

wsqn

connecting local meetings



May 2022

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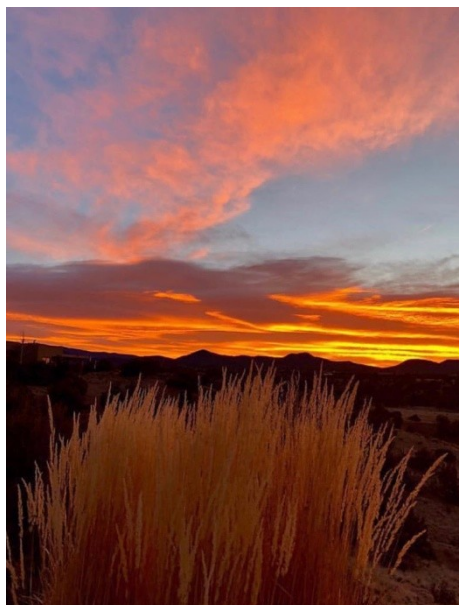
Frontispiece

The tallest tree in Wales got damaged by a storm and was supposed to be cut down, instead chainsaw artist Simon O'Rourke found a better solution to symbolize the tree's last attempt to reach the sky.

GOD

Friends have always been cautious about using the name of God too easily, and today many are acutely aware of this hesitation for a number of reasons. One of their main difficulties is that the word 'God' has often been identified with misleading and false ideas, many of them highly covered with superstition. A further difficulty is that the word 'God' is frequently used as a kind of intellectual concept, whereas for Quakers their awareness of God is discovered in response and commitment to the deeper meaning of life. Quakers also hesitate to use the word too freely because, while completely convinced that people everywhere can know this experience in the depth of their being. They also realise that the ways in which this experience is discovered and expressed by people will vary greatly. The attempt to express this living response into a word or words is liable to limit and distort it. This becomes obvious when we consider how inadequate words are to express and define any profound human experience. When a man says to a woman 'I love you', we recognise that the words themselves are quite unable to convey the full power and depth intended. But despite all these legitimate hesitations, and the impossibility of knowing exactly what the word God means, there is in the end no other word in human language that can finally convey the awareness of an encounter that confronts people at the centre of their being.

George H Gorman in *Introducing Quakers*.



Report on Area Meeting – 7 March 2022

26 Friends gathered by Zoom for Area Meeting, from all local meetings other than Lanark and Arran. Being an evening Area Meeting, a fairly short agenda is usually hoped for, and this one was quite long! However it included some really challenging and inspiring reports, and after worship and a reading from QF&P 24:35 by Adam Curle, in which he reflects on the challenge of finding an alternative to violence in response to violence, we settled down to business.

We began with membership, appointing visitors to an attender who has applied, and deciding not to arrange a further visitation for a Friend who has tendered their resignation, after we had heard both their letters expressing their sadness and their reasons for resignation, and from Friends from their meeting from whom it was clear that this Friend had already had deep conversations and support.

We then turned to the matter of Glasgow Meeting House, where it has been decided to hold a clearness meeting, at which a decision will be made about the future. Expert advice has and is being sought from an architect and letting agent, and a disability audit is to be carried out to establish exactly what would be needed to make the current meeting house fully accessible. The clearness meeting will be challenging, as there are deeply and sincerely held views both for and against staying in the current building, and we uphold Glasgow Friends in their seeking the right way forward.

There were appointments to be made – Elaine Millar as an overseer in Dunblane LM, Gavin Phillips to the White Privilege/Race and Privilege in our Society group, and Rosie Horsley as our Northern Friends Peace Board rep in place of Anne Macarthur who has asked to be released – and then we turned to a series of reports, which had all been circulated in advance for us to reflect on.

First we heard about the establishment of the Sunday evening Area Meeting Meeting for Worship, which has become a fixture since the start of the pandemic, much appreciated by Friends unable to get to physical meeting, either because of distance or infirmity, as well as those of us who just appreciate the spiritual space before the start of another busy week. Indeed, our application for membership has come from an attender at this meeting. We happily agreed that the Sunday evening meeting should be listed as an established worshipping group, with each attender/member listed under an appropriate local meeting, which will take responsibility for eldership and oversight. We then moved on to a report from our representative on the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group, supported by a fulsome report from our very busy Parliamentary Engagement Officer. The PEWG has been busy on the climate emergency, human rights, peace building, and urging

progress towards the proposed Peace Institute, building links with both government ministers and civil servants. Ann Kerr then spoke to the report from the White Privilege group, set up to support this year's Swarthmore lecturer Helen Minnis. The group has asked for a change of name, as the current one feels insensitive and possibly offensive when applied to a group of predominantly white Friends. We agreed that the group should continue as the Race and Privilege in our Society group, working on this issue and helping to disseminate study materials for local meetings both in the run-up to and after the Lecture itself.

