is routine business for Meeting for Sufferings. However, in the case of QCOP questions have been raised by Young Friends General Meeting (YFGM) as to whether there is inherent racism – even with echoes of eugenics - implicit in the group’s title and work, given their focus on the Global South where population numbers are considerably higher.

We heard that during 2024 tentatively productive discussions took place between YFGM and QCOP but concerns persist, particularly in the light of our Quaker commitment to be a non-racist church. During our discernment Friends wondered whether a change to the group’s title to reflect their focus on women’s health and reproductive rights might be an answer, or did this amount to semantics? We were reminded that QCOP has not changed its purpose since it was registered and that our task was not to re-evaluate the Quaker ethos underpinning the QRB system (although this may need to happen), but rather to make a decision about re-registration. We agreed to re-register QCOP for two years to enable time to further address these issues: to increase dialogue and provide clarification about the group’s specific aims.

Report from Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) Trustees

BYM Trustees have not met since the last MfS, so initially their report was a holding one, however, since the trustee’s decisions surrounding the Salter lecture, and the heat generated and misinformation circulating, they decided to address this matter.

The Salter Lecture is usually given during Yearly Meeting and this year Jeremy Corbyn was invited to speak alongside Quaker, Paul Ingrams. However, trustees received concerns from Friends House staff around health and safety risk assessment and as a

result made recommendations to the Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee, one of which was to move the date of the Salter lecture to take place outwith Yearly Meeting. The backlash from this has led to a perception among some Friends that trustees have banned Jeremy Corbyn from speaking, which they stress is not the case.

Ministry that followed reminded us trustees are first and foremost Friends, who, through a Quaker nominations process, and by working within Quaker structures serve us. In this way, there is no hierarchical 'Quaker establishment' holding power over decision making. While it was agreed that 'throwaway talk' is unhelpful and unfair, and that building the fullest picture possible before commenting is always preferable, Friends also asserted that it must remain possible to say if something doesn't feel right, but better this happens through questioning and challenging, rather than criticism and throwing accusations.

Israel and Palestine

In the light of many Friends feeling more should be said and done by Quakers about the Israel Palestine conflict, we began by learning what is already happening. I recommend you look at the section of the papers, MfS 2024 06 10 which sets out the presentation we were given by a member of staff from the Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) Middle East Programme. It shows how the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) works, explaining that an accompaniment model is used because the current power imbalance between Palestinians and Israelis means a mediation and conflict resolution model is hard to deliver. And accompaniment *is* having an impact and *is* welcomed by the local Palestinian community and Israeli peace groups alike. At present it is not possible to get permits to operate in Gaza, plus they always have to consider the safety of the accompaniers, so, for example they also do not go where there are known to be settler groups who increasingly are being armed and whose position has strengthened.

I draw your attention to these recent words of John Lampen, which EAs follow:

"Speak out, but don't demonise oppressors; acknowledge whatever positive values you find in them; don't attribute motives without clear evidence; try to understand the pressures which make them behave as they do; check your facts and be as specific as possible. "

In ministry it was felt that 'stopping the fighting' is the simplistic message, concerning Palestinians and Israelis, regardless of 'sides'. Although there is such a clear imbalance between those sides - where to remain neutral will further empower the most powerful - we remembered that EAPPI speaks of 'principled impartiality', not pro-Palestinian or pro-Israeli, but speaking out when International law is broken. Language matters: it can be loaded and triggering. Words like apartheid and genocide are being used by various groups, including within Quakers to describe what is happening, and yet to adopt this language as an official Quaker stance risks jeopardising the delicate building of relationships between Israelis and Palestinians, required to make peace. Further

discernment is required on this matter and more dialogue with those Quaker groups most involved with the actuality of the situation.

The Friend 19th April 2024

Scottish Friends consider single charity

One hundred and eight Friends in Scotland gathered this month to take forward proposals to form a single Quaker organization for the country. This would replace the current arrangement of six separate trustee bodies. The proposal mirrors similar changes being undertaken in Wales and the Marches, London, and Yorkshire, as Friends attempt to simplify Quaker structures.

Describing the meeting on 6th April as 'pivotal, Michael Hutchinson, clerk of General Meeting for Scotland, told *the Friend*: 'the process of change takes time to work through. Many Friends are only now appreciating the potential consequences of it and want to know more, but we are clear we want to go forward in unity'.

'We are making progress on the housekeeping,' added Michael, 'but how will that affect our existing Quaker communities and how can we safeguard what works well now? This meeting seemed to be pivotal in on giving positive clarity to the process and the imperative of exploring how Quaker community in Scotland can be strengthened and sustained. The large numbers taking part emphasized that we already have much to build on as Scottish Quakers, but change must be rooted first. William Braithwaite said it all in 1905 (Quaker faith & practice 10.4) as was heard in the opening worship'.

The Quakers in Scotland co-ordinating group used the Celtic knot trefoil diagram, developed by SE Scotland AM, to explain how their structures can focus their witness and community development, through worship at the centre. The GM is steering the process on behalf of the four Area Meetings (AM), but has no authority to make decisions unless AMs confirm them.

Update - Book of Discipline Revision Committee meeting, Hinsley Hall, Leeds 26-28 April 2024

Mary Woodward

As usual we began our work with a Zoom session on the Wednesday before our in person weekend committee meeting. One delightful task was to appoint buddies for our new committee members, Lucy Faulkner-Gawlinski, Michael Long and Antonia Swinson, as well as for those prevented from attending our meeting. We look forward to getting to know our three new colleagues as we work together.

We received short reports from those of our working and topic groups whose work we did not need to consider at length over the coming weekend. As the list of them now goes up to 'q', you can see we are working on a great many things!

On the Friday evening in Leeds we spent time sharing a little about ourselves and our involvement with the committee before talking about our experience of using the anthology sections of *Quaker faith & practice* to help us as we consider the purpose of anthology sections in the new Book.

Saturday was very full-on! Looking again at our project plan and timeline, we were delighted to see that we are on schedule, and hope that this will encourage us as we continue to labour mightily on your behalf. An important part of this work is keeping track of everything we have agreed 'to revisit at a later stage'...

I was wondering what our work will be once we have got our text ready for the consideration of the full draft by Britain Yearly Meeting – among other things, we will be engaging with Friends around the country, encouraging them to read and submit comments on the text.

We continue to work on the structure of our new book. Seeing how the texts we have already written fit together will help us see if there are 'bits missing' which we will need to produce. We continue to work on our writing guidelines as we start to work on topics which have less 'nuts and bolts' content and include much more 'anthology' material. We can't put in every single extract we collect – which ones do we use, in which order, and why? What do we not include? Various texts were agreed 'good enough' and banked for now. This includes the one I've been working on, *Quaker Approaches to Dying and Death*, which was well received: after a little tweaking it will be banked. The Structure group continues to make progress, and we are all very happy with the 'tree' concept: there are, however, continuing challenges where topics overlap – particularly *Close Relationships* [one of mine] and *Personal Journeys*. We need to ensure that our texts reflect a Quaker perspective and how that guides us in our life while also reflecting the full diversity of our Quaker community.

We continue our work on diversity and inclusion, and wonder whether having a "sensitivity reader" for our text might be helpful. We also continue to consider how and where we might share more text with Friends. We welcomed the progress of our Theology topic group's work, which aims to reflect the different theological perspectives that make up our British Quaker community.

Looking ahead to Yearly Meeting 2024, we are planning two on line sessions in the week of preparation for BYM. The Communicating with Friends group, of which I am a part, invited all BDRC members who were able to join in either or both of these sessions.

New topic groups were set up – *Friends and other churches/faiths*; *Friends and secular bodies*; and *World Family of Friends/Quakers in the world*. I was both delighted and challenged to be appointed to the last of these three: delighted because it's a topic I'm both interested and involved in, and challenged because it's yet another thing to juggle in my increasingly busy life.

There is to be a Future of British Quakerism Conference in October: various of our committee will be leading this, and it is hoped that we will have at least one committee member present at it.

We agreed our pattern of meetings for 2025 – on line at the end of January, and [hopefully] in person in July and October [as BYM is in May]. Our next meeting will be at the University of Warwickshire in Coventry this coming October.

Please continue to uphold us in our work on your behalf: we are all working hard, and at times finding it difficult to balance the many demands on our time – we can't do this work without your prayerful support, for which we are very grateful.

Our key messages:

We continue to make progress in drafting further topics for the new book and are looking ahead to the tasks we will need to undertake to bring all the topics together as a whole.

We are working to include the diversity of Quaker voices in Britain, reflecting the unity and diversity of our shared theology.

Ideas for a bold and imaginative structure of the new book are unfolding.

We are planning two special interest groups for YM 2024, and thinking about the next phase of engaging Friends with our work as we progress towards having a complete draft of the new book ready for Friends for YM 2027.

