

# *West Scotland Quaker Newsletter*

**February 2020**

Clerk's Letter	p. 2
Report on Area Meeting 2 <sup>nd</sup> December	p. 3
Report on Area Meeting 11 <sup>th</sup> January	p. 5
Quakers in Scotland and COP26	p. 9
Meeting for Sufferings December 2019	p. 10
Update on Glasgow Meeting House	p. 14
AM Concern Violence against Women	p. 15
Book Reviews: No one is too small to make a difference, We are the weather . . . .	p. 16
Master and Commander	p. 19
New Books in Glasgow LM Library	p. 20
International Women's Day: Report on celebration of the ordination of women	p. 21
SidebySide for gender justice, Scotland	p. 23
My Grannie's Suffragette Scarf	p. 25
Information & Opportunities for Action	p. 27
Local Meetings	p. 29
Hold in the Light	p. 30
Diary Dates	p. 32

## Clerk's letter February 2020

*The Advice reminds us to “think it possible that you may be mistaken”. Not always welcome words, especially when it never occurs to us we ought to be thinking things through a little more.*

*“Confirmation bias” is the term that describes the way we tend to confirm our views by associating with people who agree with us or we recognise as having the same values. It is worse these days as so many of us only read or view media that reflects our ways of thinking, and we automatically devalue other ways of thinking. Even the understanding of bias itself can be clouded with this, as we think our views are the norm and correct and hence any other portrayal must be bias. Down with the BBC indeed. The public stance of so many political parties and their leaders today makes one fear for democracy. One study published in the Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, concluded that conservatives and liberals were equally averse to listening to opposing viewpoints, even though liberal-thinker, particularly, thought they were being open-minded.*

*So what hope is there for any of us? Another Advice (9) asks us to ‘come to meeting for worship with heart and mind prepared’. Whether it is in a business meeting or open worship, Quaker worship depends on being able to let go of the active, busy, surface mind and sink deeper. Most religions and philosophies have discovered this of course, but Quaker worship emphasises it up front. Preparing for it means coming able to still the mind and body. You won’t be able to do this if you can’t remember if you switched the gas off, for example. Quaker worship is a training programme in waiting to be still and in being receptive, of being able to let go of current pre-occupations and sink down to a place where awareness grows. This can happen even if one is very conscious that you have so much on you that you can’t be still – recognising that is where you are can paradoxically allow the process, as you accept where you are now. The result is an ability to recognise what is given you from others, even if they are different to what one has thought previously.*

*It does take practice and we don’t always find it each time, but it does come. Part of the result is an increasing awareness and openness is this ability to listen to where others come from and where we are. As George Fox said, ‘and I had great openings’ [Qfp 19.03].*

### **Advices & queries 17**

*Do you respect that of God in everyone though it may be expressed in unfamiliar ways or be difficult to discern? Each of us has a particular experience of God and each must find the way to be true to it. When words are strange or disturbing to you, try to sense where they come from and what has nourished the lives of others. Listen patiently and seek the truth which other people’s opinions may contain for you. Avoid hurtful criticism*

*and provocative language. Do not allow the strength of your convictions to betray you into making statements or allegations that are unfair or untrue. Think it possible that you may be mistaken.*

## Report on Area Meeting (AM) by Zoom / telephone

### 2 December

This was our first attempt at using Zoom for an AM. Thank you to Alastair Reid, who managed the technical side and who very generously was available for people to try out their connections for 90 minutes before the meeting began. For most participants the conference seemed to work well, but sadly one of the telephone users had to be turned away as her telephone propagated a loud echo to everyone. I hope a fix can be found for this before next time.

As an ordinary participant using video on my smart phone I saw a small picture of myself throughout, and usually a larger picture of whoever was speaking at the time. It was helpful to be able to see the speakers. Occasionally I saw pictures of other video users who were not speaking, and sometimes an invitation to use WeCam (whatever that is). On the smart phone, the various tools you can use are not immediately visible; I suspect this works better on a larger computer screen. I did touch the wrong part of the screen a couple of times and got "lost"; then I decided the best thing to do was to leave the meeting and rejoin it, which was quite quick and easy. We were advised to mute our microphones except when we wanted to speak, as this cuts out coughs and sneezes and other noises.

About 30 people took part from about 15 locations.

We agreed to write a testament to the grace of God as shown in the life of Bobby Locke. The nominations committee is asked to search for people to compile this, and to find someone who can prepare to become the AM Treasurer in 2021.

Training is available. We are also looking for someone who can visit a prisoner in Greenock and someone who can become a Trustee. If you are interested in any of these, please speak to your local meeting's nominations link person or your clerk.

We considered a minute from the Clerk of Glasgow Meeting. They will present proposals for redevelopment / rebuilding of the Meeting House (which belongs to the AM) on 5 January after the regular Sunday worship. Detailed information is to be circulated before Christmas and they invite Friends from outwith Glasgow to attend. We hope they will arrange remote access for this meeting. It was reported that no alternative site is available. It will be necessary to hire temporary premises.

Martin Mansell the Clerk of the Development Group said he was willing to travel to the South-West and to Dunblane to talk to the proposals, if invited.

There is a Hub Group to work on events in Scotland during the UN Conference of the Parties (COP26) that will be held in Glasgow next November. Representative for Friends House and the Quaker United Nations Organisation in Geneva will be present at the next AM, to be held in Glasgow on 11 January.

**Jane Mitchell, Argyll**

How much is your spiritual home worth?  
ONE CUP OF COFFEE / WEEK FROM EACH



The cost of meeting Area Meeting's budget  
Please Give.

Ask your treasurer for a contribution schedule for  
details of how you can give.

New Schedules out now.

## Report on Area Meeting - 11 January 2020

Friends gathered in Glasgow for January Area Meeting with some difficulty. We had already discovered a double-booking at Glasgow Meeting House and at the last minute had to jump ship to the excellent facilities at Renfield St Stephens Centre round the corner. Add to that a major independence march and the start of Storm Brendan which meant no ferries from either Mull or Arran, trains disrupted and roads closed, and we did very well to muster 26 Friends and three visitors who were to address us in the afternoon session (see Martin Mansell's report below).

Our opening worship included a reading from Australia's book of discipline "This We Can Say". It was particularly pertinent to the theme of this AM and also to the devastation of the wildfires raging in SE Australia as we gathered, as it spoke of the aboriginal understanding of the cycles of drought, fire and flood and of our need to listen to the environment and to work with it.

There was only one death to report - that of our dear Friend Joyce Minnis, and we spent a while remembering her kindness, her independent spirit, her courage and her commitment to social justice. We felt that it was difficult to imagine West Scotland AM and Glasgow without her, and she will be much missed.

Much of the rest of the morning was spent on what should have been fairly routine business. We heard a report from Nominations Committee and were reminded that no names have yet been brought forward for either the very essential job of AM treasurer nor for further trustees to replace the two who have come to the end of their service. There is also a need for new overseers in Glasgow as three have asked to be released. Martin Mansell has been appointed as prison visitor to Greenock Prison, so that we are prepared should a request be received for a visit.

