

wsqn

- connecting local meetings



August 2021

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Frontispiece – azelias in Dawyke Botanic Gardens

Spiritual Revelation

An extract from Islam by Karen Armstrong

The Quran was revealed to Muhammad verse by verse, *surah by surah* during the next twenty one years, often in response to a crisis or a question that had arisen in the little community of the faithful. The revelations were painful to Muhammad, who used to say: 'Never once did I receive a revelation, without thinking that my soul had been torn away from me.' In the early days, the impact was so frightening that his whole body was convulsed, he would often sweat profusely, even on a cool day, experience a great heaviness, or hear strange sounds and voices. In purely secular terms, we could say that Muhammad had perceived the great problems confronting his people at a deeper level than most of his contemporaries, and that as he 'listened' to events, he had to delve deeply and painfully into his inner being to find a solution that was not only politically viable but spiritually illuminating. He was also creating a new literary form and a masterpiece of Arab prose and poetry. Many of the first believers were converted by the sheer beauty of the Quran, which resonated with their deepest aspirations, cutting through their intellectual preconceptions in the manner of great art, and inspiring them, at a level more profound than the cerebral, to alter their whole way of life.

Was it not Margaret Fell who say that when the Spirit moved it tore you apart?

QF&P 19.44

As with any other testimony, there was always the danger of degenerating into legalism, a preoccupation with outward detail rather than the inner springs of action. Late in her life, Margaret Fox (Fell) urged Friends to stand fast in that liberty wherein Christ hath made us free. (Gal 5..1)

QF&P 19.61

The Truth is one and the same always, and though ages and generations pass away, and one generation goes and another comes, yet the word and power and spirit of the living God endures for ever, and is the same and never changes.

West Scotland Area Meeting, Saturday 24th July

This is an important meeting to discern the future of Glasgow Meeting House so it is hoped that members from all over the Area Meeting will attend. The Meeting House is owned by Area Meeting and is part of our financial commitment. Whilst the complete papers for the meeting will have been circulated to you, below is the gist presented by the *Glasgow LM Property Committee and Meeting House Development Group June 2021*

1. Report on the Future of Glasgow Meeting House July 2021 – the full report has already been distributed and can also be found on a Google Docs folder along with other relevant reports:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1r8esfCqX76KZMnl4wenCGevEnXw7g6DV?usp=sharing>.

Extract from the above report:

Discernment

The purpose of the meeting on July 24th is to update Friends on the options which are available following the recent changes, rather than to make a final decision. The 5-year strategy mentioned above proposes a period of reflection as we get used to being in the building again, while carrying out some refurbishment. It then suggests a meeting in mid-late 2022 (although Trustees suggest March 2022) at which a final decision would be discerned. It appears that the options which might be open to us include:

- a) To remain in the building, continuing with the decoration and refurbishment, which could include some energy performance measures, depending on the costs of such measures, although the question of the roof expenditure and work on the top floor may be discerned at a later stage,
- b) As but plan to carry out major improvements in the medium term, for example, a new lift and remodelling the meeting room and the entrance hall and to raise funds for this over a period of 3-4 years,
- c) To sell the building and move into rented accommodation (possibly with a view to taking stock for the future).

We recognise that these issues have been discussed before on several occasions by Glasgow Friends. Although re-consideration of an issue may be justified where the situation has changed (as now), great care is needed in revisiting decisions which have been made through full discernment. Those decisions should not be undermined by piecemeal changes which undermine the leading and vision. We may need to re-think, but this must be done for the whole issue, with proper time and information given. It may be useful to remind Friends that discernment may involve a period of waiting until we have unanimity (which is the rationale for the 5-year strategy), but that waiting does not mean doing nothing, rather being open to further insights as they might arise. *Quaker faith & practice* 3.05 and 3.06 give helpful guidance.

Report from Area Meeting Monday 7th June by Zoom

Kate Gulliver, Ayrshire

It was a glorious, sunny evening but still 27 people representing 10 of our 12 local meetings joined the meeting, our Meeting for Worship for Church Affairs for the Area Meeting AM. It is encouraging to see new faces at these meetings and to feel part of a gathered community.

The agenda was quite long, but the clerk had prepared us well with detailed draft minutes to ensure we could move smoothly and efficiently through the business. There were several items of routine business, many of which we were able to accept on draft minutes. I was pleased we were able to agree our commitment towards the funding for the Parliamentary Engagement Officer for the next three years. This is such a valuable post ensuring our connection and Quaker input into matters being considered by the Scottish Government.

There was positive news for the future with confirmation that the venue has been booked for the West Coast Friends Gathering in March 2022. This will be at the Youth Hostel in Crianlarich on 11th to 13th March. More details will be circulated later in the year.

We were reminded of the dates of this year's Yearly Meeting Gathering which will be an online event spread over three weeks. There will be lots of opportunities to join discussions, hear talks and attend preparatory sessions leading up to the main business sessions to be held over two weekends 30th July to 1st August and 6th to 8th August. It will be interesting to see how Friends engage with this innovative arrangement and whether it enables more Friends to participate than could attend an actual physical event. Will we be having more blended events in the future to enable greater accessibility and inclusion? I hope so.

West Scotland Area Meeting is trying its first blended area meeting on Saturday 21st August! The August meeting is usually a wonderful day trip to Argyll, but due to current circumstances we agreed to try a blended meeting from Stair Community Centre, which is where Ayrshire hold their Sunday worship. The Centre has several rooms, Wi-Fi and video conferencing equipment and car parking but it doesn't have a hearing loop. The main meeting space can provide socially distanced seating for 30+ people. It is 15 minutes from both Ayr and Auchinleck stations so convenient for travelling up from Dumfries and down from Glasgow. We hope car sharing will be permitted by then and we can offer lifts to and from the stations.

There will be a special area meeting before then on 24th July to hear about and consider the latest situation regarding Glasgow Meeting House. There have been changes and developments so fresh consideration of the property needs to be made. Glasgow Meeting will be discussing the matter on 4th July and the special area meeting on 24th July will enable all Friends in the area meeting to be involved and understand the situation. A paper will be circulated in advance.

We also heard of the activities of the COP26 Hub Group and of how they hope to utilise the meeting house during the event and how we can offer accommodation for visitors via the *Human hotel* system. Check out the website for further information: www.quakerscotland.org/cop26

It was a good meeting and finished on time, so we were able to get out and enjoy more of the evening sunshine. Thank you to the Clerks.

I hope to see you on screen on 24th July and look forward to seeing some of you in person in August 😊

Report on Meeting for Sufferings held 10.4.21

Barbara Robinson, Glasgow

Meeting for Sufferings representative for WSAM

21.66 Reading from Jocelyn Burrell, 1989

Sometimes religion appears to be presented as offering easy cures for pain: have faith and God will mend your hurts; reach out to God and your woundedness will be healed. The Beatitude 'Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted' can be interpreted this way too, but the Latin root of the word 'comfort' means 'with strength' rather than 'at ease'. The Beatitude is not promising to take away our pain; indeed the inference is that the pain will remain with us. It does promise that God will cherish us and our wound, and help us draw a blessing from our distressed state.

This MfS was charged in a way I hadn't experienced before. For myself a sense of finality was present as it was going to be the last meeting of my 6 year role as representative for WSAM. But there was also a sense that big changes are potentially happening which will require us to be alert to how these might impact on our local meetings and to the organisation of our Area Meeting. A stronger way to communicate between all parts of our organisation would be of great benefit to us. Incorporating information coming from Friend's House in our discussion groups could be a way to understand more why change needs to happen and being a part of the discerning process could bring us closer to the heart of the current Britain Yearly Meeting and its decision making.

After covering the standing items we heard from the trustees about the action they are taking following the minute of December 2020 which committed us to become an anti-racist 'church'.

Their second item concerned the steps they are taking to connect the work of area meeting trustees with that of BYM trustees in a relationship of support. And the third item relates to the issue of simplification of our structures.

The trustees have also commissioned a paper looking at the complex relationship between Quakers and slavery as a first step in engaging with the issue of possibly renaming the William Penn room at Friend's house. We heard that there are reports of racism experienced by staff and others within

our Religious Society of Friends and were informed that trustees will be attending anti-racism training. This was a timely reminder how important it is to recognise that we all have work to do both within our meetings and within each of us inside ourselves.

The next concern was brought by Staffordshire and North West London Area Meetings seeking the discernment of the wider body of Friends on the issues of Assisted Dying. Margaret Bryan had referred to this as the principal item for consideration.

We focused our discernment on three questions:

What can we say as Quakers about this issue?

Where does this sit in our testimonies to truth, peace, equality; or in our view of life itself?

Can we unite with and/or work with others in supporting those for whom this is a matter of deepest concern?