What does Quaker membership mean to me? (A-POEM/NOT-A-POEM)

Edie Phoenix, Castle Douglas

Local meeting-

where we might attend on Sundays.

Area Meeting-

that holds our Quaker membership.

General Meeting Scotland

Also called 'Quakers in Scotland'-

Organising our Scottish Parliament engagement.

Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Also called 'Quakers in Britain'-

that we are welcome to attend,

Speaking out on our behalf

promoting peace, justice, equality, and sustainability.

Friend's House in London- the central offices of Quakers in Britain

Bookshop, café, and award-winning conferencing centre

An active spiritual home for British Quakers
to meet, work, and build community.

Woodbrooke isn't a place any more
But invite us to their online worship most days of the week
And still runs courses on-line,
and in places around Britain.
A learning experience-
Woodbrooke-Where-You-Are comes to you.

Friends World Committee for Consultation (**FWCC**)-
the world body for Friends and (almost) all Quaker Yearly Meetings
Unites Friends within our diversity.
In Africa, Asia, West Pacific, the Americas, Europe, and the Middle East

Our section-
the **FWCC EMES**,
a thriving spiritual community of Friends
in Europe and the Middle East.
Working with Woodbrooke, working in Ukraine, Israel, Palestine.

Northern Friends Peace Board (**NFPB**)
By, for, and with Quakers in the north of Britain
Peace action 'in all its height and breadth'.
One of many Quaker interest groups
Each a charity in its own right.

Quaker Council for European Affairs (**QCEA**)
Based in Brussels since 1979
Working to promote peace, human rights
Quaker values
In European institutions.

Quaker United Nation Office (**QUNO**)
A Quaker presence at the United Nations
In the international community
Patient, quiet diplomacy,
working for a more just and peaceful world.
The strength of QUNO's work is its long-term persistence.

As we sit quietly on a Sunday morning
We are joined by a global Quaker world -
Who knew that the wider family of Quakers was so much more?

Newsletter from Local Development Worker Spring – Summer 2024

This is a six page document from which some information is extracted below. For the full newsletter please apply to your LM Clerk who will forward - Ed

My work in the Second Quarter of 2024



When I work with Friends I often have to take into account the instinctive dislike of change most of us have, the fact that we so often cling to control in a sea of uncertainty. This could be read as a very specific dig at the proposed changes by the Quakers in Scotland Coordinating Group, but I promise it isn't. A fear of change and a need for control is at the heart of so many of the conflicts I work with in my role in Scotland and the rest of Britain.

The aim with working through these conflicts is that we can get ourselves to a point where the change can be understood and "owned" by the people who will be most affected by it. If we can do this with respect for one another and the support of our faith we can find the process healing, even if it was not comfortable.

I take comfort from the fact that, as Quakers, we give up control in our worship, opening ourselves up to divine guidance and inspiration. A people who choose such an uncontrolled, unpredictable way of expressing their faith must surely be more at home with change than many.

News and Opportunities for Scottish Quakers

There's loads going on at the moment, with lots of exciting opportunities and things to think about. Please go to the end of this newsletter for more information about:

- What is the Quaker Way? Monthly online sessions for newcomers to Quakers (next session 11 July)
- An invite to a Quaker Communities Day at Swarthmoor Hall (15 July)
- Quaker resources for the General Election
- Information about Yearly Meeting 2024 (26-30 July)
- Request from the Quaker Arts Network (deadline 10 August)
- Information and dates about Quaker Week 2024 (28 September to 6 October)
- George Fox 400 resources (2024)
- Quaker Grants available to Friends
- Opportunities for connection and learning for adults, families and children

Ways in which I can support you:

As the local development worker for Scotland I work to support Scottish Quakers and Scottish Quaker communities. My ongoing work for Quakers and Meetings includes opportunities to support your work and learning:

- Quaker networks for role holders, such as Elders and Pastoral Care Friends.
- Support for Quakers – whether those are as individuals, groups, local and area meetings, or General Meeting.
- In person “getting to know you” visits to your meeting – do invite me, I would be delighted to meet you!
- Bespoke workshops and events for your meeting – is there something you need particular support with? Please get in touch and we can see if I can help.

Slightly old picture of me

If you would like to know more about all of this work, I have put information up on the Quakers in Scotland website – please check here

[<https://www.quakerscotland.org/our-work/support-for-meetings>]. My email address if you need to contact me is zoep@quaker.org.uk.

Community subgroup of the Quakers in Scotland Coordinating Group

The Community subgroup has been collecting feedback from Local Meetings and other worshipping communities about how they fit into the wider Quaker world and what it is that they need. I have been doing some work to encourage groups to take part. At this point we have over 30 responses, the majority of which come from meetings and worshipping groups and the rest are from individuals.

Other News and Opportunities in 2024:

Quaker Arts Network at Greenbelt 2024 Slideshow – OPPORTUNITY TO CONTRIBUTE

The Quaker Arts Network is asking for contributions of artwork linked to any of the Quaker Advices and Queries. They are asking for a maximum of three artworks each one has to be linked to a specific one of the Advices and Queries.

These will be shown at the Quaker Arts Network Gazebo at this year’s Greenbelt Festival. If you would like to know more, please email me and I will send you more information.

Quaker Week 2024: 'Simple. Radical. Spiritual.'

Quaker Week runs every year to help Quaker meetings to attract new people and share their faith.

In 2024, Quaker Week will be from 28 September to 6 October, with the same theme as last year of ' Simple. Radical. Spiritual.' Britain Yearly Meeting are planning to produce some new materials, as well as those they offered last year. Britain Yearly Meeting is experimenting with having the same theme for two years running as this campaign was very warmly welcomed by Friends and there's more we can do to explore how this theme can speak to newcomers. New materials will be available to order from July.



Simple Radical Spiritual tote bags

George Fox 400 resources

2024 marks the 400th anniversary of the birth of George Fox, the best known of the group of men and women who founded Quakerism. Quaker meetings across Britain are organising events to celebrate. Here are some helpful tools you can use if your meeting is interested in getting involved:

- George Fox 400 information section of the Quakers in Britain website: <https://www.quaker.org.uk/george-fox-400>
- George Fox 400 resources page for Quakers: <https://www.quaker.org.uk/resources/george-fox-400-resources>.
- You can add your event to the map on the Get involved page by submitting this form: <https://forms.quaker.org.uk/quaker-week-map/>.
- You can add your event to the monthly events thread on the Quaker Space page on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/quakerspace>.

Quaker Grants

- **Yearly Meeting Bursaries:** can be found on the YM booking form or by email, grants@quaker.org.uk
- **Hope Grants:** Information and application form available here <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/grant-making/hope>
- **Pastoral Care Grants:** contact by email grants@quaker.org.uk, or phone 020 7663 1053, for information and an application form.

Opportunities for connection and learning:

Opportunities for Parents, Children and Young People:

Please consider passing this information on to other parents/carers or young people in your worshipping communities:

1. Giant Online Childrens Meeting on the first Sunday of every month - <https://www.quaker.org.uk/communities/children-and-young-people-2/i-work-with-children-and-young-people-in-a-quaker-setting/online-meetings-for-children-and-young-people>.
2. Europe and Middle East Section - youth group which meets online regularly and in person annually: <https://fwccemes.org/emes/emes-youthgroup>
3. Rising Up!, the newsletter for Young Adult Quakers - See the Spring 2024 edition here - <https://us7.campaign-archive.com/?u=7506c29d95944ba554b4871f8&id=a2065014ac>.
You can subscribe to this newsletter here <https://quaker.us7.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=7506c29d95944ba554b4871f8&id=60726d085b>.

Woodbrooke's 2024 programme

Woodbrooke, Britain's Quaker Studies Centre, have some wonderful courses. Do have a look and see if anything appeals to you. You can find the information about their upcoming events here - <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/our-courses/>

Discovering Quakers website

The Discovering Quakers website is run by Friends who want to encourage those who might find a home in Quakers to attend and try out meetings. It is full of articles, blogs, posts, videos and podcasts, and you can also join online events organised by the group. To find out more, please visit their website

<https://discoveringquakers.org.uk/>

Contacting me:

If you are interested in finding out more about me, I have a webpage and interview video on our Quakers in Scotland website. To visit the page, please go to

<https://quakerscotland.org/our-work/support-for-meetings>

My email address is zoep@quaker.org.uk

My website address is <https://www.quakerscotland.org/our-work/support-for-meetings>

Report of Quaker Committee for Interchurch and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) 15 –17 March 2024

Jan Lethbridge, Dumfries

The QCCIR Conference, in March, was my first experience of a protracted zoom event. I've attended Meetings for Worship, Area Meetings and so on, but not a three-day-event. However, I was pleasantly surprised. The technical side, which I find can make or break a zoom event, was very well managed from my point of view. The only drawback was that the camera 'in the room' was some distance from the participants, so that they were never in close-up, even when ministering, or addressing the group from the lectern. But I feel sure that if that could have been easily rectified, it would have been, such was the general standard of the technical side of things.