We were pleased to hear that both David Gean and Sonny Scott will attend JYM in August, and it is hoped that Maeve Topliff, who is now too old for JYM may be able to attend as a young adult.

Two annual tasks, which should have been straightforward, were dealt with. There is a requirement to inspect the Marriage Register annually, and a Friend was appointed to do this at lunchtime together with the registering officer. They returned to us however having failed to gain entry to the Meeting House to effect the inspection, so this inspection will be dealt with by between Meetings procedure. We also received the Tabular Statement and learnt that our members

number 226 compared to 227 at the end of 2018. Balancing the number of deaths, resignations and transfers out, we gained seven new members. However six of these were by transfer in, with only one being by application compared with nine in 2018, which is not a very positive sign. Concern was expressed that we are still recording gender. We are now allowed a third category of "other", but some felt that this still did not address the issue of equality and relevance and wished that our concern be passed up to BYM as this is a requirement imposed centrally. We were not of one mind however so we will return to this issue for deeper exploration at a later date.

In the absence of our new treasurer Kate Gulliver, detained in the south of England by grandparent-duties, Margaret Morton presented the budget for 2020 which had been agreed by trustees. The budget includes a small deficit, but we reminded that this would be wiped out if every member were to give the equivalent of the cost of one cup of coffee per week. This statistic will be included in the Contribution Schedule, copies of which will be circulated to Local Meetings very shortly. On her retiral, Margaret was thanked for her work as treasurer.

We learnt that sadly the application to Quaker Peace and Social Witness for a project worker to be based in Dumfries and Galloway had been unsuccessful. However, it was reported that the feedback had been very useful. We also noted that a special meeting to discuss the future of Glasgow Meeting House had been held the previous week, and we agreed with trustees' request that the Funding Group should be reconstituted as an Area Meeting committee, asking Nominations Committee to bring forward further names, including a further trustee from outwith Glasgow LM.

Finally we were reminded of upcoming events for which bookings are open - both Britain Yearly Meeting Gathering, to be held in Bath from 1-7 August, and Westerly Friends Gathering to be held in Crianlarich from 13-15 March. There is legacy funding to support Friends wishing to attend either or both of these. Friends were also appointed to attend General Meeting in Edinburgh in March.

Then we broke for lunch, to reconvene in the afternoon for a session about the COP26 conference to be held in November, on which Martin Mansell reports below.

**Bronwen Currie, Islay & Jura**

**Minutes 15/20 of WSAM COP26**

Further to minute 117/19, we welcome Lindsey Fielder Cook, Representative for Climate Change at Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO), Oliver Robertson, BYM Head of Worship and Witness, and Chris Walker, the Quaker Peace & Social Witness Sustainability Programme Manager.

In November 2020, the United Kingdom will host the Conference of the Parties (COP26) United Nations Climate Change Summit in Glasgow. Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) will be working with local Friends, campaign groups and faith groups to call for bold action for climate justice. BYM aims to have official observer status at the talks alongside the delegates and will be joining others to support grassroots activism around the talks. In West Scotland we have opportunity for ensuring certain practical preparations, ways of helping those attending and in giving witness. On behalf of all Friends in Scotland, we have already appointed a Hub Group to act as a communications hub and liaison group to facilitate Quaker action before, during and after the event.

Oliver Robertson began by putting COP26 in context. It affects more than just our Quaker witness. We bring our whole life to important relationships like this, so it not just the witness but about the way we live our lives. Right now, we are not in right relationships with the earth.

This UN Climate Summit will have peaks of hope and expectations, and troughs of disappointment. There are many people coming along to take part. Every one is a person. Whilst we can become frustrated at the diplomats and those in power, we need to keep in mind the humanity of all involved.

There is a cycle to the summit. Every few years there a specific agreement/effort (like for the Paris Agreement) and then a series of implementation years leading up to another peak of expectation, as will happen in Glasgow. Governments need the hot breath of activists breathing down their necks to keep them on the go and our role is to contribute to this in various ways.

Chris Walker, who already attends our COP26 Hub Group, has given the practical background to how Quakers can engage with COP26.

As a faith group we are about deep change: not just working towards the necessary climate justice, but to changes towards an economy based on justice too – for an equal and just society. Therefore it is all about seeking change to the underlying inequality. That helps us think about how we prepare. We will be pushing for

United Kingdom leadership on climate justice, not just in cutting emissions, but ensuring green investment and building this more equal world.

Quakers are one group of many interfaith and other civil society groups coming to Glasgow from all over the world, many of whom won't be part of the formal proceedings. We have opportunity to engage with and support these global networks. There is a huge opportunity to connect, and there are practical ways of doing that, which our Hub Group is already working on to provide accommodation, office and other space for civil society. Stop Climate Chaos Scotland is doing a lot to coordinate this and we will work with them.

Chris has told us about training workshops in engagement with decision makers and we ask that these be facilitated for us and other Scottish meetings.

Lindsey Fielder Cook works for QUNO which supports peace and justice efforts at the United Nations, including climate change. We are the only faith group on IPCC (the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change). What is missing in climate justice is political will, and it is our job to challenge world leaders within the context of quiet diplomacy. Lindsey's work for COP, for example, has been in holding a series of dinners, bringing together delegates from countries from different negotiating areas where we provide a safe, confidential, space. This builds confidence and trust between decision makers. A priority in her work has also been with the local communities and indigenous people's platform, which is often the area less funded.

Lindsey has explained how the COP events work and how we as Quakers might fit in and contribute both within and without the formal structure. COP26 starts with an Interfaith prayer service the night before the formal opening and Quakers can be part of this.

Whilst COP summits have high security related to the ethos of the host country and can be intimidating, we can work through this in Glasgow to reach out to all involved. There will be space for vigils outside as well as the delegates and civil society observers working inside. COP26 will be an intense process. Our Quaker contribution is to build up trust through engagement. The increasingly heard faith voice is also about accountability.

We have had a very useful time for questions and discussion. Martin Mansell, clerk of the COP26 Hub Group, has outlined the work of the group and the opportunities to be involved. We will communicate these to Friends and meetings in Scotland.



COP26 in Glasgow is a vital opportunity and we will be able to help and support our Quaker witness and diplomacy. We feel energised by our speakers' contribution and look forward to exercising our faith to help build a just world. We thank Oliver, Chris and Lindsey and will be giving them our prayerful support for their work.

## Quakers in Scotland and COP26

As mentioned in the Area meeting minute, the work in Scotland will be coordinated by the COP26 Hub Group with representatives of West Scotland Area Meeting, Glasgow Local Meeting and other local Quakers. There are also over 40 other organisations and faith groups who will be taking part in the COP and the Hub group is represented on the Umbrella Coalition as well as on the Faith Working Group of the coalition.

The Hub Group has decided that we should focus on activities in which we have a unique role and have identified three areas where we can contribute effectively.