I don't think I was alone in feeling that the contributions from representatives made this meeting for sufferings one of the most powerful. We had come together in responding to a difficult issue with each response being personal and often inspired by painful experience. One representative pointed out that it was not unlike other big decisions in Quaker history. Someone raised the question 'who owns my body?' 'Should our bodies now be controlled by the medical profession?' asked another. 'We have to be open to change' said another Friend, just as the Spirit moves through society and the Society, 'Suicide used to be a sin'. One Friend said that he did support 'fumbling steps to change the law'. He spoke about grieving with a friend, 'we should allow people to choose.' I personally was most moved by a retired palliative care nurse who spoke from long experience and brought several questions to light in particular 'how much agency do we have?' She suggested as Quakers we tend to put our attention and energy into all areas of living while avoiding the issue of dying. Not reaching unity on this issue wasn't a failure, noted a BYM trustee. It was a strength to be able to hold contradictions. 'We allow difficult conversations to happen,' she said.

The final piece of work was in response to a paper from BYM trustees on a process for simplifying Quaker structures. Three central functions needed to be reassessed from core principles: setting a spiritual direction (which is an individual and ongoing concern for every Friend within the Society...) ; establishing strategic priorities and allocating resources; and ensuring that work is carried out effectively. As Nim Njuguna wrote in The Friend (21 May 21) 'to transform our Society and Meetings, we must re-invent ourselves for the next era' which will require slow patient work, with the potential that creative decisions can draw new blessings from the challenges before us.

Ed Tyler will be attending the last MfS of this triennium next week and will be reporting back on the continuing conversation. My time as your representative

has been mixed as health issues have dogged my last three years but it has nevertheless been a wonderful learning experience and I feel enormously grateful to have been given this opportunity to expand my understanding of our unique organisation.

Nominations can foster spiritual growth.

Extract from leaflet on Nominations. Produced in April 2013 by Quaker Life. For more copies of this leaflet please contact the Quaker Life team at qladmin@quaker.org.uk or call 020 7663 1143

A nominations committee seeks to discern spiritual gifts, matching them with roles for the benefit of the individual and the community. It might search out ways in which an individual could grow, by suggesting to them a role that will develop their skills and understandings rather than giving it to someone who already has the skills. We don't automatically put the seasoned peace campaigner on the peace committee; we might ask them to serve on the children's committee, where they and the young people may learn from each other about different ways of practical peace-making.

What is a nominations Committee? How do they work?

Here are the top 10 tips from a brochure explaining the role

Top Tips for Nominations

1. Nominations is the quiet heart of building the framework of your Quaker community – enjoy being involved.
2. It is about practising prayerful discernment: of people's names for a particular role and of the ongoing needs of the community.
3. It is about encouraging people to grow, by giving them opportunities to offer service in new ways that will nourish them and enrich the community. It is not about finding people to do the jobs!
4. It is about putting our testimonies into practice, e.g. practising equality... how can we include everyone...young people, newer Friends, people with disabilities?
5. It is about avoiding making assumptions – they can't possibly be asked – they're too busy/old/sick/etc. Ask, don't assume!
6. It is about remembering not to overburden Friends – we want them to flourish, not flounder.
7. It is about listening and sensitivity – to others on your committee, your meeting and individuals you approach.
8. It is about explaining your work to others and asking for prayerful upholding by your meeting; of you and the people appointed to roles.
9. It is about keeping necessary records.
10. It is about taking a role back to your appointing body if you cannot find anyone who is prepared to be nominated for it.

It is about putting love into action and finding the divine in a well-founded Quaker process.

Are you called to serve?

Your community is made up of people of many different talents and outlooks, each valued as an integral part like the hues of a rainbow. A functioning community is made up of a diverse group of people. Where would you like to fit in?

Some are unaware of their uniqueness unless it is pointed out to them. That is the job of NOMS – to expose the hidden depths and open opportunities. We need a little help.

Giving service is central to how Quakers run when we do not have an established clergy. It is part of our offering.

Fill in the form below and hand it to the NOMS representative in your Meeting.

Name Local Meeting

.....

Telephone email

.....

Address

.....

Post code

Please list any posts of interest to you and tell us your skills and interests. If you are in a post at present, do you wish to serve a further term?

[As West Scotland Area Meeting is a registered charity we are obliged to appoint only members to certain executive roles (e.g. Treasurers, Trustees, etc). There are many roles that attenders can carry out and are of great value to our work and witness. It is important to know this as some Friends are unaware of why some posts are offered only to recorded members.]

You can return forms directly to Gill Reid , clerk to Nomination Committee at 57 Ottoline Drive, Troon, KA10 7AN

Introducing our new development worker – Zoe Prosser

Informal:

Hello Friends! My name is Zoe Prosser and I am the new Local Development Worker for Scotland. I have been a Quaker for most of my life, attending meetings from the age of two and coming into membership when I was 19 (in 1999).

For the last 4 years I have worked for Britain Yearly Meeting. My role had a particular focus on Yearly Meeting, nominations and simplifying some of our processes.

My previous jobs have been in the heritage, arts and community sector. I worked to develop community cohesion in diverse communities, on support for fully inclusive events, on arts and theatre work in and with schools, on local events for the 2012 Olympic Games and as interpretation officer for a heritage lottery funded redevelopment of a C17th historic house.

I have also worked as a support worker for people with disabilities, sensory impairments and learning difficulties (in the community and for Graeae Theatre Company). I am trained in audio description of art and theatre for blind and partially sighted people.

I am a mum of two small people (8 year old Suzy and 5 year old Ella). From the end of July (after the end of the English Summer term) we will be based in East Lothian in a small shared community made up of family, friends and cats.

My working hours will be 8am-3pm, with evening and weekend work as needed.

Formal:

Zoe Prosser has been a Quaker for most of her life, attending meetings from the age of two and coming into membership at 19.

For the last 4 years she has worked for Britain Yearly Meeting, with a particular focus on Yearly Meeting, nominations and simplification.

Zoe's previous jobs have been in the heritage, arts and community sector. She worked to develop community cohesion in diverse communities, on support for fully inclusive events, on arts and theatre work in and with schools, on local events for the 2012 Olympic Games and as interpretation officer for a heritage lottery funded redevelopment of a C17th historic house.

She has also worked as a support worker for people with disabilities, sensory impairments and learning difficulties (in the community and for Graeae Theatre Company). Zoe has combined her passion for art, theatre and access through

her voluntary work as an audio describer of art and theatre for blind and partially sighted people.

In recent years much of her time has been taken up by being a mother to her two primary aged children. From the end of July Zoe will be based in East Lothian in a small shared community made up of family, friends and cats.

Zoe's working hours will be 8am-3pm, with evening and weekend work as needed.

Book of Discipline Revision Committee update for SESAME – May/ June 2021

Mary Woodward

Having been appointed by Britain Yearly Meeting to attend Finland Yearly Meeting, I was unable to take part in the most recent BDRC committee meeting, as both events took place during the last weekend in April. Thanks to our practice of appointing buddies for those who are unable to be present at our meetings, I was able to get a good understanding of how things had gone.

I was delighted to learn that Juliette Chandler, another younger Friend, was appointed to the committee at April's Meeting for Sufferings. She will join Pearl and Marcie in their 'committee buddy bubble' with Jess and Anya, who will ensure that she very soon feels part of us.

The main business was the consideration of two papers which were presented for comment and questions - one was from the Nominations task group and the other from the Discernment task group of which I'm a part. I was sorry to miss seeing how papers that a small group has worked on are dealt with in a larger group situation – but will have many more opportunities to see this when others' papers are brought to future meetings.

Here's part of the minute about our paper:

We are profoundly grateful for the text that the Discernment group have brought us which provides an insightful and clear introduction to Quaker discernment. We are clear that there should be a substantive piece on discernment in the Book of Discipline, as part of providing the core knowledge that we must have to 'do Quaker' in Britain. Discernment is at the core of our Quaker way and this should be reflected in the content of this section and the way that it is presented.

We ask the group to take on the comments from Friends during our meeting to update their draft and provide us with a version we could consider final for now.

It's good to know that our paper was well-received! We've already begun combining into one text the two papers we presented, and thinking how to take on board the comments, which include "there needs to be more about waiting". We have another zoom session at the beginning of June.

We had a committee ‘check in’ meeting May, in which representatives of the task groups reported how their work was going and any problems or questions that had arisen. One of the challenges we face is *to what degree can we assume that the reader has read all or any of the preceding material in the Book?* Given that many people prefer to dip into things rather than read consecutively, how much do we repeat things [e.g. explaining discernment] in however many sections they appear, or do we simply say everything once, and hope people can find it when they need to? The answer to this question will materially affect what and how we write! One Friend coined a lovely phrase - *the encyclopaedic merry-go-round* - to describe the cross-referencing confusion that could result from trying to link everything to everything else: not too difficult in an electronic version of the Book, but a nightmare to create in hard copy.

We need continually to consider where we go next, and in small groups we talked about whether we thought we should work on more topics or start considering some of our key questions. It was good to talk in a small group which included at least one committee member I don’t know particularly well, and interesting that we were divided – some for topics, some for questions, and some for a mixture of both. Fortunately we didn’t have to decide, merely feed back to the clerks for their deliberations.