We began on the Friday evening, with an introductory session on the work of the QCCIR, which, like many things Quakerly, is going through changes at present. The presentation was delivered by Elaine Green, Clerk of QCCIR, and of Ipswich Meeting.

The Covid pandemic, plus British Yearly Meeting's widespread changes, has led to the QCCIR staff being reduced to 11 maximum, including two elders and two clerks. The committee will meet three times annually. In addition three Working Groups are being set up, Interchurch, Interfaith, and Spiritual Life, each with a convenor. It

is intended that interested friends will be co-opted to these groups on an ad hoc basis, perhaps using special skills, or undertaking early-stage, general non-specific tasks. For example, the Interfaith Working Group was recently asked to comment on whether or not a particular leaflet, giving general information for Quakers about working with other faiths, needed to be updated.

QCCIR works with several national groups and forums - Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, (CTBI), the national group in each of the home nations, Faith Communities Forum, and, until very recently, the Inter Faith Network (IFN). This latter group, now disbanded, was responsible for the organisation of Interfaith Week each year, but fell foul of the Government when it was discovered that a trustee of the IFN was, or had once been, a member of the Muslim Council of Great Britain.

Elaine Green spoke again on Saturday morning, this time about Quakers' Interchurch work, and gave something of a warts-and-all account. From the early inward-looking days, when Quakers considered themselves something of a "spiritual aristocracy", via co-operation and liberalism, we have reached the diversity of the 21st century, which can be awkward and unnerving. But ecumenism remains controversial. There remains some unkindness and disdain between some Quakers and the rest, often born of ignorance, I find. Country-wide, many Local Meetings are involved closely and happily with their local Interchurch groups, but not all. It is surely irrational to expect everyone to be the same, and we must beware of a condescending attitude. Building stronger local relationships between churches can surely only be a good thing, and a keystone to peace building. Quaker 'right ordering' is consistent with receptive ecumenism, where we both give and receive the spiritual gifts of others. But there is often little connection between local and national interchurch work.

Until the 1960s there was an inherent Christian culture in Britain, but today's under 25s have no real understanding of this, and we have no real understanding of them. Local ecumenical groups can provide a platform for understanding. This is where my own interest began, back in the 1960s. We have to learn to disagree well, without rancour. Deep listening and sensitive speaking is the way to do this. And it starts in our own Meetings. Familiarity with the Bible is necessary for conversations with some denominations, but how many Local Meetings actually use the Bible at all? It sits on the table, but is rarely picked up, in my experience. Some Quaker language (jargon?) can separate us from others, but it is more important to let go of language to be alongside other people.

The Lord's Prayer, beginning "Our Father..." , that bedrock of Christianity which we all once knew, inspired one to "treat everyone else as a brother or sister", but, apparently, the original Aramaic language did not translate as "father". I'm inclined to think 'So what?' We weren't told what it actually was in translation, but this looks to me like a case of "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life".

Storytelling, of our own faith journeys, was mentioned many times as a valuable tool for connection. How many of our own Meetings have done this as an activity for cementing our own relationships, particularly bearing in mind that a meeting's membership changes over the years.

"In Friendship" is a signing-off which I've never seen elsewhere than among Quakers, and don't use myself because it doesn't come naturally. But a contributor, who had difficulty with the exclusiveness of that, found it to be most appropriate when writing to a person of another denomination, and by extension another faith - and I shall remember that.

The session on Interfaith Work was led by Dr Maureen Sier, whom I've known for many years through my own interfaith involvement. So it was good to see her again, and at a Quaker event.

She began her presentation with her own personal journey, beginning in a secular home in the north of Scotland, albeit one which, like many at that time, included attendance at the local Sunday School. She accepted the Baha'i Faith in her teens, and having left school before Higher stage, returned to education at Aberdeen University when her youngest child started school, where she encountered none other than our own Nigel Dower, of Aberdeen Meeting. Five years living in Samoa followed, which culminated in a PhD in Religion and Gender, before a return to Scotland in 2002 where the Scottish Interfaith Council, as it then was, was just getting off the ground. She began working there, and is now its Director.

Interfaith Scotland, as it now is, has, like all healthy organisations, evolved over the years from having seven full members, representing the major world faiths, to a system of "self-identification" as a faith/belief system now. Members are now divided into three groups: Abrahamic, Dharmic (Indian), and Other, where those such as Pagans, Mormons and possibly Humanists might fit. This rang some bells for me of present Quaker membership discussions. In Fact, Maureen said that she sensed that "Quakers think structure matters". When I reported this back at Local Meeting, the response was "Yes, but we don't like leaders!"

Much of Interfaith Scotland's current work is around dialogue and engagement, in fact 'Making a Difference Through Dialogue' is one of the strap lines. Courageous Conversations, between Jews and Muslims is a current initiative. Interfaith Scotland (IFS) convenes the Religious Leaders Forum, which meets twice yearly, and of course supports some 23 local interfaith groups. Interfaith Week actually began in Scotland, twenty years ago. Much work is done with refugees and asylum seekers, and around climate justice, Interfaith Scotland (IFS) having had input to COP26 in Glasgow. Tackling Hate Crime is another area of work, and one in which, unlike at Westminster, Interfaith Scotland does have a voice in Scottish politics. Likewise, there is a cross-party group considering religious freedom, and consultation on religious literacy in schools. The seven staff at Interfaith Scotland are all part-time.

Fairly recently, there had been an interfaith pilgrimage to the Holy Land, embarked upon by 35 people representing 10 different faiths. One visit was to the tomb of Abraham at Hebron, where, although Muslims and Jews have separate entrances, everyone prayed together, surrounding the tomb. Maureen wondered if this would ever happen again.

Looking to the future, Dr Sier feels that the present time is one of Disintegration: polarization, extreme nationalism, politicising and weaponising of religion. But from this, she believes new systems will be created, different ways of living together, less dialogue perhaps and more working together, and hopefully this will attract the younger generations. (More Quaker bells ringing in my head!) “The old order changeth, yielding place to new.” (Tennyson: Morte D’Arthur)

Following each of the major speakers, there were optional breakout groups and workshops, and I attended the Interfaith ones. These are difficult to report on, but a couple of things stood out for me. Shared stories are always important, and I was pleased to have the opportunity to share something that happened to me recently. To cut a long story short, what I had expected to be a prayer meeting for a deceased friend, turned out to be a request for a taster of Quaker worship! So I found myself ‘leading’ a Meeting for Worship between a small group of Quakers and Baha’is. And it worked perfectly!

Less comfortable was the feeling at the end of one presentation that it was necessary to mention to the speaker that “We don’t clap”. This I’ve always found hard to understand, especially when children have performed in some way. However, at the very end of the conference, when it was revealed that the “technical expert” was in fact a history/theology tutor in disguise, the room, and indeed the screens, broke out into a round of spontaneous applause! So we do clap!

Ashworth School

Laura McMurtie, Ayrshire

Every year Ackworth School invites representatives from a number of Area Meetings which it retains links with to attend their Annual General Meeting. Scotland’s Shindig – our annual gathering for Young People has been held several times in recent years at Ackworth- so we retain links with them.

This year the school invited us not just to attend their meeting but to consider nominating someone to attend for 3 years so that they might help foster stronger links and provide the school with continuity.

I was able to offer to attend online and as part of that attendance to provide feedback to our Area Meeting who would then consider whether our continued involvement was useful and of value to the school and to ourselves as an Area Meeting.

Following my feedback to the last Area Meeting we discussed very briefly what continued involvement might entail and how to arrive at a decision concerning its effectiveness and purposes if we did wish to remain involved. Area Meeting may consider establishing a short life group to do so. This will be returned to at a future Meeting.

Report on attending Ackworth School General Meeting

I attended the morning session of Ackworth School General Meeting by Zoom on behalf of West Scotland Area Meeting on Saturday 18/5/2024 May 2024.

We began the session with a period of quiet and then an acknowledgement of the continued importance of the school's Quaker heritage.

Students are encouraged to support one another and develop and sustain a sense of community. This ethos is fostered and encouraged throughout the school and across the curriculum. Several examples were provided of outreach to the wider community. Community in action within the school and out with the school was evidenced.

We then received a series of reports.

The school has experienced several challenges over the last 5 or so years. With a new senior management team now in place, including the recent appointment of a new head and significant changes in the membership of the governing body the reports which were presented provided a positive outlook for the future.