- Glasgow Meeting House will be block booked for the duration of the COP, except for our regular Sunday and Wednesday Meetings for Worship. As well as our large meeting room we will offer a smaller meeting room and possibly office accommodation. Volunteers will be needed at the Meeting House to offer pastoral care and orientation. We also anticipate that some groups will be allowed to sleep on the floor overnight in the Meeting House and wardens will be required to be on duty overnight. We will also need the loan of beds and bedding, for the volunteer wardens, as well as desks and chairs etc. for the flat. If you are able to help in these areas, please contact Ed Tyler on 07799 898369 – or email him on [tyleward@gmail.com](mailto:tyleward@gmail.com).
- Many delegates and activists, especially those from indigenous communities who are usually most directly impacted by climate change, are not supported by their governments and are often unable to pay for their travel. We will be working through FWCC and QUNO to identify, particularly young Quaker activists from developing countries and supporting them in their visa applications and their travel costs. Can you contribute to a fund to support delegates who otherwise would not be able to come? If so, please contact Jenny Brook [sandalwood891@gmail.com](mailto:sandalwood891@gmail.com).

The fund would also be used to support their travel to meetings outside Glasgow. Cheques should be payable to West Scotland Area Meeting.

- Glasgow Quakers have a scheme for bed and breakfast accommodation for visiting Friends. This will be expanded to include all areas within 1 – 1½ hour travelling of Glasgow (e.g. Edinburgh, Stirling, Dunblane, Ayr etc.). If you have a spare room for an attendee from a developing country or a volunteer or can help in organising an accommodation register, please contact Mary Alice Mansell [mamansell54@gmail.com](mailto:mamansell54@gmail.com).

We will also need volunteers to help in other areas such as publicity, logistics and communications etc. as well as translators for Spanish and other languages. If you can help in any way, please let me know. We are planning to have a briefing email every two months or so – contact me if you would like to keep in touch with developments.

COP26 is a massive once-in-a-lifetime event – please think about how you can be part of it.

**Martin Mansell COP26 Hub Group Convenor** [mamansell69@gmail.com](mailto:mamansell69@gmail.com)

## **Meeting for Sufferings – impressions by Ed Tyler**

### **December 2019 in Friends House, London**

This was a packed, fascinating and moving day, largely because we heard from presentations from our 4 “Central” Committees: Life, Peace and Social Witness, World Relations and Christian and Interfaith Relations.

From this I gleaned some big themes/issues that are occupying British Quakers at this time.

### **Same sex relationships**

Hannah Brock Womack, the Quaker appointed by us to be the new president of 4<sup>th</sup> Presidency group for Churches Together in England (CTE), has not taken it up this position because of objections to the fact that she is in a same sex relationship (she was “asked to exercise restraint” by not taking up the position). The result is a symbolic “empty chair.”

Instead of presenting us with a dry annual report, Christian and Interfaith Relations had invited her along in person. When she stood up and spoke to us, I found it one of the most moving public occasions I have ever witnessed. Below I have set down what she said (note that it is not verbatim but is my best effort):

*“The first thing I'd like to say is that I'm fine – and so is my partner.*

*There are good things about this unprecedented situation: we know as peacemakers that crises present opportunities for change. CTE has not been talking about the issue of living together in difference. Quakers have staying power – initially we are a lonely voice but we stick at it.*

*There are six presidencies and the other five are held by men.*

*Some members have expressed a belief that my situation is a manifestation of God's purpose.*

*We have a lot to learn from other faith groups.”*

I wish all of you could have been present, for it came to me as a powerful affirmation that Quakers are relevant and have an important role to play.

It was more even than that. Hannah was bearing witness to our beliefs about Equality, Integrity and Truth and also to the way we do things in an increasingly polarised, confrontational world.

It made me realise that Quakers are a Faith Group, not in name but in action, and that action from a stand of faith is incredibly powerful, especially when it is done grace, clear-thinking and engagement. We are not afraid to put ourselves on the line and hold it, but in doing still holding those with whom we disagree in the Light.

### **Gender Diversity**

Quaker Life (QL) received many responses on this subject from individuals and groups. It provoked strong opinions among respondents as well as some honest and raw personal accounts. Some of these responses were read out.

“It is the reality of my life”. “Fear that medication intervention at an early age will take away choices”. “Worry about the mental health of the younger generations – they can benefit from the support and wisdom of Friends.” “Deep divisions in Meeting – discussion can quickly become insult and threat.”

Emma reported that the consultation was still open but that QL will be making decision soon.

### **Climate Crisis**

COP 26 (Conference of Parties) is coming to Glasgow in November 2020. COP is the group of nearly all the world's nations who have agreed to take action to prevent a global Climate Crisis. They meet every year; the most recent one (25) was held in Madrid last December.

All the reports I have heard say that the conference was disappointing and that all eyes are already on Glasgow in the hope that nations will finally agree to take the radical actions that are necessary. Not only agree on a strategy (as they did in Paris, signing the Paris Agreement in 2016) but ACT.

Quakers in Scotland have a big role to play. West Scotland Area Meeting have set up a “hub” committee to coordinate Quaker action during COP 26 including using Glasgow Meeting House as a space for events, meetings, discussions etc. Stewards will be needed to offer pastoral care and support for attendees from all over the world.

The hub consists of both Scottish Quakers and staff at Friends House, London and those based in Geneva working for the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO). Friends House staff work for Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) and have made COP26 a key part of their work for 2020. During the lunch break I spoke to Ann Floyd of World Relations and she was enthusiastic about working with Friends outside Europe in the run-up to COP.

The event will be huge: an estimated 30,000 from across the world will be in Glasgow.

Quaker focus will be on Climate Justice: how poor countries can be empowered to develop in sustainable ways (e.g. using renewables rather than fossil fuels, have access to the latest sustainable engineering technologies).

## Meeting for Sufferings February 2020

### **Council for European Affairs**

The day after we officially left the EU, a young staff member of the Council spoke to us: “Europe’s policymakers continue to frame migration in terms of ‘crisis’ and ‘threat’, and remain beholden to the received wisdom that security and militarism go hand in hand. Fundamentally, we seek to challenge those narratives, providing evidence for sustainable and humane policy alternatives, and creating opportunities for new approaches to emerge.”

He referenced what to me was a particularly impressive piece of work: “a project called #ChooseRespect during the 2019 European Parliament elections. Over one month, we reached out to European voters on Twitter with messages which addressed myths about migration and encouraged social media users to have a conversation about migration in more positive terms. These messages were targeted to users living in areas with high support for far-right parties, and who themselves followed far-right politicians on

Twitter. When we engaged directly with a cross-section of this audience, we saw tangible evidence that reaching out and having conversations about migrants and refugees changes the tone of online discussion and defuses some of the anger which often characterises such interactions.”

### **Local Development Workers (LDV), Impact and Fundraising**

Trustees are still deciding when the LDV “roll-out” should happen (it is not now a question of “if”, but “when”). Though the aim is that all Area Meetings should have *access* to a hub worker, it will not mean that there will be one based in *every* Area Meeting. The idea of locally based workers is that Meetings will no longer have to struggle.

They have also appointed staff to work on fundraising, speaking of the need to get the message out that we need bigger contributions in order not to have to cut work in vital areas. We heard from David Loxton, our new Head of Communications and Fundraising.