The Communicating with Friends group has a meeting in early June, when among other things we’ll discuss how to make our willingness to speak about our work known as widely as possible. We’ve visited large and small Meetings in England, Scotland, and Wales, but many people aren’t aware of our work and the part they can play in it. I recently wrote a report on our ‘gigs so far’ for our next committee meeting – on paper it doesn’t sound as though we’ve done a great deal – nine visits so far this year, and another six already booked for later in the year – but that’s before you start to factor in the planning, organisation, and delivery of each gig!

Two of our future gigs are [Covid permitting] ‘in person’ rather than via Zoom. This raises many new questions about time, cost, and personnel: it’s expensive if I offer to do a gig in Cornwall – but what if there’s no-one living nearer who is willing and able to do it? What if we have six gigs booked for the same area in a short period – we can’t expect the same people to do them all. How many gigs is it reasonable to expect to be able to do in, for example, a month? This will be something the committee as a whole has to consider as we hope we are moving towards being able to travel more widely – doing the gigs in person is good, but it’s also great to Zoom in with a group of committee members who have widely-differing personal and Quaker experience to contribute to the sessions.

And then there’s the BDRC’s involvement in Yearly Meeting Gathering – blessedly not part of my brief! More information will be widely available soon, but I can reveal that we will be doing three sessions – one ‘basic introduction

to the Book and our work', one 'next steps' one, and one for Welsh speakers to consider what Welsh language material might be included in the new Book.

Our next full committee meeting is half a day in mid-June and there's a social get-together at the end of June. We have a full committee weekend in early July – and of course the small group work continues...

The key messages from our April committee meeting are:

We have been considering Quaker discernment and nominations in detail, producing draft text and exploring the issues raised. Work on these topics is helping us to understand different ways to split up our core and supplementary material. We are asking questions like: what does every British Quaker need to know to join in with our community processes?

We continue to develop the core principles of our work. This includes questions about the sources we use for quotations, the vocabulary we use, and how we make the final version as accessible as possible.

We appreciate the support and upholding we are receiving. The size of the task and the need to work remotely can be daunting! We welcome more suggestions of things to include, especially images, diagrams, or videos on discernment, nominations, and other topics. We are also pleased to receive invitations to speak to local or area meetings and other Quaker groups, and will be running sessions at Britain Yearly Meeting - details to follow.

Please do continue to uphold us and the work we're doing on your behalf. Please also note the invitation to contribute made in the last part of the key messages. Send your contributions to bdrc@quaker.org.uk. Thank you in advance, Friends!

Make a Book of Discipline in an hour

Read through the following questions and notice what stands out to you. Where is the life of your response? Follow your sense of energy and enjoyment to create a version of the 'Book of Discipline' that expresses something of what it means to you. You can either think about what our current book of discipline means to you, or imagine what you would like the revised book of discipline to be.

You could use words, pictures, collage, sculpture or something else. If you try out a new way of working you will open up a different area of your brain.

Questions:

What's the most important thing for you about being a Quaker?

If you had to tell someone three things about being a Quaker what would they be?

Where do you see yourself reflected in *Quaker faith & practice*?

What is the most important thing you would want to add to *Quaker faith & practice*?

If the book of discipline was a painting what kind of a painting would it be?
If the book of discipline was an app what kind of an app would it be?
If the book of discipline was a piece of music what kind of music would it be?
If the book of discipline was a _____ what kind of a _____ would it be?
What do you love about *Quaker faith & practice*?
What don't you like about *Quaker faith & practice*?

If you could only choose three passages from *Quaker faith & practice* to take forward in the revision process what would they be?

QUAKER CONCERNS

Scottish Quaker Criminal Justice Network

Restorative justice and us

Elizabeth Allen, East Lothian

As infantile babbles were shaped into words and phrases, how long was it before you added, "It wasn't me, it was him!" to your vocabulary? We are born into a culture of blame and we quickly learn to avoid it, as punishment for the guilty party usually ensues. But is punishment an essential element of justice?

As Quakers we seek to peace build and over the years we have developed many practices, which help. At a recent meeting of the Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network, we discussed the place of restorative justice in our society. We have much to learn from this justice, which puts the people involved in the offence at its centre, through creating a safe space for them to speak truthfully about their experience and listen deeply to one another about what happened and its consequences. Trust is a key element of the process and during the sessions the people involved need to feel part of the same community. In this non-adversarial atmosphere the steps on the journey to making amends can be explored. We may never find ourselves taking part in formal restorative practices but can we learn from the principles, which underpin them?

It strikes me that there is spiritual food for thought here for all of us individually and collectively in our local meetings. In essence this is about growing up and taking responsibility for our actions and their consequences. But the real spiritual transformation comes when we practice this truthful way of relating to each other in our families, our Quaker Meetings, our workplaces, until it become part of our mindset and our way of living. If we did this from early childhood, what would life be like?

Every interaction we have with others can transform or it can reinforce what we have always done. Changing our ways is not easy and it can be scary, which is why we tend to surround ourselves with those who think and behave like us. But to have those encounters, which can transform, we need to meet

and listen to those who are not like us - the 'other'. People who participate in the deep listening open themselves for significant transformation.

Like many of you I've read Ben Pink Dandelion's 2014 Swarthmore Lecture, 'Open to Transformation: Being Quaker'. I'm energized by transforming everyday things and I'm inspired and challenged by the prospect of personal spiritual transformation but am I truly open to it?

Our gathered Quaker meetings for worship are safe spaces in which we are upheld and we uphold one another. They give us comfort. But sometimes the ministry and our nagging thoughts are far from comfortable. When we listen deeply, what we hear might push us to act and challenge us. I find it is my discomfort that opens me for transformation.

THE HORNS OF A DILEMMA

Abdul Rauf was part of a grooming gang who targeted 47 girls some as young as 13.

He and two others in the gang were to be deported back to Pakistan after serving their prison sentence. Rauf served six years and is now free. Out shopping locally in Rochdale he was able to meet his victims. One stated she was never so scared in all her life.

What is justice here? What does love require of us?

Margaret Roy

Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends Minute on Prison Abolition

The following was approved by Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends in 1981 (Minute 93). We approve the following Statement on Friends Response to Crime: Friends, partly through their own experiences in the prisons of the seventeenth century, became concerned about the treatment of the accused or convicted. Friends witnessed to their concern for the Divine Spirit in humans by seeing prisons as an alternative to corporal or capital punishment. Subsequently, they worked for reform of these prisons. Today, Friends are becoming aware that prisons are a destructive and expensive failure as a response to crime. We are, therefore, turning our efforts to reform prisons to efforts to replace them with non-punitive, life-affirming and reconciling responses. The prison system is both a cause and a result of violence and social injustice. Throughout history, the majority of prisoners have been the powerless and the oppressed. We are increasingly clear that the imprisonment of human beings, like their enslavement, is inherently immoral and is as destructive to the cagers as the caged. The challenge before us is to use alternatives based on economic and social justice and on the fulfilment of human needs. Some alternatives to prisons have already been developed and more are needed to bring about reconciliation and healing within the community. Friends need to seek out, develop and support such programs. At the same time, we need to foster awareness in ourselves and others of the roots of crime and violence in society to ensure that our lives do not unintentionally reinforce these evils. Prison abolition is both a process and a long-term goal. In the interim, there is a great need for Friends to reach out to and to support all those affected: guards, prisoners, victims and families. We recognize a need for restraint of those few who are exhibiting dangerous behaviour. The kind of restraint used and the help offered during this time must reflect our concern for that of God in every person.

Violence against Women

April 2021 Women, Peace and Security Monitor

This is part of a report produced by WILPF monitoring the UN Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Read the full report on WILPF web site.

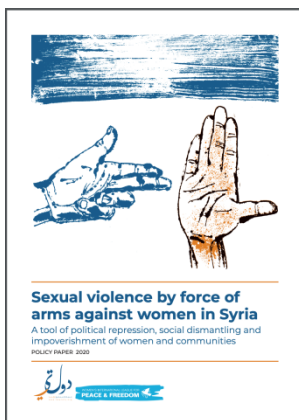
“A focus on protecting women and girls and addressing rights violations during conflict and humanitarian settings alone is insufficient. The roots of women’s victimisation during armed conflict lie in structural and gender inequality that existed before the conflict.” [UNSCR 1325 at 20 Years Report](#), pg. 30

The annual Security Council open debate on sexual violence in conflict was held on 14 April 2021, under the presidency of Viet Nam. The open debate focused on examining the challenges in preventing and responding to sexual violence in conflict, particularly on services and support for survivors of violence.

As in previous years, [WILPF monitored the debate](#) focusing on key themes, including prevention, arms proliferation, accountability mechanisms, and policies and programmes to support survivors.

Here are some special features. You can download these from the website in English or Arabic.