The major challenges were primarily of a financial nature and like most businesses/charities the Covid 19 pandemic had caused a worsening of a financial situation which was already sticky. However, over the last financial year and during the current year the situation is improving, and the strategic direction suggests that a strong financial foundation is being secured.

The academic achievements of the school were highlighted and reported as excellent overall in terms of relevant comparators. Furthermore, we learned of significant achievements in sports music and the arts generally both within the school and in terms of post school entry to music art and design institutions as well as university places. Several pupils also achieved professional sporting positions.

There remains significant demand for places at the school and whilst the ethos remains Quaker based the majority of pupils are not from Quaker families.

Whilst this was an interesting experience, I would suggest that we might think carefully about whether a triennial appointment would add value to the school if our involvement was confined only to attendance at the General Meeting.

However, our current resources as an area meeting would make it difficult if not impossible to contribute any more than we do therefore we should carefully consider our future involvement.

Quaker Concerns

Gender based Violence

“The Scottish Youth Parliament recognises many girls and women feel unsafe in public spaces and calls on decision makers and communities to raise awareness and work together to eliminate gender-based violence in public areas.”

93% of young people consulted agreed with this statement.

The current situation in Scotland

Gender-based violence is prevalent across the world, including in Scotland. Looking at [sexual crime](#), at least 37% of the 15,049 Sexual crimes recorded in 2021-22 by the police were related to a victim under the age of 18. For those with experience of serious sexual assault, the first (or only) incident occurred between the ages of 16 and 20 for more than half (55%). Generally, there is an underreporting of these crimes and in 2020-21 there were 2,176 cases reported to the police, but only 152 prosecutions and just 78 convictions. All of these statistics paint a picture of how widespread violence is, including for young people, and how the legal system is failing victims.

The [Equally Safe strategy](#) in Scotland aims to end the violence facing women and girls in Scotland and achieve greater gender equality. In addition, new legislation called the [Victims, Witnesses, and Justice Reform Bill](#) is in process to improve legal systems handling cases of sexual offences.

What do MSYPs want to see?

- Early intervention through better education in schools.
- Safer public spaces and transport.
- Supportive and safe workplaces.
- An intersectional approach.
- Increased support for victims of violence and abuse.

What action has SYP taken so far?

MSYPs participated in a research project for The Scottish Government on [gender inequality in education](#). This report covered issues such as gender stereotyping, girls' safety in school and how teachers act and behave differently with female students.

Alongside this, SYP continues to work to end violence against women and girls and call for the criminalisation of misogynistic behaviour and sexual harassment.

SYP's Women's Empowerment Programme also works to identify issues and opportunities relating to young women's empowerment within SYP.

Our next steps

Campaign Delivery Groups will now be formed where Members will go on to design and deliver each of the three campaigns.

Resources

Our campaign will be focused on gender-based violence. Violence against women and girls is one part of gender-based violence and a conversation that continues deserve specific attention and to be tackled.

Want to learn more about gender-based violence? Check out these resources from some of the organisations working to both tackle violence against women and girls and to bring about equality in Scotland:

- [The Young Women's Movement's 'The Rise Report'](#) on relationships and domestic abuse.
- [Zero Tolerance statistics](#) on men's violence against women and girls.
- [Engender's webpage](#) on the role of primary prevention in preventing violence against women and girls.

Sign up to our mailing list to get involved in our projects and campaigns.

Scottish Youth Parliament
Mansfield Traquair Centre, 15
Mansfield Place, Edinburgh, EH3 6BB

WSAM Gender-based Violence Concern

Going forward from our questionnaire that seemed to point out that the majority of those responding saw gender-based violence as a domestic matter. Is this a Quaker issue? Are the elements of bullying in Quaker Meetings the same as the process in domestic violence/abuse? Shocked? We have a new action in ferment where we are producing cards to be placed on seats at meetings for worship – very similar to those produced by Glasgow Elders to draw attention to what was expected in Quaker meetings for worship. Hopefully we will be sending a batch off to local meetings soon. Do look out for them and feedback is always valuable.

You will know that many are deeply disturbed by the happenings in the Gaza/Israel conflict and many are taking part in the many responses. It seems a poignant time to remind friends of our concern for rape in armed conflict situations so here is a partial reprint of our leaflet:

Weaponised Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict

We are not just talking of rape but we can start there.

It is not only women who are subjected but also men and children.

Most see rape as normal vaginal penetration which means rape is not always taken seriously. Indeed until quite recently it could be the object of jokes. The reality is very different. Let us remember that many do not survive the immediate rape or

later commit suicide as a result of the traumatic nature of the crime and its aftermath.

Rape can be very brutal causing much physical damage to the victim, especially so if it is gang rape. The commander has his fill then passes the survivors over to the men. Also, penetration may not be the vagina alone but anal and oral, and sometimes all at once. And . . . it may not only be penises that are inserted. One Somali victim I came across had a broken bottle inserted. In another well-known gang rape case in India her entrails fell out and despite being rushed to hospital she died.

The horror of the attack may be enhanced as other members of the family are forced to watch. This may include husbands, fathers and children.

Afterwards survivors may be further penalised as they are ostracised from their family as 'damaged goods' or from the community that is unable to absorb the shame. Children resulting from rape may also be treated in this way, victimised and shunned, with no future in the community. Men can be so ashamed they can't talk about it at all.

Such sexual violence may be systemised humiliation and de-humanising of a community. This is a powerful weapon that demoralises making it easy to overcome and oppress that community.

Weaponised sexual violence is wide spread. In her book *Our Bodies, Their Battlefield: What War Does to Women*, Christina Lamb gives details of 15 separate areas of conflict throughout the world in this century. It is an aspect of war that is hidden. Only recently are we beginning to talk about this happening during the European wars of the twentieth century – the First and Second World Wars. With Ukraine at the forefront of our news today, the abuse of fleeing women is being spoken of more openly, but much more evil to some is the opportunism that rescues Ukrainian women into sexual abuse elsewhere as they flee to 'friendly' countries

In our own land, threats of rape are used to silence female politicians or anyone that dares express a different opinion, another kind of war. I was appalled that the inhabitants of Golder's Green and Finchley in London were treated to men screaming abuse from the open windows of cars as they raced up and down the streets also shouting that they would rape the Jewish women. Was it an excuse that Israel had perpetuated yet more violence against Palestinians?

Is there an answer apart from just wagging our finger as we say no, no?

We must work in our own societies to create greater understanding and foster skills of compassion and empathy, changing our own hypersexualised society and attitudes to justice and inequality.

Some help:

Books: Christina Kaur *Our bodies, Their Battlefield: What War Does to Women*

Valerie Kaur *See No Stranger*, a memoir and manifesto of revolutionary love. *A Sikh woman's experience of racial abuse in USA with much info on her nonviolence approach to develop 'revolutionary love'.*

WILPF International has produced various booklets referring to the situation in many different countries including Somalia, Yemen, Syria, Colombia, Iraq, Niger, and others.

See also our WSAM booklet *Women Do Count* produced to highlight the effect of climate change on women especially.

Campaigns:

WCC Thursdays in Black inspired by the Mothers of the Disappeared in Buenos Aires, Women in Black in Israel and Palestine, Women in Rwanda and Bosnia, and Black Sash in South Africa. Look for our updated leaflet detailing where help for sexual violence is available in Scotland.

UN 16 days Action on Violence against Women 25th November – 10th December (Human Rights Day)

White Ribbon Campaign a global movement of men and boys working to end male [violence against women and girls](#). *Never use, excuse or remain silent about men's violence against women.* **White Ribbon Day 25th November 2022**

Alternative to Violence project avpbritain.org The Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) is an international movement that started in the 1970s in the American prison system. AVP Britain is one of multiple independent branches which operate around the globe. A registered national charity (1085709), AVP Britain is committed to working towards a resilient and non-violent society.

There are still 16 female hostages in Gaza since 7th October 2024.

Pregnant women in Gaza??? Very informative interview by a gynaecologist and one woman's experience of pregnancy and birth. See BBC4 Woman's Hour, 22nd July 2024.

**STOP
PRESS**

Sir Keir Starmer in the King's Speech promised to tackle 'the epidemic' of violence against women and girls.

See interviews on BBC Women's Hour 23rd July.

Peace and Reconciliation

Quakers Fast for Peace in Gaza and Israel

Friends Journal. June 24, 2024

By [Sharlee DiMenichi](#)

Quakers for Peace in Palestine and Israel, a group of at least 17 Friends from the United States, Ireland, and Venezuela, fasted and participated in [virtual worship sharing](#) on April 8 to express solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza, according to

participant Claire Cohen. The event coincided with the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, during which believers fast from dawn to sunset.

Participants in the worship sharing considered several queries, including one about reaching out courageously and lovingly to people on all sides of the conflict, and another concerning their practices of daily connection with God.