The trustees are also concerned about “impact” and have appointed an Impact and Projects Officer, Alex Fulton. She, along with David, got us to take part in an exercise, which I include here.

If you had to choose, which end of the spectrum would it be?

Compelled to witness.....or.....Compelled to achieve change?

Be distinctively Quaker.....or.....Voice all concerns?

Everyone felt that the second statement was clear-cut (i.e. that “being distinctively Quaker” was what really mattered), but that the first statement was a lot more nuanced.

### **Diversity and inclusion**

We heard reflections from Friends present at the recent Diversity and Inclusion gathering and broke into small groups for further discussion.

#### **Bath: Yearly Meeting Gathering in August**

As Area Meetings we were encouraged to undertake preparation for this (see the later pages of the booking leaflet that has been sent out). The title of the Gathering was discerned by Young Friends and is: “Listening, prophecy and reconciliation: allyship in a Climate Emergency.”

#### **Ed Tyler, Argyll**

## Update on Glasgow Meeting House

A special business meeting was held on 5<sup>th</sup> January. The purpose of the meeting was to seek clarity and to involve the members across the Area Meeting. To that end there were representatives of Trustees and the following Local Meetings: Argyll, Ayrshire, Castle Douglas, Dunblane, Islay & Jura, Lanark, Milngavie. Below are copies of some of the minutes:

### **20/3 Purpose of the Meeting**

This special meeting to consider potential plans for Glasgow Meeting House is held under the authority of Local Meeting minute 19/127, which asked the Meeting House Development Group to progress it. We are pleased to welcome Friends from other Local Meetings in West Scotland Area Meeting and beyond.

We have been considering the future of our Meeting House over the past five years. On one level it is a decision about bricks and mortar but at a deeper level it is also about our vision for the future of the Quaker Meeting in Glasgow. We have undertaken a visioning process (which is still ongoing) to help us discern the way forward. The Meeting House Development Group has looked at a whole range of options, most of which have been rejected as not feasible or appropriate. They are now presenting a recommended option. A briefing paper, attached to these minutes, has been circulated beforehand.

Any final decisions will have to be made by Area Meeting, which owns the Meeting House, in consultation with AM Trustees. The purpose of this meeting is to brief Friends and to indicate to Local Meeting by minute any conclusions we come to today. The minute will be forwarded to Area Meeting.

**20/4 Documents in advance** *were circulated before and during the meeting.*

### **20/5 Presentation and discernment**

Martin Mansell introduced the background to the matter and the possible ways forward for refurbishment or rebuilding of the Meeting House.

Charlotte Wright spoke to possible methods of funding the works.

During the presentation there was the opportunity to clarify factual matters.

The text of the presentation is attached to these minutes. Following the presentation we have had a period of discernment.

### **20/6 Next steps**

We welcome the work done so far by the Meeting House Development Group (MHDG) and Funding Group and approve the general direction to stay on this site.

We tend towards rebuilding. We wish to live adventurously and become a beacon for the Society in West Scotland incorporating creative and imaginative design. We remain committed to our vision.

We are looking to the future and future generations. The needs of young people are paramount.

We ask the MHDG to work with Friends in the Area Meeting to gather ideas as to how we can serve the local meetings with a new building.

We have noted questions raised by Friends including from the AM treasurers. The matter of financial risks was also raised.

We ask the MHDG and Funding Group to consolidate plans including commissioning an estate agent to value different options. We ask them to test the plans with Trustees and draw up a proposal for LM to forward to AM. This should include a timetable.

We suggest that the Funding Group becomes an Area Meeting Group and ask Trustees to consider this.

We send these minutes to Area Meeting for information.

**Michael Hutchinson, Daphne Wassermann Clerks**

### AM Concern: Violence against Women UN 16 days action 2019

How do you measure success? Six full black bags of bras and knickers were taken to the Pantagon for the Smalls for All charity to send to Africa. And in answer to one question raised at the AM in Dunblane, they are multicoloured! Of the 100 leaflets we had printed for Thursdays in Black, we have only about 50 left. They were carried out by many local meetings and women's organisations. Our vigils were as successful as previous years in the number of young people we spoke to - we targeted the universities this year - however fewer people attended the vigils to help out. MRoy also had an article on the subject, printed in The Friend.

Our day seminar was a huge success. 10 of us heard Verene Nicolas speak on the legacy of patriarchy. One key theme was that Patriarchy was a system whilst Feminism was a movement for change. Another aspect of Patriarchy as it is practiced today is that it underpins an economic system that is exploitative of the earth, unjust and unequal regards women, and is generally unsustainable. We are hoping to take this further to COP26 and that maybe one of the outcomes of the special AM. Perhaps? Our afternoon session of poetry lead by Clare Phillips was inspiring and bonding in our experience as Quaker women.

If you want further involvement or to be kept in touch with our concern, contact Margaret Roy or Kate Arnot.



## Book Reviews

### **No One is too small to make a difference - Greta Thurnberg**

This is a small book that carries a heavy message. It is her first book in English and is a collection of her speeches to diverse audiences from people attending climate rallies, the UN, World Economic Forum and the parliament in Westminster.

On page 58 in a speech ‘Can you hear me’ delivered at the Houses of Parliament at Westminster, 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2019 she says:

*‘I was fortunate to be born at a time and a place where everyone told us to dream big. I could become whatever I wanted to. I could live wherever I wanted to. People like me had everything we needed and more. Things our grandparents could not even dream of. We had everything we could ever wish for and yet now we may have nothing.*

*Now we probably don’t even have a future anymore.*

*Because that future was sold so that a small number of people could make unimaginable amounts of money.’*

We hear her message. The issues are real and the effects are already being seen and felt right now particularly in some of the parts of the world least able to cope. Climate instability causing severe weather, droughts and food insecurity, precipitating and exacerbating conflicts between groups over resources.

*‘Avoiding climate breakdown will require cathedral thinking. We must lay the foundation while we may not know exactly how to build the ceiling’.* The opportunity to fix this is finite and the clock has started ticking.

*‘We children are doing this to wake the adults up. We children are doing this for you to put your differences aside and start acting as you would in a crisis. We children are doing this because we want our hopes and dreams back.’*

Her book is a call to us adults to get on with the job of doing all it takes to stop the Climate clock counting down to human and planetary extinction.

**Published by Penguin Random House at £2.99**

### **We are the weather, Saving the planet begins at breakfast – Jonathan Safran Foer**

In this book the author weaves personal stories with the science and blends in philosophical and sociological musings on the climate crisis.



*'I run to soothe a nightmare in my son's head but do almost nothing to prevent a nightmare in the world. If only I could perceive the planetary crisis as a call from my sleeping child. If only I could perceive it as exactly what it is'.*

He takes time to explore the situation in this beautifully written book but cannot escape thinking *'the truth is as crude as it is obvious: we don't care. So now what?'* This is pages 34 and 35 the rest of the book is his attempt to answer the question and provoke the reader to do the same.