IN SOUTH SUDAN Ms. Caroline Atim, Executive Director of the South Sudan Women with Disabilities Network, briefed the Council on gender-based violence facing women and girls in South Sudan, particularly those with disabilities. She urged all actors to ensure that rights, inclusion and accessibility for women and girls with disabilities are at the heart of all efforts to prevent and respond to GBV.



Sexual violence by force of arms against women in Syria

This policy brief presents a feminist approach to understanding sexual violence and weapons in Syria, based on gendered analysis. It is a product of collaboration between Dawlaty and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), as well as extensive and continuous coordination with Syrian feminist and women-led partner organisations working in Syria and in neighbouring countries to achieve justice within society.

UNSCR 1325 at 20 Years: Perspectives of Feminist Peace Activists and Civil Society

The annual open debate on sexual violence in conflict is one of two annual debates under the theme of women, peace and security at the Security Council. In October 2020, WILPF published a report on 20 years of WPS implementation, showcasing the perspectives of our global network of feminist peace activists



The Correlation Between the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Iraq and Rates of Violence Against Women

As a result of rapid proliferation, small arms and light weapons (SALW) are now among the primary weapons used in conflicts, interpersonal violence and criminal activity around the world. This report seeks to understand and highlight the impact on women of the proliferation of firearms in Iraq, where intimate partner violence is common yet poorly recorded or examined. Six researchers focused on collecting information from a range of stakeholders in Iraq and KRI.

There are a number of videos available on line:

CSW65 Parallel Event: It is Not About Counting Women - But Making Women Count

Generation Equality Forum Special Session: Protection of Women Human Rights Defenders, an Imperative for the Achievement of Equality

WILPF's Women, Peace and Security programme promotes conflict prevention, and the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in all efforts to create and maintain international peace and security.

For more about our work, go to our [website](#), follow us on [Twitter](#), and [subscribe](#) to WILPF's other newsletters!

Climate Change

Combining two? Look out for information on activities during Cop26 on the effect on women of the economic system of growth that leads to the inequalities in wealth distribution. What does consumerism lead to? A conference is planned for 6th November and a vigil of Thursdays in Black.

JONATHON PORRITT talks on 'Population growth and the climate emergency: ensuring a just transition' Tuesday 27th July 16.30 – 17.30 To book for this talk, which is part of Yearly Meeting Gathering, you must register online at www.quaker.org.uk/ym

Sanctuary Everywhere to Loving Earth: picking up the threads between migration, climate change and war.

Susan Mitchell, Dunblane

This is a submission to Our Stories

I've always liked making things and over the winter months during lock-down the horizontal surfaces in our house became covered with all kinds of stuff – fabrics, wool, glue, paint and card. Out of the mess emerged some butterflies, bears and people chains! They have all gone their different ways – an influence for good, I hope.

I had got involved with 'craftivism'; first with Sanctuary Everywhere and then with the [Loving Earth Project](#). The LEP is a way of showing care for the planet we love and an important aspect of the work is the statement with each panel which addresses key questions: ***What or whom do you love that's in danger from environmental breakdown? How do you contribute to the threat and what can you do about it? What's the tiniest thing that you could do that would make a difference? What's the most radical thing that you could do? As I reflected on these questions I felt that one big issue not being widely talked about was the contribution of the military to greenhouse gas emissions. Who was headlining this and why did I not know about it? I needed to find out.***

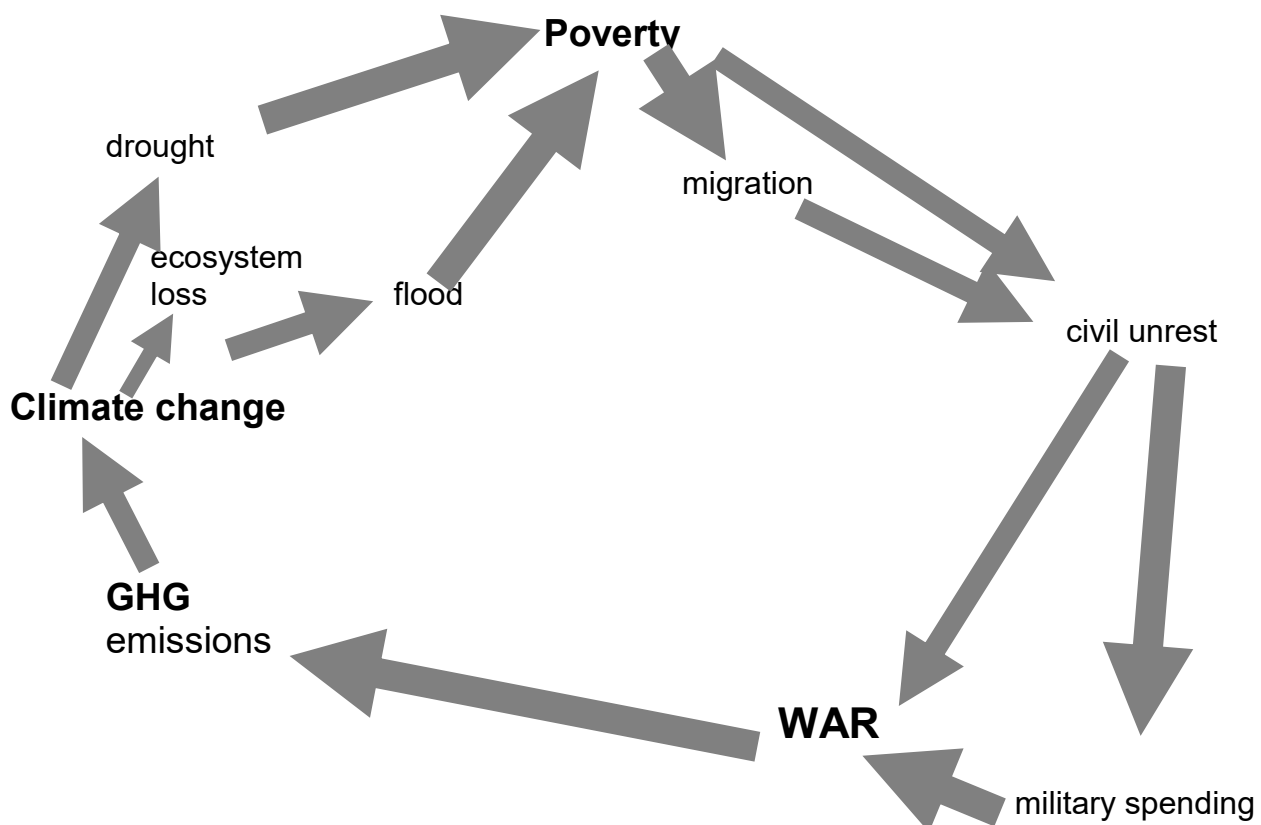
Dr Stuart Parkinson from Scientists for Social Responsibility, writes in '[The Carbon boot-print of the military](#)' about the direct and indirect effects of military activities and how emissions produced by the military are hard to quantify. The Paris Agreement in 2015 left the inclusion of military GHG to the discretion of individual nations for inclusion in their targets and although the UK does include them, many countries do not. (Emissions produced by the arms industry are included.) Global military emissions, including the arms industry, are estimated to be of the order of 6%, that's more than civil aviation at 5%, BUT the 6% does not include emissions from the indirect effects – fire, deforestation, rebuilding, healthcare etc. - nor the loss and damage caused – so the total may be nearer 10%.

What is the cost of all of this – not just financial - but also the diversion of intellectual resources? Spending should be on the real threats – climate change and pandemics – not on wars. Yet in the middle of a pandemic eye-watering sums are spent on weapons. In 2020 global military spending rose by

2.6% to almost \$2 trillion and the UK announced an *increase* in military spending. ICAN reports that “\$72.6 billion is how much nine nuclear armed countries spent on their nuclear weapons as the pandemic spread in 2020 and a global treaty banning nuclear weapons took full effect. The report “[Complicit: 2020 Global Nuclear Weapons Spending](#)” details the spending of these nine countries on their arsenals, the companies that profited, and the lobbyists hired to keep nuclear weapons in business.”

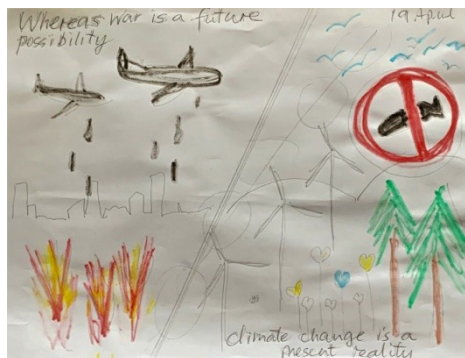
This global misappropriation of funds needs a global solution. Unfortunately the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the UN’s scientific advisory body, has little to say on the subject of military carbon emissions, although it acknowledges that “Climate change can indirectly increase risks of violent conflicts by amplifying well-documented drivers of these conflicts such as poverty and economic shocks”. The Conflict and Environment Observatory (CEOBS), launched in 2018 with the primary goal of increasing awareness and understanding of the environmental and derived humanitarian consequences of conflicts and military activities, has put together a [call for action](#) for governments to commit to cut military emissions at COP26 which the Quaker Council for European Affairs is supporting.