The query that meant the most to participant Lauren Brownlee was “What does love require of you?”

“That is a query that lives on my heart always. It’s sort of the North Star for my life,” Brownlee said. Brownlee is the deputy general secretary of Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), but joined the action in an individual capacity and not as a representative of FCNL.

Participant Diane McHale felt most touched by the query on outreach to various sides of conflict, which reminded her to love all parties impacted by the war.

The current phase of the longstanding conflict between the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and Palestinians began on October 7, 2023, when Hamas militants killed more than 1,200 Israelis and took more than 240 hostage. The IDF responded with attacks on Gaza that have killed more than 35,000 Palestinians. The war has caused starvation and blocked the delivery of international humanitarian aid.

Brownlee fasted to bring about internal transformation, realizing that fasting in solidarity with starving Palestinians was not the equivalent of experiencing lethal hunger. Brownlee took the day to center other people’s needs and to raise her own awareness.

Abstaining from food for the day deepened McHale’s concern for Palestinians facing starvation.

“Fasting connected me to the suffering of the people in Gaza. I was nervous about whether or not I could do it because I sometimes get migraines if I don’t eat. We talked ahead of time about how I could drop out if I did. This brought home what it is like if you are in Gaza where you can’t stop fasting when you have medical problems,” McHale said.

Participant John Choe fasted for the whole month of Ramadan.

“I felt that fasting was this physical analog to silent worship where you are listening intently,” said Choe, who worships with the People of Color Worship and Reflection Group, which meets under the care of Flushing Meeting in Queens, N.Y.

Choe attended several iftars (fast-breaking meals held in the Muslim community at the time of evening prayer during Ramadan). Muslims pray five times a day. Sharing the meals enabled Choe to form relationships with his Muslim neighbors and share their concern for their co-religionists who the IDF are killing in Gaza.

Asked about the Biden administration's pause on weapons shipments in response to Israel's incursion into the Gazan city of Rafah, Brownlee characterized it as "an important baby step."

Brownlee, a member of Bethesda (Md.) Meeting, sent her meeting's pro-ceasefire minute to Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton and received a form letter in reply. Norton and other Congresspeople wrote to President Biden highlighting the risk of starvation among Gazans and urging a peaceful end to the war.

McHale hopes that letters to Congress members will hasten the war's end. She called on the United States to stop weapons shipments to Israel and to increase humanitarian aid. "We should be sending food, not arms. We need a ceasefire."

Sudan

According to UNHCR (the UN Refugee Agency United Kingdom for UNHCR), the people of Sudan have endured over a year of continued violence. Now the country is in the grips of a food crisis with millions on the brink of famine.

Since the fighting broke out in Khartoum in April 2023, more than 8.6 million people have been forcibly displaced. Millions have lost their homes and livelihoods. The situation is now dire with 18 million people facing acute hunger and malnutrition – one in seven are children.

UNHCR is working on the ground in Sudan and across neighbouring countries providing life saving support like emergency shelter, bedding and access to food and clean water, but critical underfunding combined with constant influx of refugees is resulting in over-crowding in camps. Resources are now desperately stretched and support urgently needed. **See unrefugees.org.uk/sudanappeal 0800 029 3883**

UNHCR has the global reach and local knowledge to get aid through quickly to the people who most need it. Teams are continuing to work in Sudan and surrounding countries providing emergency relief and protection at borders, but with the situation only 7% funded more financial support is needed.

Northern

Friends Peace Board

Friends met in Glasgow on 21st June and some went on to join the meeting for worship at Faslane. The next meeting in Darlington on 6th July looked at Security – time for a rethink. Look out for - QPSW are part of a Working Group planning the first global Week of Action for Peace and Climate Justice, 21-28 September 2024 (<https://climatemilitarism.org/weekofaction/>).

A Climate of Peace?



What is to gain from peacemaking? Alastair Reid, Ayrshire

An interesting discussion by a panel organised by Chatham House. Some thought on how we can start to regain our reputation trashed by the past 14 years, and start to make a useful difference again.

What is to gain from peacemaking?

Conflict zones are fertile ground for terrorist groups, arms smugglers and human traffickers. Less conflict doesn't just serve those who live in conflict zones, it also delivers direct benefit to all nations who strive to live in peace. Since the end of the Cold War, many civil wars have ended through negotiated settlements. In many of these conflicts, Britain and British citizens - often working through the UN and other peacemaking organizations - have played central roles in efforts to find a peaceful end to the violence. However, the current chaos, from Ukraine to Gaza, may lead us to question whether peace is still possible?

This event explores the prospects for nations, including the UK, to make a positive contribution to peacemaking when much of the world is at war. Panelist Chris Thornton recently published a paper called Progressive Realist Peacemaking. This panel will critically examine some of the questions it raises from different perspectives, and also address the following themes:

What do nations gain by prioritizing peacemaking? What sacrifices need to be made to do so?

What role does the UK have in peacemaking? Does it have the potential to achieve greater success in peacemaking around the world?

How could the UK play a greater role in peacemaking and what would this entail? Where does the UK have most to offer and most to gain from a more proactive approach?

Climate Change and Sustainability

Climate Café

Monday 12th August

The next meeting of the Climate is on **Monday 12th August**, at usual time of 5.30. In the meantime, do check the Google Drive for updates, and suggestions for action https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1G98-18PHbhGg2hNAa0nyx98SgNXY4DK-?usp=drive_link

At the moment, as well as a report by Barry on the 9th May protest at Barclays AGM, you'll find a couple of useful items from Sarah, our Parliamentary Engagement Officer: - an overview from Stop Climate Chaos Scotland of climate policy and political changes;- a template letter to send to MSPs.

Sarah comments that with the change in government coming so soon after the removal of the 2030 climate targets, we need to show continued public support for urgent action. Here is where to find your one constituency MSP and your seven regional MSPs

<https://www.parliament.scot/msps/current-and-previous-msps>

and I hope soon to add some details of my visit to Decarbonise this week to find out about Carbon Capture and Storage plans, especially at Peterhead.

Keep active and keep in touch. **Doreen Osborne, Glasgow**

Scottish Communities Climate Action Network & Transition Network Hub for Scotland

We aim to support community-led action in Scotland to address the climate and nature emergency and work for a just, thriving and resilient Scotland

SCCAN is the Transition Network Hub for Scotland. The [Transition Network](#) is a movement of communities coming together to reimagine and rebuild our world.



We Offer:

[Training & Resources](#)

Providing bespoke and relevant training, knowledge exchange and a growing resource bank for communities.

[Climate for Change](#)

Engaging more people in your community with climate action through proven conversation model.

[Storyteller Collective](#)

Telling 1000 better community stories together to change the narrative and transform the world.

[Regional Networking](#)

Building regional community networks for powerful climate action, relevant to where we live.

[Spaces](#)

Hosting and support for your organisation's web page as a part of our friendly network.

[Funding](#)

Offering small grants to communities and individuals and advising on finding your own funding.

Experiment with Light

Margaret Roy

Eleven of us gathered on 15th June at Glasgow meeting house to be led by Andrea Freeman and Ann Bettys in the retreat version of the practice. A further three were prevented by illness.

Andrea led an artwork experience with coloured inks to help us externalise our experience of the 'meditation'. Of course some of us who are more 'thinkers' find the art a challenge. I can certainly own up to this and often feel like a mucky puppy making my dabs on the paper but . . . over several retreats now, I enjoy the 'messaging' (sorry Andrea) and frequently find it deepens the practice to provide inspiring insights. I have attached one of the pictures to our front cover this issue, but because of confidentiality have not put the name.

Here are some others commenting on their experience;

For me the retreat demonstrated how important it is for me to meet face-to-face to share in worship and meditation.

And from another -I took a notebook to the Experiment with Light retreat, but I wrote nothing in it. I don't think I did much thinking either. It was all about experiencing - about being in the moment - present in the encounter. And I realised when I came away from our day together how much I need that - just to be. And a bonus to do that alongside others.

Yet another writes: I enjoyed reconnecting with experiment with light and particularly enjoyed the deepening of experience that the painting brought to my practice. It opened some new insights for me that have stuck with me since.

It always interests me why more people do not take up the practice of Experiment with Light. I have always found it an excellent way to help Friends learn the spiritual discipline of opening to the Light and I would like to see it at enquirers' weekends and even occasionally at AM or even GM. There is a problem though and I eventually saw that this weekend. I heard three different ways of practising.