He is easy on the reader, no hectoring or preaching here, in fact quite the reverse. He looks at the situation through many fascinating lenses. On page 108 he talks about the Romans:

*'After the Roman Empire's fall, exotic plants bloomed across the Colosseum's bloodstained ground, plants found nowhere else in Europe. They overcame the balustrades, choked the columns, relentlessly grew and grew. For a time the Colosseum was the world's greatest botanical garden, if an unintentional one. The seeds had been unknowingly transported in the pelts of the bulls, bears, tigers and giraffes brought from thousands of miles away for the gladiators to slaughter. The plants occupied the Roman Empire's absence.'*

The author's grandmother, a holocaust survivor, had been a constant person in his life from childhood. As he writes this book, she is dying, at times he writes sitting beside her in her final illness in the room where they had spent many happy hours when he was a child. She had told him, when he was young that he was her revenge.

*'“Revenge” comes from the Latin word for “vengeance” vindicare meaning “to set free” or to “lay claim to”.' To set something free again, to reclaim. 'The ultimate revenge against a genocide that is meant to eradicate you and your people is to create a family. The ultimate revenge against a force that tries to claim and imprison you is to set yourself free again, to reclaim your life. Maybe when she looked at her children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren, she saw something like a coliseum of thriving, colourful, distinctive life, spectacular precisely for its improbability. If we address the environmental crisis now, the future life we will have enabled-reclaimed, re-freed- to thrive might look the same.'*

Safran Foer provides a readable broad and engaging picture of the world as it is and the tasks ahead that we have to undertake individually and collectively in our attempt to fix the planetary crisis. Technological and economic fixes will be needed. Invention and legislation will be needed too. The environmental problem involves 'social challenges like overpopulation, the disempowerment of women,

income inequality and consumption habits. It reaches into not only our future but our past.’ The second world war provides examples in this book of how a clear and present threat to survival can motivate populations to change behaviour for the good. Opportunities for minorities and women to work in the industrial workforce including US shipyards as the men left for the battlefield is one example. These changes helped to loosen structural inequalities and galvanise civil rights movements further down the road

*‘Saving ourselves will require collective action, and acting collectively will change us- especially if we change not because we are inspired to, not because we “we see the light”, but rather because, sensing an approaching dark, we compel ourselves to act on knowledge that we can’t believe. When a couple suffers a betrayal- an affair, for example-and is deciding whether to stay together, the famed therapist Esther Perel encourages the partners to think of their marriage in these terms: “Your first marriage is over. Would you like to create a second one together?”’*

In the section of the book - It will be Impossible to Defuse the Ticking Time Bomb Without Reducing Our Consumption of Animal Products he concludes *‘Home-front efforts during World War two were not enough, on their own, to win the war, but the war could not have been won without without home-front efforts. Changing how we eat will not be enough, on it’s own to save the planet, be we cannot save the planet without changing how we eat.’*

I found this book an uncomfortable read.

Jonathan Safran Foer has made a good stab at looking at the issue of our reluctance to take action on the Climate Crisis and by examining his own difficulties with this helps shed some light on some shadier parts of our psychology.

This book has an appendix detailing some of the background to the central thesis about the link between animal farming and climate change, extensive notes and a bibliography.

**Published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux \$16.99**

**Men are are not free when they are doing just what they like.  
Men are only free when they are doing what the deepest self likes.  
And there is getting down to the deepest self?  
It takes some diving.**

**D.H. Lawrence**

## **Master and Commander**

When wind blows wild and blasts ye hard, an' ye have to alter course,  
This may not suit the men ye serve, nor those ye love the most.  
The seas are rough, the waves are high, an' sweep across the deck,  
Ye fear the worst, the riggin's gone, ye think y'er for a wreck!

But courage calm, an' nerves o' steel, is what the sea demands,  
The crew will turn to ye 'the skip' to give the right commands.  
Master and Commander sir, not many make the grade,  
Know well the sailors sent aloft, or mustered on parade.

Depend they will to see them home, they may not read or write,  
A warm dry bunk, a tot of rum, is all they want tonight.  
They'll bicker an' they'll grumble, an' sometimes swear an' curse,  
But each o' them he serves his course, an' not for weighty purse!

When landfall comes, and crew gets 'shore, it's then they've lost their fears,  
It's tales o' storms an' riggin' high, that's fed to women's ears.  
"I used to serve wi' Nelson!" a crewman once gave boast,  
Now there's a worthy seaman – an' once I seen his ghost!"

But when it's call to muster, they'll line along the plank,  
The Master and Commander's 'board, they call him, 'Lucky Jack'  
"I sailed the Spanish Main wi' 'im", the bearded bosun said,  
"Ol' Jack he'll see you through m' lads, so have no fear or dread.

But if he catch ye stealin', or drunk aboard this boat,  
He'll string ye from the yardarm, an' let yer carcass float.  
Bold Jack he is a fair man, and knows the seas right well,  
He knows the sheets to put to wind, in calm, an' storm as well.

Sailors served a'fore him, tell tales about his rank,  
Look lively when he speaks to ye, he's never one to prank.  
Just clean yer gear, and do yer job, the best that ye are able,  
And if yer luck holds firm young lad, ye'll serve the Cap'ns table!"

**Bill Bingham Glasgow**

Captain James Cook navigated the world in a boat that had no engine. He had no Sat-Nav and most of his crew could neither read nor write. Whilst his contemporary, the notorious Captain William Bligh, thought nothing of handing out 400-600 lashes to his 'insubordinate' crew.

James Cook handed out 200 lashes in the whole of his naval career. The maximum number of lashes he gave at any one time was 12, and that was for theft. Although he never became a Quaker himself, he was trained in the ways of the sea by the Quakers of Whitby who were coal merchants. Cook sailed the shallow-drafted Quaker coal boats from Whitby to the Thames, and he went on to become the greatest navigator of the oceans that the world has ever seen.

*We are caught between the beauty and strength of the Light we seek, and can rest in, and the reality of the darkness that surrounds us calling us to act, to create a better world for all. It is not easy to hold to the Light in the world when we are bombarded by the darkness but it is not the God without that I fear but the one within. The one within demands patience and tolerance. It demands that I grow in understanding and cease from reacting out of my defence mechanisms when someone else reacts from that dark place escaping their fear and pain in attack.* Bill Bingham, Glasgow

### **The Darkness of the Soul that has Lost its Way**

*There is greater darkness than the one we fight.*

*It is the Darkness of the soul that has lost its way.*

*The war we fight is not against powers and principalities,*

*It is against chaos and despair.*

*Greater than death of the flesh is the death of hope.*

*No one knows the shape of the future and where it will take us.*

*We know only that it is born in pain.*

### **From Babylon 5**



# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 8<sup>TH</sup> MARCH

International Women's Day 2020  
campaign theme is #EachforEqual

An equal world is an enabled world.

Individually, we're all responsible for our own thoughts and actions - all day, every day.

We can actively choose to challenge stereotypes, fight bias, broaden perceptions, improve situations and celebrate women's achievements.

Collectively, each one of us can help create a gender equal world.

## **Into the Belly of the Dragon**

Into the belly of the Dragon  
to feel its pain  
to touch the outer limit  
and to draw back  
into form.