My researches, as well as my work with refugees, led me to the conclusion that a vicious cycle exists between war, climate change and migration and I started to draw this out.



This may be too simplistic as there are certainly other factors operating, but for me it is a helpful way to keep the relationships in mind. It emphasises the

connections between our peace testimony and our sanctuary and environment work. I hope that in the [new QPSW strategy](#), migration and sanctuary will have an important place.



So how might I translate this information into fabric panels that would communicate both what I love and what troubles me? At Meeting one Sunday a Friend mentioned Yuval Noah Harari, who writes, “*Whereas war is a future possibility, climate change is a present reality.*” Though this is true, sadly for too many people in the world war *is also* a present reality.

I made a sketch and shared it with a my LEP group.

A Friend commented '*maybe that would work better as two panels*' and so I made the two panels shown here.

Royal Philosophical Society of Glasgow The climate emergency in Scotland – what can we do about it?

Lectures on line:

28th July Pete Smith, Director of Scotland’s Climate Change Centre of Expertise On-line 7:30pm.

11th August Nature and Climate: an Emergency Response Francesca Osowska, CEO of NatureScot (formerly Scottish Natural Heritage) On-line 7:30pm.

1st September Bestriding the world stage like a Colossus? Or “Doomed, we’re all Doomed!” Baroness Young, Chair of the Woodland Trust On-line 7:30pm.

Our 220th lecture series starts in October 2021 visit our website for information and to register for the above talks.

From Janey Andrews and COP26 Hub group

Greetings Friends

As I'm sure you know, we are encouraging Friends in central Scotland to consider offering home accommodation during COP26 via the Human Hotel platform. To encourage Quakers to sign up, I've drafted a Guide for Quakers to Human Hotel, based on my experience so far.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hSBRMCL93jumSKxCjGtCUxLXXmphZjL0/view?usp=sharing>

I hope that this can be shared widely to provide a bit more support to Friends who are considering sharing their home for this period. If you have space to circulate in your respective newsletters/ websites, I'd be very grateful for your help.

The Peace Testimony

Meeting for Worship at Faslane

Meeting for Worship for Witness for Peace at Faslane restarts on Sunday 16 May at 11am.

We meet at the North Gate. Bring something to sit on, weather-proof clothing, and something to eat before returning home if you wish.

Parking is available just beyond the gate on the right at the cemetery.

Future dates are as follows.

27 June

26 September (possibly joined by Northern Friends Peace Board)

10 October

14 November

Further details from
Mary Alice Mansell.

mamansell54@gmail.com



Made in Scotland

Extracted from a letter from Andrew Tomlinson

A motion was submitted by Alex Rowley MSP highlighting the on-going humanitarian crisis in the Yemen and raises concerns about the way in which the UK is enabling this conflict through the sale of armaments.

Many of you will have read the recent Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT) report [“Made in Scotland”](#) which highlights the role that many Scottish companies are playing in this conflict. We have written to Ivan Mckee (Scottish Government Minister for Business, Trade and Tourism) expressing our concerns about this.

Motions in the Scottish Parliament can be supported by MSPs up to six weeks after their submission. While this motion is largely symbolic, it can play a significant role in raising awareness of the issue and highlighting the strength of opinion within the parliament. If this motion gains significant support from MSPs it will make it easier to put pressure on the Scottish government to consider the ways in which Scottish companies, many of whom receive support from the Scottish government, are contributing to the crisis.

That is why we are asking Friends to contact their MSPs encouraging them to support this motion. You can also give them the link to the CAAT report if they would like further information about the issue.

May Peace Prevail On Earth

23rd Annual ~ 2021 Peace Pals International Art Exhibition & Awards

PLEASE READ THE RULES

(artwork must be scanned - do not send artwork through email)

Register Now Theme and Message: Kindness
Express Yourself through Kindness

Artwork must be Received

31st of August, 2021

Andrew Tomlinson, our Parliamentary Engagement Officer, has some ideas to help us engage with our newly-elected MSPs – see below for Andrew's message which he hopes Local Meetings and individual Friends might consider.

Andrew writes:

We now have the results of the last week's Scottish parliamentary elections and over the coming weeks MSPs will begin the task of charting Scotland's path through the next five years. We are encouraging Friends across Scotland to send a postcard to their MSPs congratulating them on their appointment, wishing them well in their endeavours and highlighting our hopes for the future as Quakers.

Roughly a third of this crop of MSPs are new to the parliament, so this is a perfect opportunity to make a connection. Below we have given some information on how to go about this and some guidance on what you could include in your message. You don't need to follow this too closely. Remember the important thing is for you to make a connection with your MSPs.

Practicalities

Who is my MSP?

You will have one constituency MSP and 7 regional MSPs representing you at Holyrood. You can find out the names and details of your MSPs by going to <https://www.parliament.scot/msps> and typing in your post code.

What address should I send the postcard to?

The Scottish Parliament address is:

[Name of MSP]

The Scottish Parliament

Edinburgh EH99 1SP

What postcard should I use?

You can use any postcard you like. You may want to make your own. You could choose one from your local area, one that conveys good wishes, or one that expresses your hopes for the next parliament. It is entirely up to you.

What should I write?

The purpose of writing is not so much to provide a to-do list for the new MSPs, but to reach out a hand in friendship. By making a connection at this early point in the parliament, it will be easier to engage with MSPs as issues arise further down the line. Below are a few examples to get you started (please do not copy it word-for-word):

Example 1

Dear [insert name of MSP]

I am writing to congratulate you on your successful election to the parliament. As a Quaker I would like to share my hope with you that this parliament can work towards a Scotland characterised by peace, equality, truth, simplicity and sustainability (these are Quaker values). I recognise that the role of elected representatives is not an easy one, but wanted to encourage you as you begin the task.

In friendship,

[insert your name]

Example 2

Dear [insert name of MSP]

I wanted to write to you to congratulate you on your election and encourage you as you begin this new session of parliament. As a Quaker I am concerned about [insert issue], and I will be holding you, and your colleagues in the parliament, in the light as you discern Scotland's path these next five years.

In friendship,

[insert your name]

Example 3

Dear [insert name of MSP]

As a Quaker, I wanted to write to you to congratulate you on your successful election to the parliament and to encourage you as you begin the task ahead of you. I recognise that now is probably quite a busy time for you, but I would value the opportunity to meet with you to hear more about you and your hopes for Scotland over the next five years.

In friendship,

[insert your name]

Don't forget to include your contact details if you would like a reply.

Contact Andrew at andrewt@quaker.org.uk | www.quaker.org.uk

020 7663 1138 | 07892934620

Not just people

Ro Binhood

In Denmark, there are libraries where you can borrow a person instead of a book to listen to their life story for 30 minutes. The goal is to fight against prejudice. Every person has a title - "unemployed", "refugee", "bipolar", etc. - but listening to their story makes you realize how not to "judge a book by its cover". This innovative and brilliant project is active in more than 50 countries. It's called "The Human Library".

MODERN SLAVERY

Daphne Wassermann, Glasgow

Eleven Friends Zoomed in on 10 June to a fascinating talk by Simon John who had just completed his sponsored cycle ride from Lands End to John O'Groats in aid of Anti-Slavery International.

Slavery was outlawed in the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights with no dissent. The modern definition is *"the total CONTROL of one person by another, with a view to the economic exploitation of their labour, with the use or threat of VIOLENCE, to maintain that control."*

Human trafficking is often confused in the media with slavery but usually involves transporting people into slavery. People smuggling could be for any kind of migrant and does not necessarily involve slavery.

The trans-Atlantic slave trade went on for 350 years and in that time 12 to 13 million people were enslaved. About 1/3 died on the journey. Many still die on the journey, witness the 39 Vietnamese people in the lorry in Essex. Historically, at any one time there were about 40,000 slaves. It is estimated that there are currently 40.3 million people in some form of slavery with 25.3M in forced labour and 15M in forced marriage. 70% are female and 25% are children.

Historically the life expectancy of a slave was 7 to 8 years. It is still not much higher: 8 to 9 years. In the USA it is estimated that in the sex trade the average age of enslavement is 11 years old with a life expectancy of 3 to 4 years.

Children are lured under false pretences to harvest cocoa in the Ivory Coast. Slaves work in textile factories, brick kilns, mining, fisheries, construction, domestic work, sexual exploitation, forced criminality. If you see knock-off goods at cheap prices or cheap fashion, slavery was probably involved.

This doesn't only happen abroad. There are an estimated 200,000 modern slaves in the UK, half foreign and half British. Vulnerable children are recruited to County Lines drug gangs. People work in car washes, shops, nail bars, in waste disposal and on farms. If you see someone who looks suspicious you don't need proof. They could be one part of a larger jigsaw. You can phone the modern slavery helpline 08000 121 700.