When Rex Ambler introduced the practice, he had been studying the words of George Fox and indeed he gathered these in *Truth of the Heart*. I don't know where he got Gendlin's focussing technique from but it was developed in psychotherapy when it was realised that some clients got nothing from the sessions whereas others did. What were the others doing? Gendlin's six step process leads us from stilling the mind to awareness of what is happening in mind and body then encourages openness to find a word or image that speaks to the condition. Does this resemble the Quaker process of waiting in stillness for the spirit to move? This was developed in some of the practices where a thought, possibly a problem, was held and taken into the silence for contemplation to better understand and possibly even receive insight in how to tackle it. Indeed this could be further developed into a relationship with an inner guide, even Christ, possibly becoming a daily practice.

Thus Light groups may differ in their approach but all contain the procedure of sharing in creative listening mode without comment on each participant's experience. And of course each group is shrouded in confidentiality so a safe space is created for each to go deeply into the process. It can be very healing and always strengthens us to 'stand in the light'.

Some would argue that this can be too psychotherapeutic with a concept of growth and self-help. On that issue we might want to return to Paul in the Bible who saw Christians as growing in 'personality' through engagement with the Spirit. Early Quakers would have put this differently as the Lamb's War, they would say in regard to social change we must balance the inner and the outer worlds, that perhaps real change starts with ourselves and listening to the Spirit within that is our Teacher. Fox and others saw the Teacher as Christ himself.

Our open group on Wednesdays at 2pm, alas currently only on line, uses the four step 'retreat version' of the practice to deepen our experience of the Light – Mind the Light, Open your heart to the Light, Wait in the Light, and Submit to the Light. Almost anyone is welcome to join with us. Visitors are welcome but of course we would like more regular commitment to maintain the cohesiveness of the group. Contact margaret.roy@btinternet.com.

Much more information is available on the web site www.experiment-with-light.org.uk. There you will find the different meditations on the individual, on the world, and MOWS, in print and in CD form. And you will find recommended books and the EwL journal as well as news of any events. In that light, you may find the following of use:

[Experiment with Light, a Quaker Spiritual Practice](#)

Online Light groups are facilitated by members of the Experiment with Light (UK) Network Steering Group every second and fourth Tuesday of the month, 4pm – 5.15pm (British time) and every first Thursday of the month, 7pm – 9pm (British time). These sessions are intended to give participants the opportunity to reflect on their life in these times of emergency and loss.

For instructions on how to join, [send us a message](#) to Experiment-with-light.org.uk

Our online resources and events are free of charge. We are, however, always grateful if you can [support us with a donation](#) if you are able to do so. Thank you!

*“ It is necessary for me to see the first point of light that begins to be dawn.
It is necessary to be present alone at the resurrection of Day in solemn
silence at which the sun appears, for at this moment all the affairs of cities,
of governments, of war departments, are seen to be the bickering of mice.
I receive from the Eastern woods, the tall oaks, the one word DAY.
It is never the same. It is always in a totally new language.”*
THOMAS MERTON (Journals, MAY 1965)

The Lamb's War

Margaret Roy

This was a favourite topic of early Quakers including James Naylor and George Fox. Margaret Fell talks of the need to address the inner struggle . . . to be a better person. Paul in his many letters talks of the gifts of the Spirit changing us, for example, so we can become more peaceful and loving. Today such self-improvement is hived off, away from religion, into 'New Age' therapies and books. Yet it is still a core in many churches as in Agnus Dei chanted three times in Catholic and Anglican services:

Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

When we Quakers run a mile from such religious practices, cutting off our nose to spite our face, we often willingly embrace the process as it is explained in other religions. Here is a piece from Daoism (John Lash in *Tai Chi*, Vega Books, 2002):

The Tai Chi school is a place of silence. There is no loud music, traffic noises, arguments, and such like, but only the silence of the Void. In silence the rational mind has nothing to focus upon and thus turns inwards and towards the inner nature, the true reality of the individual. It is this silence that is so feared and shunned in the world of ego outside the door. People do not want to see what lies within because they would see the meaninglessness of their lives. Thus, people feel uneasy in moments of silence when no one is talking or the radio is off. But, in the Tai Chi school, it is exactly this knowledge of the inner self that we are seeking and silence eases our way inward. Then the students will see that their inner being is

Something mysteriously formed,

Born before heaven and earth.

In the silence of the void . . .

**Verse 23 of *The Tao Te Ching*
Lao Tzu**

In the Tai Chi school, the students return to the womb of all creation. All of the things that make the world of ego what it is disappear within the walls of the Tai Chi school. Hence the students can escape the hard coldness, pain, ambition, aggression and competition that drive the world of ego, and return to the warm loving womb of the Wu Chi (*unknowable but present everywhere*). In the Tai Chi school there are no ranks, no trophies to win, no place for competition and ambition. All separating labels disappear. Opinions about the fictional world of the ego are left outside the door. Labels such as businessman, lawyer, housewife, college student, conservative, liberal, Christina, Jew, American, European, rich, poor, white, brown, and such like have no meaning. There are only human beings who need to love and be loved.

I want to dedicate this to Peter Christy an ardent practitioner of Tai Chi and Qi Gong.

The Ballad of George Fox

to the tune Lord of the Dance.

c Stainer and Bell, 1964

There's a light that is shining in the heart of a man,
There's a light that was shining when the world began.

There's a light that is shining in the Turk and the Jew
And a light that is shining, friend, in me and in you.

Walk in the light, wherever you may be

Walk in the light, wherever you may be

*"In my old leather breeches and my shaggy, shaggy locks,
I am walking in the glory of the light," said Fox.*

'If we give you a pistol, will you fight for the Lord?'

'But you can't kill the devil with a gun or a sword.'

'Will you swear on the Bible?' 'I will not,' said he,

'For the truth is more holy than the book to me.'

Walk in the light, wherever you may be

Walk in the light, wherever you may be

*"In my old leather breeches and my shaggy, shaggy locks,
I am walking in the glory of the light," said Fox.*

There's an ocean of darkness and I drown in the night

Till I come through the darkness to the ocean of light,

You can lock me in prison but the light will be free,

'And I walk in the glory of the light,' said he.

Walk in the light, wherever you may be

Walk in the light, wherever you may be

*"In my old leather breeches and my shaggy, shaggy locks,
I am walking in the glory of the light," said Fox.*

FWCC has acquired the permissions to publish the words to the *Ballad of George Fox* in his [400th birthday year](#). Also known as *There's a Light that is Shining* or simply *The George Fox song*, it was written by Sydney Carter, best known as the composer of *Lord of the Dance*, *When I Needed a Neighbour* and *One More Step Along the World I Go*, all of which have become anthems for Christian compassion. Although Carter was not a Quaker, he knew Friends well, having served with the Friends Ambulance Unit in World War Two.

The song is licensed to be sung at [#GeorgeFox400 events](#) without needing to pay further copyright fees. There is [also a version in Spanish](#).

Book Reviews

‘For thy great pain have mercy on my little pain.’

Victoria MacKenzie Bloomsbury Publishing 2023

Sheila Semple, Glasgow

This novel is an account, told by both women separately, of the lead up to a meeting between Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe, both in their lives spanning the 14th and 15th centuries. Margery’s (dictated) book, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, is considered by some to be the first autobiography in the English Language; Julian’s writings in *The Revelations of Divine Love* are thought to be the earliest surviving English language works by a woman.

I liked Victoria MacKenzie’s book very much. It was very readable, apparently simple but actually with some very deep aspects to it. The different characters of the two women were well drawn, but you could see them moving closer together as time went on, in that Julian hid her writings until towards the end while Margery was driven to announce her experiences of the guidance of Jesus. I suspect that some early Quakers would be more like Margery, 'in your face', challenging in her emotional state and in the way that she stated that she had been with Jesus, fleshy and down to earth. The insights into what might have been Julian's emotional life were interesting and illuminating as she settled into her confined state, and her tender back story was imagined movingly. And the use of Margery as a trustee for Julian's writings seemed a good possible explanation of how they came to be preserved. I didn't know much about Margery Kempe's writings, but I know a bit about Julian's and was impressed how some of her writing was integrated into her statements.

I am still absorbing it, and thinking about it.

‘Sacred Nature’ – How We Can Recover our Bond with the Natural World - by Karen Armstrong

(Armstrong, K, 2023, Penguin Random House UK,) Pete Clarke, Glasgow

This book examines when and how we lost the connection between spirituality/religion and nature. It goes further than dealing with ‘connections’ and argues eloquently that we, and our religious/spiritual beliefs were once part of our understanding of the world and universe – and as such we need to rediscover our, and spiritualities, place in the universe to protect our planet.

As an introduction to the idea that we have lost our understanding of the place of religion and spirituality, she discusses the role of past shaman as offering, not a particular way of ‘worship’ of ‘gods’, or indeed something ‘supernatural’, but

instead of simply projecting his and our awareness outwards into nature. In this Armstrong argues that in the past, (and before the advent of Christianity and other religions which offer a one 'god being'), people were able to see the oneness of people with nature and a commonality with everything from animals to lichen – there was a 'reciprocity between [our]selves and the natural environment', (Armstrong p7), where today at best we see nature as a mere backdrop to human affairs.