To shape and crystallise the fear  
to transform it  
into hope  
or turn away  
and hide in conformity

Into lies and deception.

ILLUSION

The truth too raw to bear  
Welcome to the World.

They are not cowards who hide in rules.

GREEN is not an accident  
but a flag of hope . . . In every blade of grass.

## Report on the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Ordination of women to the priesthood in the Scottish Episcopal Church.

Curiosity, a general interest in women's issues and having a friend who was one of the original women who were ordained in Perth were what led me to attend this service.

The service was held in St Ninians Cathedral Perth on the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2019.

Organised by a group of women, one of whom was Rev Canon Dr Carrie Applegath. She said, "This anniversary marks a significant moment in the life of the Scottish Episcopal Church. It is exciting to celebrate the first 25 years of women's ordination to the priesthood, and to acknowledge that we are still on the journey towards equality and inclusion, not just for women in the church but for women everywhere."

It was good to be warmly welcomed into the church, where the chairs were arranged 'in the round', giving a more intimate and inclusive feel to the usual arrangement where the congregation face the altar during most of the service. The women clergy processed to their places, followed by the male bishops (and the first female one, Rt Rev'd Anne Dyer who presided at the Eucharist.) The whole service was led by women, including the sermon, which was preached by Rev'd Canon Dr Anne Tomlinson. The male clergy provided support. For me this created a wonderful atmosphere of unity and respect to those we had gathered to honour.

Some of the original ordinands had died, but they were named and included by the use of white roses being placed in a vase in the centre of the circle.

It's hard for me – who wasn't connected with any church at the time that this all took place -to really appreciate what it meant for those women who felt called to the priesthood but were prevented from doing so. But I could see and feel from the dedicated members present that it was a deep healing that had taken place.

It seems to me that the ordination of women provides a living example of how the Episcopal church has managed, (albeit painfully), to move closer to the teachings and example of Jesus.

Finally, a quote from Bishop Anne: 'The journey continues until all of God's children are truly welcome in all ministries in the Church'

**Stella Cranwell,( Attender at Perth Meeting.) 11<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2020**

*I had been asked to attend this service by GM on behalf of Scottish Quakers, so I had a mindful eye on my Quaker perspective. I have been a local Pact (Perth Action of Churches Together) representative for several years and was especially pleased to see many faces I recognised, including our local 'Women in Black' advocate.*

*After I had acclimatized myself to the long white cassocks that the ordinands wear and the beautiful refurbished Cathedral necessary as part of the tradition of Anglican worship, I was also moved by the grace and warmth generated by the service in the*

*round and the naturally shared caring community, predominately of women, women officiating and amazing acoustics of the full range of voices singing. Certainly one big difference from silent Quaker Worship!*

*The poignancy of the symbolic floral vase of white roses was deeply emotional and thought provoking, as supportive clergy, relatives or friends individually presented their memorial tributes - the lone flower lurching in the vase gradually joined by others. Sadness and arduous journeys being expressed as a human right of passage traversing the 'darkness' where shared comfort, contribution and company led to a rightful equal life in the 'light'. I found this reinforced as happy, rejoicing groups were photographed on raised steps around an altar. The celebratory spirit was carried over into cake and 'sparkly' (local effervescent elderberry flower 'champagne') that all could partake. The joint Ecumenical spirit and respect was beautifully embodied in a service where all were encouraged to find a place – I came away feeling that women and those of 'all and no faith' had a welcome, the hope is that it will never be tarnished.*

**Jill Tutton, Clerk, Perth Meeting**

## **Side by Side Scotland**

This is an international organization that is currently Christian but has growing links with the world of Islam. It is not constituted to be formed by organisations so I attend meetings as an individual Quaker. It works through faith leaders in many countries. Through it, I attended a cross-party meeting on development at Holyrood where a presentation was made about the role of faith leaders in promoting development in local communities among disadvantaged nations but where this role of leadership was not fully recognized by the development agencies. **Margaret Roy**  
One of SbS's proposed actions is period poverty, usually an unmentionable subject:

### **Side by Side Scotland Period Poverty Concept Note**

#### **Background**

Period poverty is a lack of access to sanitary products due to financial restrictions. It is often compounded by a lack of information about menstruation and a lack of access to safe, clean, accessible spaces to change period products and clothes.

Period Poverty is an inherently gendered issue. It overwhelmingly affects women and girls, although trans men and some non binary people will also be impacted. The potential impacts on those experiencing period poverty range from girls and women not being able to attend work, school or social activities, to concerns over hygiene and health, to negative impacts on self confidence, self esteem and body image. The societal shame and stigma attached to menstruation and poverty means that women often struggle in silence, unable to tell their family or friends or seek help.



In the UK, 49% of girls have missed an entire day of school because of their period. 59% of these girls have made up a lie or an alternative excuse to avoid going to school. Over the course of a year, 137,700 children in the UK miss school because of period poverty.

In Scotland, 1 in 5 women have gone without period products because they could not afford them, 17% of women had relied on charitable sources to access period products, 1 in 10 have had to prioritise other essentials such as food over period products and 22% were unable to change their products as often as they needed to, leaving 11% with a serious health impact due to this.

In April 2019, Monica Lennon MSP lodged her Private Member's Bill on period poverty, seeking to create a right to access free period products in Scotland and to oblige local authorities and public bodies to make period products available. The Bill is currently under scrutiny by the Local Government and Communities Committee who are taking evidence until February 2020.

### **Poverty Connections**

Period poverty is fundamentally a poverty issue and requires concerted action to ensure that everyone has the resources they need to lead a dignified and fulfilling life. However, this is compounded by a lack of knowledge and an ongoing stigma over menstruation, making it vital that our anti-poverty work is gendered. **What could this look like in practice with our charitable giving?**

### **Environmental Connections**

Most period products are single use and can contain up to 90% plastic. Tampons, pads and panty liners amount to more than 200,000 tonnes of waste per year in the UK. However, when relatively cheap plastic disposable sanitary products are impossible to afford, more sustainable, reusable and (in the long term) cost effective products are completely out of reach for many women and girls. **How can we centre a gendered and anti-poverty approach in the environmental movement on this issue?**

### **International Connections**

Period poverty is a global issue and affects women and girls around the world as well as in Scotland. **How could we change our international partnership and solidarity work to help tackle period poverty?**

### **Opportunities**

- Linking in with existing partners to create a concerted faith voice on this issue (including environment, food banks, international partners as above)
- Community led research - finding out what the current access to period products is like in places of worship across Scotland
- Political engagement with the Bill process
- Campaigning for places of worship and community facilities to supply period products on a voluntary basis to complement public sector access



Majority of families in rural Ethiopia are too poor to buy sanitary pads, or Underwear

As a result of not having adequate sanitary protection many girls are absent from school 2-7 days a month affecting their educational prospect

UNICEF in partnership with health care worker teachers have worked with local manufacturers to produce a washable reusable pad enabling girls to attend school and further their education and job prospects.