Anti-Slavery International has been fighting slavery for 180 years and provides alternative sources of income for those vulnerable to trafficking. For example in Nepal they provide entrepreneurship training to women to enable them to set up businesses

such as dress-making. Simon John has a just giving page for the charity if you wish to donate.

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/freedomride2021>

ONE VIEW OF ASSISTED DYING

Dear Sir –

I was going to vote SNP/Green in the coming Scottish Parliament elections, because the Greens have excellent education policies. However I shall not be voting for the Greens, because they support assisted suicide. As a disabled person I will never vote for this, because a world in which assisted suicide is legal is a world in which I am much less safe.

Dignity. Assisted suicide is often supported using the idea of dignity. In a society that values physical competence, the idea is that when your body has become too problematic to support you, you can avoid profound disability, pain and suffering by choosing to die. Which is (sort of) fine if, as a non-disabled person, you already started out with a lot of dignity points. If you can (usually) take it for granted that society respects your decisions and believes in your competence. But what if that is not the case? What if you sometimes get propelled across a road you didn't mean to cross, because some kind person assumes that's what you want? What if when you go swimming by yourself somebody intercepts you to ask who is with you - and even to ask where your parent is when you are 32? What if, when you go out with someone people automatically speak to that person because they must be in charge of you, even if you are speaking to the stranger in a language that you both speak, but that your companion doesn't understand? What if, when you have a child, you spend the first year utterly terrified because you think every health professional is there to take your child away, because people like you aren't considered suitable to have babies?

I have had to fight continuously for the dignity of being considered an equal person, because people assume that my obvious impairments mean I am not an equally competent person. The association of dignity with physical competence means that I have far fewer dignity points to start with than any non-disabled person. I want the dignity of being alive, not the nothingness of being dead. To say that death is a more dignified position than disability is a position of such awesome non-disabled privilege that it frankly disgusts and terrifies me. Pervasive negative stereotypes about disability make me doubt that any legislative safeguards would be adequate. Assisted suicide would make me and others like me so unsafe.

Dr Nuala Watt

Simplicity clears the springs of life and permits wholesome mirth and gladness to bubble up; it cleans the windows of life and lets joys radiate

Philadelphia YM 1955, found in "Living Adventurously" D & R Brown (in the VRM Library)

Seven Thousand Ways to Listen, *staying close to what is sacred*. An extract from Mark Nepo, 2012 Simon & Schuster

When we seek to experience 'that of God in everyone' it not only involves listening and giving space to the other but deep listening with an open heart. Glib words? This book really opens the door. Each section has questions for self or group discussion and a meditation/reflection. This extract from the introduction will tell you more than I can.

Margaret Roy

'The many ways to listen have been reaching into me for years. To *enter* deep listening, I've had to learn to keep emptying and opening, how to keep beginning. I've had to lean into all I don't understand, accepting that I am changed by what I hear. In all, it's been an exciting journey, one that's made me more alive. I offer what I've learned and am still learning, not as a map or set of instructions but as one way to open our humanity.

To start with, we must honour that listening is a personal pilgrimage that takes time and a willingness to circle back. With each trouble that stalls us and each wonder that lifts us, we are asked to put down our conclusions and feel and think anew. Unpredictable as life itself, the practice of listening is one of the most mysterious, luminous, and challenging art forms on Earth. Each of us is by turns a novice and a master, until the next difficulty or joy undoes us.

In real ways, we are invited each day to slow down and listen. But why listen at all? Because listening stitches the world together. Because listening is the doorway to everything that matters. It enlivens the heart the way breathing enlivens the lungs. We listen to awaken the heart. We do this to stay vital and alive.

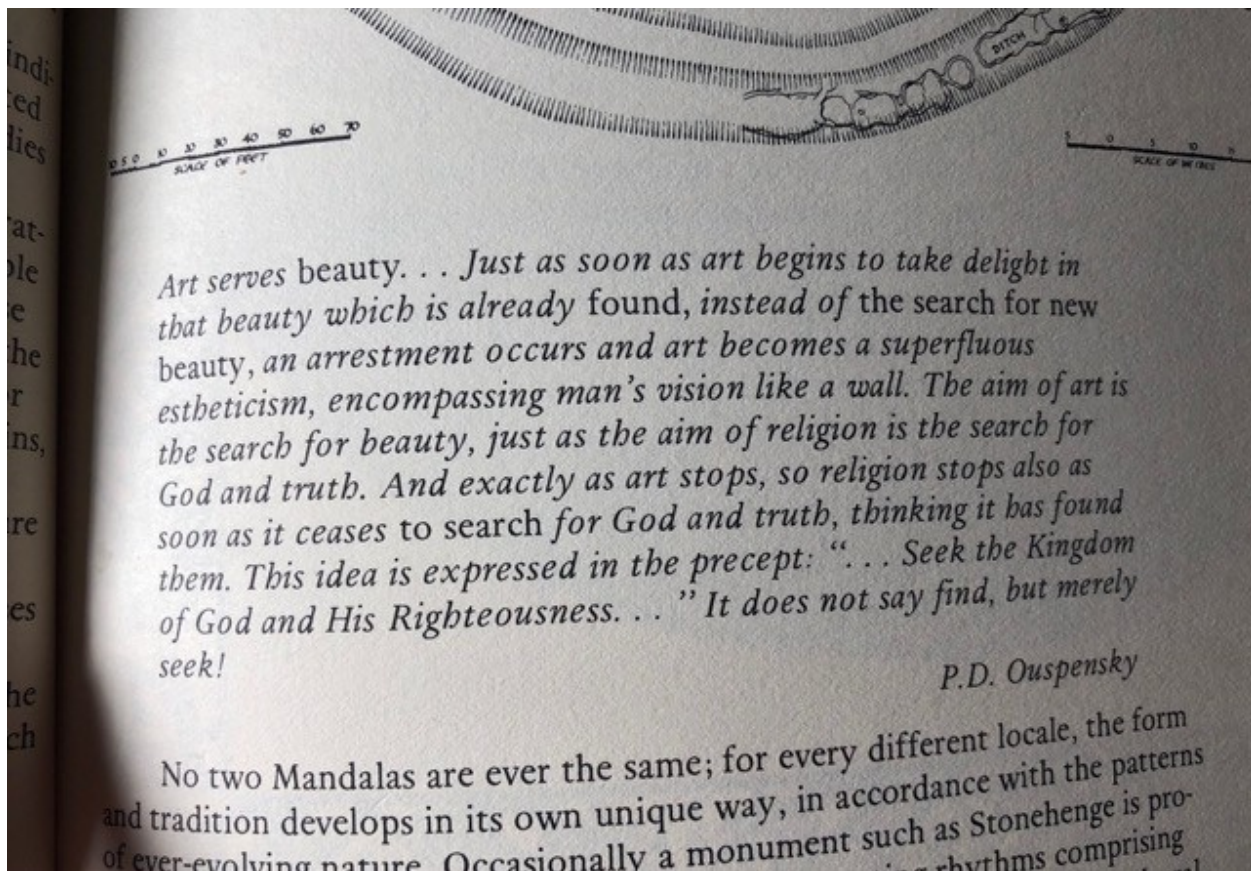
This is the work of reverence: to stay vital and alive by listening deeply. . . Ultimately, a devotion to deep listening remains the simple and sacred work of being here.

To awaken our heart through the reverence of listening strengthens the fabric that holds us all together. Why? . . . the world depends on the dance between the individual awakened soul and the river of Spirit that feeds us all. The world needs healthy awakened souls to stay alive and whole.

Yet how do we inhabit these connections and find our way in the world? By listening our way into lifelong friendships with everything larger than us, with our life experience, and with each other.

Our friendship with everything larger than us opens us to the wisdom of the Source. This is *the work of being*. Our friendship with experience opens us to the wisdom of life on Earth. This is *the work of being human*. And our friendship with each other opens us to the wisdom of care. This is *the work of love*. While we may feel lifted or overwhelmed by each of these on any given day, they are intertwined and inseparable – three friends we need to stay connected to – *the work of being, the work of being human, and the work of love* – frame the journey of this book.

In a daily way, listening is being present enough to hear the One in the many and the many in the One. Listening is an animating process by which we feel and understand the moment we are in: repeatedly connecting the inner world with the world around us, letting one inform the other. Listening is an on-going way of relating to experience.



This second passage is from "The Spiritual Canticle"

O soul,
most beautiful among all creatures,
you who so long to know the place
where your Beloved is,
so as to seek him
and become one with him,
now it has been stated:
you yourself are the home in which he
dwells.
Here is a reason to be happy;
here is a cause for joy:
the realization that every blessing
and all you hope for
is so close to you

as to be within you.
Be glad,
find joy there,
gathered together
and present to him
who dwells within,
since he is so close to you;
desire him there,
adore him there,
and do not go off
looking for him elsewhere . . .
There is just one thing:
even though he is within you,
he is hidden. [2]

John O' the Woods

On Erin's isle he came to life, a strange and lonely child.
No other children played with him, they found him course and wild.
In early youth he could not find, one to call his own,
And so he turned to live his life, unlettered and alone.