This separation of humankind from nature finds some roots in the writings of Descartes in the 17th century and his theories which posit a primary division between, and a retreat from, nature. To save our planet from environmental damage and eventual demise, we need, Armstrong argues, to recover our connection, understanding and veneration of nature. Examples of such can be seen in Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism and Hinduism which all share a common ethos and understanding of humanity's relationship with the natural world. Several chapters of the book give a detailed insight of each of these religious and philosophical traditions, too detailed for review here.

With this in mind Armstrong, argues not for a return to any of these particular traditions, but instead that we should learn from them the timeless relationship we have with the natural world and environment which has a history beyond and before logic and science. Indeed Armstrong argues that it is only with the advent of science and the 'one god' religions, that we have lost sight of the importance of 'myth' alongside 'logic' that have in the distant past allowed us live within nature – understanding the 'myths' within nature help us to understand the truths and guidance of nature, which in turn helps us understand our place and to live effective safe lives, (Armstrong p29).

The 'way forward' (a structure to each chapter in the book), may prove the most challenging to readers, as through a reference to Confucius, Armstrong argues that there is 'no division between human beings and the cosmos, because the two share the same reality', (Tu Weiming, 1975). This then in my reading offers links to pantheism which argues that what is divine is right here on the earth and in the universe – **all is divine, therefore all should be treated as sacred and 'given worth to' (to worship).**

References

Armstrong K, 'Sacred Nature' – How We Can Recover our Bond with the Natural World ,2023, Penguin Random House, UK

Tu Weiming, 'The Continuity of Being: Chinese Visions of Nature' in Tu Weiming *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation*, 1985, Albany, New York p137-8

The Department of Work and Pensions Assesses

A Jade Fish Nuala Watts

Edie Phoenix, Castle Douglas

Our Friend Nuala Watt from Glasgow meeting wishes to thank Friends who came to the launch of her poetry book. Nuala has had several poems published previously and this book, "The Department of Work and Pensions Assesses a Jade Fish" is her first full collection. It contains about 45 mostly very short poems, all of them thought-provoking and highly readable.

This insightful and sometimes humorous book holds a wide range of themes. The realities of life of a Disabled woman who is also a Disabled mother and her interactions with bureaucracy. Also, topics like living through the Covid pandemic, about Glasgow Meeting House, and the anxious joys of being a parent.

Some might say the book is all about impairment, all about medical condition, but that is not the way I see it. Nuala uses impairment merely a vehicle for the story she is telling, and the way she responds. It is a very human book that non-disabled people can find much to identify with.

I laughed with empathy at the poem about trying to renew her bus pass, and at 'Important Information Enclosed' from the energy company.

With her light touch and fresh outlook, I enjoyed reading this book and will continue to bring it down from my bookshelf to dip into again and again.

You can buy a copy at the publisher's website Blue Diode Press or at Amazon or the Poetry Book Society, but it is best for the very small publisher if you buy directly.

<https://www.bluediode.co.uk/product-page/the-department-of-work-and-pensions-assesses-a-jade-fish-by-nuala-watt>

Quaker Worship: Reflections and Explorations

Kindlers new book is now published. You may remember contributing material to this book, for which we are very grateful.

At the same time, we are publishing *The Kindness of Presence: Revisiting the Bible with an Open Heart and Mind* by Peter Parr. This is a beautiful book, simply but profoundly written, distilling the essence of many Bible passages which support a generous and compassionate view of the world.

These books will soon be available from Friends book Centre in London, price £3 each plus p&p, but as a mark of our gratitude we would like to offer them to you at the special price of £5 plus £2.50 postage. If you would like to take this up, please let me know at admin@thekindlers.org,uk and I will make the necessary arrangements.

James McCarthy, Kindlers administrator , thank you for your support of the Kindlers.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

An Invitation from Ayrshire Meeting

Dear Friends

I hope you are all well and enjoying the summer!

As we left Crianlarich in March several Friends commented it would be nice to get together again sooner than next March, so this offers an opportunity to do that.

Ayrshire Meeting is hosting Area Meeting on **Saturday 5th October, 11am to 3.30pm**, at Stair Community Centre and online, and they are offering the opportunity to make a weekend of it.

Friends would be welcome to arrive Friday evening for a social gathering, stay on for an early shared supper and a ceilidh on Saturday evening and join them for worship on Sunday morning.

Several Ayrshire Friends can offer accommodation locally for Friday and Saturday night, plus there is space for camper vans and tents if preferred.

They also hope to be able to offer children's activities during the Area Meeting sessions.

So come along support Area Meeting and spend time with Friends.

It would be helpful to know if you are interested in joining us for all or any part of the weekend so we can plan accordingly.

Please can you let us know if you would you be interested in:

- a) Friday evening social
- b) Attending area meeting in Stair Community Centre
- c) Children's activities on Saturday
- d) Saturday early shared supper
- e) Saturday evening ceilidh
- f) Sunday morning worship
- g) Accommodation Friday and/or Saturday night

I look forward to hearing from you.

In Friendship Kate Gulliver, Clerk West Scotland Area Meeting

Scottish charity number SC011234 wsamclerk@gmail.com

Open Weeks at the Camas Centre to the wider West Scotland Area Meeting?

The Camas Centre is part of the Iona Community, based at an off-grid outdoor centre on the Ross of Mull. We host a variety of groups (schools, vol orgs, charities) for a week at a time, as well as offering an Open Week programme which the public can book onto.

In particular we are having a '**Quietly Wild**' week in **September** that I hope will be of interest to Friends across Scotland. See blurb below!

*Experience the magic of Camas through a week of quiet reflection and nature connection. **Led by Iona Community leader Ruth Harvey and outdoor instructor, Nick Austin; this week is inspired by the couple's Quaker faith and experience of outdoor adventure and wilderness exploration.***

Drawing on the beauty and simplicity of the Camas setting, we'll craft a week together joining gentle adventures in the wilderness with stillness and reflective practice. You are welcome, whatever your level of adventure, or reflective practice experience. We'll tailor the programme to suit all needs and gifts. We look forward to sharing a week of simple community living, creative space, outdoor activities, reflective practice, good food, good company and the great outdoors.

Ruth and Nick are Quakers living in Cumbria, NW England. Nick has been an outdoor instructor with the Outward Bound Trust for 30 years, most recently as a Learning and Adventure Manager. Ruth is a Church of Scotland minister and a Quaker, mediator and facilitator, and currently Leader of the Iona Community. They met at Camas 30 years ago and have been enjoying its quiet wildness ever since.

Booking info here- [Quietly Wild - Iona Community](#)

Folk can find more info about bookings/concessions/the rest of this summer's open week programme here [Events from 30 September – 13 April – Iona Community](#) or get in touch with myself at camasprogramme@iona.org.uk

Susie McGuinness (she/her) is Camas Programme Worker, The Iona Community

Come to Wiston Lodge 13 – 15 September with Friends in South East Scotland Area Meeting

Friends invite Quakers in Scotland for a weekend for **Building Community** with a mix of activities, fellowship, and worship for Friends of all ages. **Simplicity and Sufficiency** are to be the values we explore. Wiston filled up quickly last year, first come first served! Please book via <https://bit.ly/wiston24>.

We are sending this to **all friends in Scotland** and hope it might offer an opportunity to meet, especially for younger Quakers and families. Go for it! This year we've hired the whole place - all [facilities in the Victorian Lodge, the Cabins and the camping field](#).

"**Just chilling out**" is encouraged, as well as a film on Friday evening, Firepit on Saturday night, a nature walk, climbing Tinto Hill, games on the lawn etc on Saturday afternoon. There will also be an opportunity for outdoor / gardening work as part of Wiston's Growing Greener environmental initiative. And you can join Lanark Meeting for Worship on Sunday morning.

Local News

Celebrations are in order with our following Friends who have reached notable anniversaries;

Muriel Robertson is 95. Wonderful photograph of her surrounded with balloons and grandchildren and great grandchildren. Alas needed permission from all to print.

Margaret Peacock was trying to keep it quiet that she is 90.

Diane Bowes is also 90.

That's three from Milngavie Meeting folks. Move there for a longer life! Also. . .

Margaret Borland is 90 in September. Dunblane Meeting is planning something to celebrate.

Alison Mandeville is 80. Another from Milngavie!

Clare MacLeod of Dumfries Meeting is 80.

No room to mention the few who are 75 this year. That's you and me waiting another five years Michael.

Sadly our Friend Peter Christy of Ayrshire Meeting died on 5th May . Our thoughts for consolation are with Hilary and their family.