## **A call for religious actors to participate in UN Commission on the Status of Women 64**

In 2020, the global community will mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995). A five-year milestone will be reached towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. 2020 is therefore a pivotal year for the accelerated realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, everywhere. We hope to be able to support one or more religious actors to participate in the 64<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

**At: United Nations Headquarters, New York, USA Between: 9<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

Selected delegates will be expected to contribute to advocacy related to our statements submitted to the UN. The focus is on the role of religious actors in advancing gender justice, and the following four critical areas:

1. **Defending Human Rights and Gender Justice.**
2. **Sexual and Gender Based Violence.**
3. **Acknowledging Family Diversity.**
4. **Gender Justice in Law.**

## **MY GRANNIE'S SUFFRAGETTE SCARF**

My Grannie lost her Mum when she was young. Her father was a 'deaf and dumb' cabinet maker who took her with him when measuring the bodies for their coffins. Grannie was raped in her teens producing Robert who died at El Alamen. She had gone on to marry and had five other children, the youngest of which was electrocuted in the tomato houses of the Clyde Valley - no health and safety in those days. Grannie made her own butter. She baked every week. Her scones were made with buttermilk that was delivered by the milkman. The top drawer of her great mahogany tallboy was full of knitting needles. *The devil makes mischief for idle hands to do.* When I was five, she gave me my Bible and a big book full of glorious pictures illustrating Bible stories. My Grannie was a hard working good woman. The only other thing I have belonging to her, apart from her name, is a silk green and purple scarf, a suffragette scarf.

Two generations later, has it changed, Grannie?

Try to find a woman who has not been fondled! Although it is a little better today when most women wear trousers. Mum didn't until after Dad died - he wouldn't let her. Like you, she never went out to work. Father's pride. But then, she had so much to do at home. She never had a washing machine till after I left school. And, in the new houses, after the war, she had her own kitchen – no camaraderie of the Steamie for her. Fridges? No – she saught fresh food daily. Her son was shot through the head in a street in Belfast. Dad put him into the British Army so he wouldn't go down the mine. Dad died of a broken heart and guilt a few years later. Economic conscription they called it.

WRI, WI, WRVS, the Women's Guild. What's happened to the Rural? And the Guild is not just for women now but even has a man at its head. Oh Grannie, this equality business! They say we have equal pay, equal opportunities and of course we now all have the vote. But . . . but . . . but . . . is it at the expense of taking on masculinity? If women's world/values is confined to 'caring' then this is the least valued in our society as the lowest paid in a system that accords value by money. Money as profit fuels an economic system that grossly exploits individuals and strips the Earth of her resources. It fuels our alienation from the natural world.

Oh Grannie, that is a big one with COP26 coming here to Scotland in November. But there you go. It is all big boys, government organisations, all working in the negative – stop this, cut that . . . *terrible things happening chaps, so we have to change!* A bit like local councils pulling in their belts, cutting outgoings. So what do they cut? Public toilets, looking after their residents' basic needs of course. The vulnerable have no power to answer back. Big bucks talk.

I fear for the younger generation. When they gave us the PILL, to prevent conception, they told us we would be free of our biology. They didn't tell us we would be freer to be exploited by men. Young women are now under great pressure to open their legs. However, fuelled by pornography, they are seen even more as objects in our hypersexualised society. Domestic violence is such that 173 women were killed last year, three a week. Over 10,000 sexual crimes each year in Scotland, 43% perpetrated on under 18 year olds.

Worldwide, we know more now. What is visible is the awful culture of FGM, Female Genital Mutilation, to control women's sexuality. Did they say 20 million women??? The women are ostracised when the 'side effects' < discharge, double incontinence, make them 'dirty', or many die in childbirth, the scarring makes birth very difficult. And, the biggest increase is in the southern USA amongst white fundamentalist Christians! Women in refugee camps without men do not belong to anyone! Rape is now widely encouraged as a weapon of war in many local conflicts. I could go on.

Women's issues are hidden or ignored.

We hope Quakers will take up this concern to expose the inequalities and injustices of our misogynous society. We need to get back to a better relationship with Nature that is

more respectful and less exploitive. Away from dualism to find the Unity of the Heart.  
Your scarf I wear to remind me that your struggle is not over.  
**Margaret Marion Spence . . . Forrest . . Findlay . . Roy**

## Information and Opportunities for Action

**Love & Dying** <https://vimeo.com/372576467> Password: 2FALAD\_Trailer\_v2  
Assisted dying documentary

From: "David George" <utilityfilms@gmail.com>

We are film makers from the Isle of Wight. The link takes you to a short trailer for our new documentary 'Love & Dying' which looks at the issue of assisted dying. The film will be released at the end of February and is being made available, free of charge, to organisations who wish to organise screenings.

300 dying people end their own lives in this country every year.

Every eight days a Briton travels to Dignitas in Switzerland for help to die.

84% of the public support the choice of assisted dying for terminally ill adults.

Assisting someone to die is against the law and could risk a 14 year prison sentence.

It is important that the debate around assisted dying continues.

The film's makers said "We tell the moving stories of two families who have been directly affected by terminal illness and its consequences. We are convinced that a new law should allow those with a terminal illness prognosis of six months or less, that have mental capacity and are suffering intolerably, to bring their own lives to an end. We hope our film will assist the debate."

### **Compassion in World farming**

An appeal to fund London adverts against UK live exports raised £15,650 target in under five hours. In fact, over **£29,000** was donated.

Tube station adverts, calling on the Prime Minister to ban UK live exports, will be live in six central London stations from 24th February. Then don't miss the *Evening Standard* and *Spectator* adverts, and ad van tour, later in the week. *Sadly all down south folks.*

## **Faslane 2020**

I grew up thinking that "2020 vision" was perfect vision, sight impossible to improve on. This year my hope is that our dear leaders will attain 2020 vision and dismantle and remove the abomination that is the nuclear weapons system imposed on us in Scotland, maintained at Faslane on the Clyde estuary.

In the meantime, we shall continue with the six times a year silent witness and Worship we hold at the North Gate of the Faslane Naval Base. The dates are Sunday at 11 am on:

15 March

19 April

17 May

21 June

27 September

8 November.

If you would like to attend, and would like more information about e.g. transport to get there, please contact Mary Alice Mansell. All are welcome to attend, as with any Meeting for Worship.

## **Framing human policing**

From Quaker Council for European Affairs a new booklet that can be read at [www.qcea.org/HumanPolicing](http://www.qcea.org/HumanPolicing). This will be backed up by a 45 minute live webinar that is open to small Quaker meetings on Sundays at 12.30. If your meeting would like to join contact by e mail [events@qcea.org](mailto:events@qcea.org).

This addresses the subject of anti-migrant violence committed by police and private security forces in Europe. Quakers have been working behind the scenes to tackle the problem at the policy level, deploying Quaker-inspired 'quiet diplomacy' to help make constructive discussions happen.

Also from QCEA, there is in planning a 'mini' Study Tour to Brussels from 1 -4<sup>th</sup> April 2020. Participants will visit the European institutions, learn about QCEA's work and meet Friends from across Europe in advance of their General Assembly Weekend. The theme will be 'sticking together'. [www.qcea.org/StudyTour](http://www.qcea.org/StudyTour).