He found that men were full of guile, they lied and fought for naught,
And so in time their ways and speech, he very soon forgot.
He chose to live in natures way, amidst the streams and trees.
He watched the birds and animals, with those he felt at ease.

His day was filled with chores to do, collecting herbs and roots,
He watched the fox and badger, and heard the owl's hoots.
The eagle flew upon the wind, with grace beyond compare,
He watched with mirth and laughter, the antics of the hare.

The river's flow, returning rain, the sun upon his brow,
The falling snow, the melting ice, were all his here and now.
He never shaved or cut his hair, for him there was no need,
He never caught convention's ways, of colour, class, and creed.

In time he found companionship, a wolf caught in a snare,
He freed the beast from all its pain, though yellow eyes did glare.
The loss of blood had left it weak, unable to resist,
The silent man who dragged it free, with strength of hand and wrist.

With tender care he dressed the wounds, inflicted by his breed,
Through anxious days, with herbal swathes, at last he did succeed,
To bring the grey wolf back to life, less fretful than before;
It seemed to know this bearded man, a different mantle wore.

Two kindred spirits found a bond, rare to find this day,
Among the ranks of Adam's seed, so devious in their way.
They lived together in the wild, without the need of money,
Their simple wants were met by Grace, wild berries, fish, and honey.

And then one day, with fading eye, the old man laid his head,
The grey wolf at his feet lay still, beside his master's bed.
They slipped from life together, returning to their God,
The leaves they whispered their goodbyes, the trees gave silent nod.

W.J.B.

Book Reviews

Begin Again: James Baldwin's America and its urgent lessons for today. Eddie S Glaude Jr (2020) London: Chatto and Windus

Mike Nellis and Maureen Waugh

“Not everything that can be faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed without being faced”. These seem like wise words to us, and something that surely resonates with a Quaker sensibility, as does much else said by their US-born author, James Baldwin (1924-1987) - essayist, novelist, civil rights activist. He has been gone awhile, became less visible in his later years, and was probably not a household name in Britain even before he died. In the USA there is a large literary-political industry devoted to his life and work, and it might be said, a tad uncharitably, that in death he has been purloined by academia. Not quite though - there have been intervening generations of writers and activists, right to the present time, who never forgot how astute he was, how sublimely he wrote and why he never ceased to matter.

Eddie S Glaude, head of African-American Studies at Princeton University, teaches a course on James Baldwin to students who had not been born when he died, insisting on his relevance in an era of resurgent, undead, white supremacy. This book does the same. It is neither a biography of Baldwin nor a rounded analysis of the work – the novels hardly figure at all, (one consequence of which is the underplaying of his queer sexuality). Rather it's a meditation on what it takes to live, think and act in what Baldwin poignantly called the “after times”, the point beyond defeat, the liminal moments in which loss is accepted and faced, and the courage and the words found to begin again.

What had been lost? Medgar Evers, Malcom X and Martin Luther King were Baldwin's friends and comrades, and their murders shattered both the momentum of the Civil Rights movement, and him. Reluctantly, bitterly even - but above all realistically – he embraced Black Power to protect the lives and the sustain the dignity of African-Americans, but the FBI ruthlessly killed its leaders or drove them to self-imposed exile. Using racially coded terms like “silent majority”, or just “law and order”, first Nixon, then Reagan allowed the great enduring lie of white supremacy to breath and flourish again, and set in train the laws and policies that produced the “war on drugs” and the unprecedented mass incarceration of Black people, some in penitentiaries that had once been plantations.

All this traumatised the once defiantly hopeful Baldwin, son of a Christian preacher, a child preacher himself, steeped in the Old and New Testaments (whose legacies never left him),

preternaturally smart, fierce when he needed to be, undeceived

by history and unsentimental about the world, but temperamentally forever kind. He worked through his trauma with friends, lovers and books in Paris and Istanbul, places that gave him the critical distance from America that he need to recover and rethink, but he always felt the obligation to return to “his country”, to keep arguing back, to simply insist that black lives mattered as much as white ones, that America could heal, that amity was possible. He did give up on Martin Luther King’s earnest view – as Martin arguably did himself - that the long redemptive suffering of Black protesters would bring White Americans to a sense of repentance and responsibility, but he was incapable of giving up on love and reason. In one of his last articles, wrestling with the place of faith in his life, he wrote; There is absolutely no salvation without love: this is the wheel in the middle of the wheel. Salvation does not divide. Salvation connects ...it is not the exclusive property of any dogma, creed or church. It keeps the channel open between oneself and however one wishes to name That which is greater than oneself. It has nothing to do with one’s fortunes or one’s circumstances in one’s passage through this world. It is a mighty fortress, even in the teeth of ruin or at the gates of death.

Eddie Glaude is no mean writer himself, and his book makes you wish you could talk to Baldwin again, just one more time, and then one after that. But we have his novels, and his collected essays, and now several biographies, for those who want more. There are also lots of interviews with him online. This one, with the poet Nikki Giovanni, is a good place to start.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KL_cM7SXfbo

World Wide Waste, *How digital is killing our planet* Gerry McGovern 2020

Margaret Roy

With COP26 on the horizon, we are reviewing and re-accessing how our involvement with many factors of modern life contribute to the degradation of our world. It is an area that is so easily open to conspiracy theory! Thus it is important to know that McGovern is a 'highly regarded speaker' who is used by many organisations that include BBC, CNN and CNBC, as well as WHO, IBM, Microsoft and governments of US, UK, EU, Netherlands, Canada and Norway. 'The Irish Times has described him of one of five visionaries who have had a major impact on the development of the web.' Those accolades are necessary because what follows deeply challenges our mindset that digital is clean and green.

Two of the book's basic premises are 1. that digital apparatus uses enormous quantities of energy – HOW? And 2. much of our use of digital is wasteful, repetitive, redundant, and unnecessary for the functions the computer carries out. McGovern works for large companies bettering their management of digital. For you and me that is managing our computing, mobile phones, facebook, twitter, etc. We might also like to ask what part digital plays in our life.

Like me you may often wonder why your computer seems to have a mind of its own. Why is it so complicated, especially after up-dating? The simple answer here is that new programmes or updates are messy as they often sit on older programmes leaving older bits behind. Deleted material is not deleted from the hard drive! And surveys show as much as 80% of downloads are never looked at again yet every time the computer is booted up this material is booted up too, using energy – unless you are really clever and manage your disc and registry cleaning regularly! What is the cloud? It is great warehouses with banks of computers to store your favourite photos and documents, and downloads. These computers need great amounts of electricity so they do not overheat. *Great* is not superlative!

An e mail with an attachment uses as much electricity as an energy light bulb burns in one hour. If you sent an e mail to the group . . . all those redundant thankyou's use energy.

That makes sense and we can do something about it but he says. . . . digital is a big lie.

'Computers store and process information but they do not organise' it.

Process/ organise??? What is the difference? Apparently, *'Only the most progressive managers are interested in investing in information architecture, navigation and findability. . . .reviewing and removing out-of-date content'.*

Next time you are on the end of the phone and the operator is as confused as you are, they are attempting to *navigate* the system. In an interesting letter to a newspaper recently the chap explained how the operator knew an appointment was needed but the computer said no. And it took five hours before he found out how to override the computer to give the chap an appointment. This is not about us versus the nerds. It is about sloppy, incomplete work when installing. Another example of the hidden repercussions of our new dependency on on-line transactions involves ordering on line then sending back. So easy to click a button but . . . returns can be as high as 30-40%. In one estimate this engendered 15 million metric tons of CO₂ pollution every year (according to Optoro). To offset this we need to plant 1.5 billion trees. *'Not just that, about 2.5 million tons of these returned goods are then dumped creating even more pollution'.* He doesn't mention the cost of our new Zoom freedom!

I will confess that I am not computer savvy enough to distil the rest of the book that applies most to companies and large organisations (but I can see the

confusion engendered is part of the issue) but hopefully the little I have put here will be enough for those amongst us to investigate what he calls the culture of waste and what our role in it is in supporting *climate change* when we turn on our computer.

To restate, most of the book is challenging the wasteful management of large companies but here is another thought that challenges our underlying mode of thinking.

Humans are natural hoarders ('a result of Nature's feast or famine') and digital is cheap so we hoard, more. But data is not knowledge! He quotes the Greeks and Romans that a piece of information is valuable only when it is understood, '*when it has delivered some form of intelligence, knowledge or value to a receiver*', i.e. Information is a verb not a noun. What is a library of books if not used? We see it as a noun but what if we saw it as a verb? He asks us to change from a culture of want (hoarders of data) to a 'culture of use'. If we take this further, it has enormous implications re our use of resources, re our economic system dependent on consumers. Re computer use of energy, this would be computed in terms of outcomes, not measuring outputs. Very subtle and so much for our culture of statistics (my *bête noir* when these are interpreted, not as probabilities, but as facts). He is asking us to live a simpler life!