A testimony is being prepared and will be with AM shortly.

*Therefore be at peace with God,
Whatever you conceive Him to be,
And whatever your labours and aspirations,
In the noise confusion of life keep peace with your soul.
With all its sham, drudgery, and broken dreams,
It is still a beautiful world.
Be cheerful.
Strive to be happy.*

From the desiderata by Max Ehrman

Joint Meeting for Worship Arran and Ayrshire Meetings.

Ayrshire Meeting has established what we are calling Wild Card Sunday. Where there is a fifth Sunday in the month, we have decided to use it to visit other Meetings. We usually do this on an individual basis and then if Friends want to just share the experience at the next Sunday after when formal MFW finishes.

We decided to do something different on the last Sunday in June and visit as a Meeting to our neighbouring Meeting on Arran. Since this required quite a bit of travelling and organising as well as having a fixed date not everyone who wanted could join us on Arran. We did however manage to set up a Zoom link so Friends from both meetings and other individuals who sometimes join us were able to join also.

So, 5 Friends from Ayrshire travelled to Ardrossan on Sunday morning for the ferry to Arran. We were met at the terminal by one of the Arran Friends

We then had a short walk to the venue where another Friend was setting up.

In all we then we had 7 Friends at the venue and a further 4 online.

The venue was very pleasant and calm the Zoom worked well and we had a very lovely MFW. Arran Friends provided a nice lunch for us. We would have liked to spend longer with them, but we needed to be mindful of ferries and onward travel.

For Ayrshire Friends we had the added benefits of time in cars and ferries together.

We thank Arran Friends for their hospitality and all the efforts they went to help make this the lovely experience it was. We do intend repeating the experience and not necessarily waiting for a fifth Sunday. We might try another whole Meeting Road trip to another Meeting on another fifth Sunday. Invitations gratefully received.

Ayrshire Friends.

Mauchline Holy Fair

Thousands flock each May to Mauchline's one-day Holy Fair. This year, Ayrshire Quakers had a go at hiring one of the 60-or-so street stalls there. The result surpassed expectations, as meeting clerk Brenda Dalton explains :

In May each year the Ayrshire village of Mauchline holds a modern iteration of the Holy Fair held in the town in previous centuries. The day is filled with music, art and poetry with a particular emphasis on the life and work of Robert Burns who lived and completed much of his work in the village. An integral part of the Holy Fair is the many street stalls in the old lanes in the centre of the village which people enjoy meandering through.

This year Ayrshire meeting decided to place an advert in the event programme sharing the details of our weekly meetings to let those attending the fair know that we are here. This got us thinking about having an actual presence on the day. What could we do as Quakers that could be meaningful? We decided to take one of the stalls and share our testimony to sustainability through offering young children an opportunity to grow a plant.

Six Friends took along biodegradable plant pots, compost and sunflowers and invited children to plant a seed in a pot, take it home to care for and watch it grow into a sunflower. When asked we were able explain why we were offering seeds, that we believe God plants seeds of love in everyone and that as the seeds grow in us they help us look after the world and each other. We also had Quaker leaflets on offer and displayed posters that gave information on our meeting.

As we set up the stall in the early morning there was a bit of trepidation. Were people just going to walk on past this odd stall from a group called Quakers? Our stall did look rather plain in comparison with the others surrounding it which were packed with baking produce, jewellery and crafts, and the obligatory tombolas and bottle stalls. Our stall consisted only of a table cloth with rows of brown paper pots and a selection of leaflets. What did uphold us however was being together as Friends as we set up our stall and waited expectantly as the crowds began to filter through.

Many children came to our stall keen to plant a seed and take it away to nurture and grow. Of course we were also happy to give them to some young at heart adults too, along with packets of flower and vegetable seeds we had also brought along. Some people stopped to ask who we were and what we believed in, taking away leaflets to read through after having a chat with us.

The day flew by and really surpassed all of our expectations. We did not know if anyone would stop at our stall and whether our participation would be viewed as out of place amongst the many for-profit enterprises. All of our 60 seedling pots were soon taken and it is uplifting to think of the many sunflowers being grown by children in their homes. It was also an opportunity for our Meeting to come together to live out our Quaker values in a practical way within our community and we hope we may be able to do something similar again in the future.

SW Cluster Meeting – Castle Douglas, Dumfries and Wigtown

A Well- Attended and Enjoyable Cluster Meeting

Upwards of sixteen friends from Castle Douglas, Wigtown and Dumfries Meetings gathered in the Bowlers' Hall, Castle Douglas on the fifth Sunday in June, for the most recent meeting of the South West Cluster. Also included were two visitors, former members of Dumfries Meeting, who happened to be holidaying in the area.

Coming from an habitually silent meeting, I was pleased to hear some thoughtful ministry, most of which, if I remember rightly, centred on the word 'cheerful', as in "Walk cheerfullyetc". How can we be cheerful in the face of so much worldwide suffering? Should we even be expressing joy, when so many of our fellows have absolutely nothing to be cheerful about? Conversations over coffee picked up on this theme.

It also transpired that 30th June was the very day which saw the birth of Dumfries Meeting, 50 years ago.

Something at least to be thankful for.

A few friends had brought picnics, and stayed on to catch up, and/or get to know each other, over their lunch.

It is intended that the cluster group will endeavour to meet each fifth Sunday - the next one being September 29th. This cluster group is important to us in the south-west, and may well become even more so as the future of Quakers in Scotland continues to unfold.

Glasgow

Advance Notice Mugdock Shared Picnic

Sunday 28th August, 11.00 – 14.00

This year, Glasgow Quakers' Meeting for Worship at Mugdock Theatre will be followed by the usual shared picnic in a shaded clearing in the grounds of the country park. There are plans to include an informal 'ceilidh', where we'll be encouraging Friends of all ages to bring along not just something nice to eat, but a wee song, story or poem they'd be happy to share!

Details of facilities, access, lifts, ideas for food etc. to follow.

Pastoral Care Team

Quaker Walks

The next dates are Saturday 3rd and 31st August.

On 6th July we proposed to do alternative walks from Rowardennan. The fitter people climbed Ben Lomond while others stayed on a lower level walk.

For further information contact Daphne Wassermann.

To get on the mailing list contact Daphne Wassermann - daphne@aquarius1000.plus.com

Film Theatre

Hi, I am setting up a whatsapp group for anyone interested in joining a Quaker group to attend GFT films. I will circulate the group when I see an interesting film and ask if anyone else wants to attend that particular film. Please let me know if (in general, though depending on the particular film on offer), you would be interested.

In Friendship

John Sillince sillincejohn@yahoo.co.uk



And certainly not last . . .

Bronwen and husband from Islay & Jura Meeting winning medals at the Mokrun. It must be all that fresh air Bronwen.

Congratulations.

Health and Safety for Local meetings

1. Meetings who hire rooms do not need a H and S policy as this is the responsibility of the building/room owners. However clerks and elders should ensure that they are aware of who to contact in an emergency and follow local H and S policy
2. it is good practice for all who deal with food and food service beyond tea and biscuits should have a food handling certificate

<https://www.glasgowclyde.ac.uk/courses/94815-rehis-elementary-food-hygiene-online/5088>

<https://www.dumgal.ac.uk/course/rehis-elementary-food-hygiene-online/>

<https://dundeeandangus.ac.uk/courses/ccroef23-x-1da/>

<https://www.westcollegescotland.ac.uk/business/professional-development/hospitality-business-courses/rehis-elementary-food-hygiene/>

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Area Meeting

17th August West Cluster: Ayrshire, Argyll, Arran, Islay&Jura, Mull &Iona
5th October East Cluster Dunblane and Lanark

General Meeting dates

These will be blended (hybrid) meetings.

14 Sept 2024 North
9 Nov 2024 East
2025 8 March South East



Hold in the Light

In these very difficult times our healing ministry has never been more important.

How much time do you set aside in the Light to hold friends, neighbours and your Meeting, and others. Do not feel you cannot make a difference. It takes only 25 of us, five minutes before Meeting, to create more peace in the world. During WW2, Winston Churchill set up one minute for peace at 9pm each evening.

There is a meeting of Friends Fellowship of Healing on first Monday of each Month at 7.30pm. Contact nicola.james53@gmail.com to add names.

West Scotland Quaker News is published by West Scotland Area Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), 38 Elmbank Crescent, Glasgow G2 4PS. Telephone 0141 248 84 93

The opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of individuals, They do not necessarily present the views of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). The deadline for contributions for the next issue is 15th September 2024.

Send articles in Word format, of no more than 1000 words, to the editor at margaret.roy@btinternet.com.

Helpers for this issue are Laura McMurtie and Edie Phoenix, and of course our proof reader Ruth Bacon. We are still looking for a distribution editor who will deal with sending out the hard copies.