## **WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER 6<sup>TH</sup> March at a church near you.**

This international ecumenical movement was brought to Scotland in the 1930s. Each year, a day in March is set aside, to share the same world wide service of prayer.

Each year women in one country write the service. The aim is to pray for that specific country. This year the country is Zimbabwe.

## News from Local Meetings

### Quaker Meeting by Zoom?

My local meeting has had to reduce its number of meetings for worship by 50% in the past year, because of lower attendance. A lot of travelling is involved for some of us. And the weather can make the journey difficult, especially at this time of year. Now the meetings are so few that if someone has to miss one there's a big gap before they can come again.

I am keen to try to start some kind of regular activity online. I would suggest a short period of silent worship followed by time to chat. There might be something to think about before next time or a pre-announced theme. But Argyll Meeting isn't on its own big enough to sustain such a group, I fear.

My experience is that online worship can work well, particularly if many of the people involved already know each other.

I would like to find out if there are people out there who would be interested in getting this to work. I'm thinking principally of people in small meetings in West Scotland - for example, some of those who attend the gathering in Crianlarich. Sadly I will not myself be there this year to put forward the proposal.

I think there would have to be prearranged groups - possibly chosen by the timing of the meetings. There would have to be a convenor or two for each. This person would need to have Zoom and invite the others to join. There could be a reminder in advance. Visitors would be welcomed. I'm not clear how the visitors would know about the schedule though.

**Jane Mitchell, Argyll**

**West Coast Friends Gathering, Fri 13th - Sun 15th March**, at Crianlarich Youth Hostel. There are spaces available. All attenders and members are welcome, highly recommended.

Kate Gulliver is taking the bookings [kathryn.gulliver@phonecoop.coop](mailto:kathryn.gulliver@phonecoop.coop) to confirm your place

### Corrections to the November newsletter.

Daphne Wasseremann's Trident article on page 12 should read **China**, Pakistan and India" not "India, Pakistan and India".

## Hold in the Light

That is a phrase we use so often as Quakers.

Confronted with a sadness or obstacle, it can reduce our helplessness. Yet, it is one of most powerful tools and some of the most beautiful words that come down to us firmly invoke the experience.

Do we know how to?

As newsletter editor, I have persevered bringing Friends to you that need a little cherishing . I have done this on the tails of our healing ministry but my ‘secret’ mission is to strengthen our ‘fellowship’\* as a worshipping community. We/I? need that strength to face the darkening world.

So, to ‘hold in the light’, is it just a passing thought or a heart-felt wish? Or something more?

To hold in the light we have first to place ourselves in the Light. In almost any religion, this is spoken of as *opening the heart*. The Buddhists go further to talk of engendering Bodhicitta, great mind. When we place awareness in the Heart (chakra for some), as it opens, we feel LOVE. For me the sun shines, even on the most overcast days, and everything around is brighter in colour (OK I need to see an optician). There is Light all around. If I continue to sit there, I go into a very deep nurturing silence where time vanishes. I can become very much more aware of all around me. Now I have choices.

I can allow myself to become ONE with the Light, *feeling* out into the whole world – blessing it, becoming ONE with it. Becoming revitalised myself but also strengthening the awareness of the Light, its presence in the mind of human consciousness. The rest of the world, Nature, is never separate from that Light, only us humans and so we suffer in our thought world.

I am not very good at it but if we can do this in Meeting, and all others are in that Light, we strengthen the experience for each other. This is why some go off to sit with gurus. Us Quakers are *all* Children of the Light. As Seekers, we seek the Light.

In the Buddhist POWA practice for the dead, we engender Bodhicitta taking the image of the beloved into our hearts and into that Light. We don’t interfere any further because that is not yet our journey. We only hold them in the Light and in Love to give them strength to continue.

We almost do the same in healing but this is the Tong Lin Buddhist practice that is more active. After engendering Bodhicitta, coming into oneness with the Light, we hold the Other's image but see them as whole and smiling. Actually it is more detailed as we take their illness on ourselves in love but to do this correctly we need to feel the Oneness of the Light into which the illness will dissolve. *And not stay within us because we are One.*

However, you don't need to wait until people are ill. In Judaism, they open to the Presence night and morning as the light changes. Twilight and dawn are the times when the angels are praying!

In Experiment with Light, we do similar. Once we let go of the chattering thoughts and emotions, when the stillness of the heart is steady, we look to see what is disturbing us, what we are holding that stirs the waters. We give it attention and wait. Like Excalibur, an insight may arise or an answer to a question that was bothering us. We do this automatically all the time if we walk in the Light as Fox asked of us. The key is to WAIT in the Light, to TRUST the Light, to listen and acknowledge the Light. M = Mind the Light; O = Open to the Light; W = Wait in the Light; S = Submit to the Light. *Jesus taught, and we Quakers believe, God himself will teach his people\*.*

Here is a special Hold in the Light for this newsletter. You may have others, joys and tears, that I encourage you to share with us all. Send to me at the newsletter or to Derek Read at the Quaker Healing Group. **Margaret Roy, Glasgow**

*\*Oh, do excuse the sexist language.*

*Neil MacKechnie who has just come out of hospital after pneumonia.*

*Paul Burton also out of hospital after scare re pneumonia.*

*Joyce Minnis' family adjusting to their loss of her.*

*Sheila Semple whose husband was waiting an op so she is taking a break from her interviews for the newsletter.*

*Carol MacGregor Ross who hasn't been at Wednesday meeting for a while.*

*Mary Kennedy working on the front line with pregnant refugee women.*

*Jane Mitchell bringing together Friends in the isolated West.*

*All the new role holders – you know who they are in your Meeting.*

*Ian MacDonbald & NOMS committee looking for an Asst Treasurer*



## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

6 <sup>th</sup> March	Women's World Day of Prayer
7 <sup>th</sup> March	GENERAL MEETING Edinburgh
8 <sup>th</sup> March	International Women's Day
9 <sup>th</sup> March	Area Meeting by telephone/Zoom
18 <sup>th</sup> April	Area Meeting Castle Douglas
8 <sup>th</sup> June	Area Meeting by telephone/Zoom
13 <sup>th</sup> June	GENERAL MEETING Elgin
1 – 7 <sup>th</sup> August	<b>YEARLY MEETING GATHERING Bath</b>
22 <sup>nd</sup> August	Area Meeting Lochgilphead
12 <sup>th</sup> September	GENERAL MEETING DUNDEE
19 <sup>th</sup> September	Proposed date of Special Area Meeting Glasgow on Legacy of Patriarchy
10 <sup>th</sup> October	Area Meeting Ayr
9 – 19 <sup>th</sup> November	COP26 Glasgow
14 <sup>th</sup> November	GENERAL MEETING Glasgow
7 <sup>th</sup> December	Area Meeting by telephone/Zoom
16 <sup>th</sup> January 2021	Area Meeting Glasgow
6 <sup>th</sup> March 2021	GENERAL MEETING

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Copy should be send in Word format to the editors Alastair McIver or Margaret Roy**