It is wonderful that Glasgow is planting 18 million trees for COP26:

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jun/01/glasgow-to-plant-18m-trees-as-city-readies-for-cop26-climate-summit>

See Zem Moffat on decluttering

I am often asked to describe my work, and my quick answer is 'intelligent tea drinking'. I work through listening, by finding out what really drives and inspires clients, and supporting them to achieve their aims. This can be done with practical and physical help, through positive motivation input and by teaching habit changing techniques.

Specialist expertise/experience

In 2014 I founded a meetup called Clutter Chat. It's a supportive group for those with chronic clutter and problematic hoarding habits. In 2020 it became a Scottish Charity SC050222 and you can find out more about its work here <https://clutterchat.co.uk/>.

Changing the world starts with openness to personal transformation.

News from Local Meetings

An Artwork for the Meeting House?

A small enthusiastic group of Friends has been working hard on evaluating options for an art work on the ugly gable end of the Meeting House in time for COP26. After evaluating various options including a green wall, banners, projections etc, we are now negotiating with the council to have a mural painted directly onto the gable wall of the Meeting House which in some way can express our commitment to the environment as set out in our 'Canterbury Commitment'.

Glasgow City Council have a mural fund which could potentially cover the whole cost of the mural (estimated at £8,000 - £10,000) and we are hoping one of the artists, well known to the Fund, will apply on our behalf. Quaker contributions may be needed to remove the existing graffiti.

Mary Alice Mansell, Kate Mooney, Gisela and John Creed, Margery McKechnie, Alistair Trainor and Phillida Ball

Glasgow Meeting Community Playlist

From Leilani Rabemananjara

This consists of 24 songs spanning classical to country, so hopefully something for everyone! Listen here: <https://tinyurl.com/glasgowquakersplaylist>

I'm also sharing an accompanying booklet, which acts as listening notes and shares written offerings behind the choice of some songs and why people felt they represented their spirituality, Quakerism or our shared life together.

Written offerings include - an original poem, talk about Quaker values, quotes from Quaker Faith and Practice and a sharing of life experiences & insights:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1G9xBIn9Fnoga5IWYWRvilyMRHBHf0q0F/view?usp=sharing>

I just wanted to thank everyone that contributed and hope it's a lovely thing we can share that we created together! Happy listening!

Help needed! Do you have decorating skills?

Glasgow Meeting House Property Committee would like your help on 31st July to help with redecoration in the Meeting House.

Contact Charlotte Wright beforehand so the committee can plan the jobs.

charlmorayplace@outlook.com

Journeys in the Spirit Newsletter supports families, children and young people. See it on line at <https://mailchi.mp/quaker.org.uk/jis-april-1495246>

Castle Douglas Local Meeting – maintaining a Quaker Space during Lockdown

During opening worship at Area Meeting last Monday evening, the co-host read from QF&P Chapter 28.10 a passage by Harvey Gillman written in 1993. It begins: -

Many of the people who come to us are both refugees and seekers. They are looking for a space to find their authenticity, a space in a spiritual context.

Physically, we have been offering a Quaker space in Castle Douglas Community Centre (a former school building repurposed for local groups as exists in so many towns and villages) since 1991. Our numbers have waxed and waned – for a while, our children's meeting was bigger than today's adult meeting - presently we only have one child but another is 'on the way'!

We know of course that the space Harvey Gillman writes about is not about buildings. But our habit of gathering at 10.30 for an hour every Sunday morning (despite being small, we've always met weekly) established a firm foundation for welcoming all sorts of people to take part in that ambiguous process of meeting together in 'the things that are eternal' whilst at the same time attempting to worship and witness experimentally - the Quaker way.

Then came the pandemic.

In 28.10, Harvey Gillman goes on to write (of that spiritual space)

Some find what they need among Friends, others go elsewhere.....

Later in the passage he acknowledges that the gift of offering this space *demands patient listening; it can be enriching and challenging to our complacency.*

Last summer, and more recently, we spent some weeks trying different buildings and rooms. Since the recent easing of restrictions we are back to meeting on Sunday from 10.30 to 11.30 in the main Community Centre but in a room opposite the one we had for nearly 30 years. We may move again.

However, like other LMs, we now also meet by Zoom, in our case on Wednesdays at 4pm and this seems likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Whilst all the change and upheaval has been going on, new 'refugees and seekers', as well as members and attenders of long standing have continued to come and go and find what they need (or not) amongst us. Our Wednesday worship meetings now regularly include a friend from Glasgow, one who lives in Paris and two from our local area who would not normally have attended in Castle Douglas before Covid-19. A few of us with roles in the meeting and some without have worked hard to keep our local spiritual space both stable and open. It's taking a fair amount of extra time and effort and I'm not just thinking of sanitizing chairs and reminding people to mute themselves or wear a mask.

It has required Harvey Gillman's *patient listening* and has been both *enriching and challenging*.

28.10 ends as follows: -

Our riches are precisely our sharing. And the world is very, very hungry.

Clare Phillips, Castle Douglas Local Meeting, West Scotland Area Meeting

Meetings for Worship in West Scotland Area Meeting updated 5/7/2021

Meeting	Day	Time	Type	Contact / Venue
Argyll	4 th Sunday	13.30 – 14.00	Zoom	argyll@quaker.org.uk
Arran	1 st Sunday	11.00 – 12.00	Physical	Dippen House, Dippen 01770 820223
	3 rd Sunday			Banner Lodge, Brodick arran@quaker.org.uk
Ayrshire	Sunday	10.30 – 11.30	Blended	ayrshire@quaker.org.uk
				Stair Community Centre, KA5 5HT
Castle Douglas	Sunday	10.30 – 11.30	Physical	Caste Douglas Community Centre (please use back entrance)
	Wednesday	16.00 – 16.40	Zoom	castledouglas@quaker.org.uk
Dumfries	Sunday	10.30 – 11.30	Zoom	dumfriesquakers@gmail.com
Dunblane	Sunday	10.30 – 11.30	Zoom - blended	dunblanequakers@googlemail.com
			1 st & 3 rd Sundays	Braeport Centre, Dunblane
Glasgow	Sunday	11.00 – 12.00	Blended	Glasgow Meeting House clerk@glasgowquakers.org.uk
	Wednesday	12.30 – 13.00	Zoom	clerk@glasgowquakers.org.uk
Lanark	Sunday	10.30 – 11.00	Zoom	lanark@quaker.org.uk
	2 nd Sunday	Physical, depending on weather		Contact as above for information
Islay & Jura	1 st Sunday	13.30 – 14.00	Zoom	islayjuraquakers@gmail.com
	Last Sunday	14.00 – 15.00	Physical	Bowmore Baptist Church
	2nd Monday	11.00 – 12.00	Physical	Bowmore Baptist Church
Milngavie	2 nd & last Sunday	11.00 – 12.00	Blended	The Fraser Centre, Milngavie Cross
				milngaviequakers@gmail.com
Mull & Iona	Sunday (1 st Sunday blended)	10.00 – 10.45	Zoom	claxtoninghamrob@gmail.com
	2 nd & 4 th Wednesdays	10.30	Physical	Leob Croft, Ross of Mull
Wigtown	Sunday	11.00 – 12.00	Varied	Please contact clerk on 01988 403364 for details
Area Meeting	Sunday	19.30 – 20.00	Zoom	ayrshire@quaker.org.uk

Zoom meetings usually open 5 - 15 minutes before the stated time of Meeting for Worship to allow for settling in and technical checks.

Friends intending to attend physical worship should email beforehand to confirm space.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

31 July - 6 August,	Yearly Meeting	Gathering, Bath. But possibly on line.
21st August	Area Meeting	11:30 am – 4 pm at Lochgilphead, Argyll.
9th October	Area Meeting	11:30 am – 4 pm in Ayrshire.
6th December	Area Meeting	by video/telephone (7-9 pm).
15th January 2022	Area Meeting	11:30 am – 4 pm at Glasgow.

We confirm the dates and venues for the holding of Area Meeting in 2021 and January 2022, subject to the necessity of holding the meetings by Zoom rather than at these venues. Further to minute 66/10, an incorrect date was given for the August meeting, which is corrected here.

11th September GENERAL MEETING 10.30 am by Zoom
You need to register beforehand.



Hold in the Light

If the surrounding world is like a storm tossed ocean remember Jesus was walking on the water when he said , 'Do not be afraid'.

The love that is the core of our Hearts unites us to the spirit of all humanity and reaches inward to the Light of which we are all part.

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 or the next issue of WSQN is 15th September 2021.

Copy should be send in Word format only to the editor Margaret Roy.