Michael Hutchinson told us about the physical gathering of Meeting for Sufferings in London, from which he had just returned. On this occasion, both principle representatives and "alternates" were present, giving the gathering a much more inclusive feel, and the possibility of returning to the practice of two representatives per Area Meeting is being considered. Inevitably, worship focused on the war in Ukraine, and Oliver Robertson's moving address is to be published. The main business however was devoted to how the Society is to face change and the need to adapt to fewer members with different life pressures. We are also being asked by Sufferings to give our opinions about the use of the term "overseer".

Finally, we were informed that the clerk, Alastair Reid, after consulting with the assistant clerk and others, signed the multi-faith letter to the prime minister, protesting against the terms of the Nationality and Borders Bill. Daphne Wassermann has also signed the letter on behalf of Glasgow Friends. We also heard that the monthly Meeting for Healing is to resume on the first Monday evening of the month, and Jan Lethbridge drew our attention to a review group set up by Central Nominations Committee to consider to what extent attenders should be appointed to roles within the Society. Attenders make up a significant proportion of active and committed Friends – perhaps up to 45% in Scotland. Are we ignoring a valuable resource? There was a questionnaire about this in the 3rd March edition of "Quake!" and responses were sought by the end of March.

Area Meeting closed shortly after 8.30pm and we look forward to meeting, both in-person in Glasgow and by Zoom, in Glasgow in a month's time.

Bronwen Currie, Islay & Jura

Stillness can't be broken but silence can.

Report on Area Meeting – 10 April 2022

This was my first experience of a “Blended Area Meeting” and it felt strange. Glasgow has a large wall-mounted screen with microphone and camera placed beneath it, top of the range, it seemed, though this did not stop our having a hitch with the wi-fi in the proceedings in the afternoon. The attendance was modest with one screen sufficing for those talking part from home and eight, later nine, in the meeting room.

Familiar faces showed up on the screen, though it was hardly a crowd. Most meetings had at least one Friend taking part. Three from outwith Glasgow made the journey into the city.

Much of the agenda was the necessary sharing of information, the most important being financial. Bronwen Currie, treasurer, said that last year’s accounts, accepted by our trustees, were now with the examiner, and that we had made a good start with our contributions to 2022, though cautioned that most annual giving tends to occur early in the year. It appears some younger Friends are eager to attend Yearly Meeting and we encouraged Bronwen to make sure they had the funds to allow this. The meeting house had been considerably spruced up for CO26 and it was a delight to see how clean and sparkling everything looked. Just don’t look at the roof, or try to get in the front door if you’re wheelchair bound. And there is still that gap site next door. Anyway a timetable for making a Big Decision on the building’s future has been set with a Special Area Meeting proposed for July. Elders, stimulated by their clerk, a very active Michael Hutchinson, had agreed to meet twice a year with optional drop-in sessions roughly once a month,. They had devoted some time at their recent meeting to look at ways of encouraging study groups and learning sessions. Lots of information is on its way. Woodbrooke as ever is a good provider of courses and material.

The hospitality team provided soup, hot drinks and cakes in the Elizabeth Fry Room, where we enjoyed catching up with folk we had not seen in person for ages. (No idea how you managed at home...) The main activity of the day was the afternoon session devoted to sharing reflections on meetings in person, using video technology or a mixture - or blending - of both. We split into groups, one of which was composed of those in the meeting room. This mirrored a similar session held online last April. We shared insights on our feelings of meeting for worship in a group and in person and the impact of Zoom on the worship and ministry, and especially on us as a religious community. How well do we look after each other? Are we discovering a new form of worshipping group not tied to physical location? Much effort is being devoted to pastoral and spiritual care, a theme to which we will return.

We became a bit tired, closed the meeting at a quarter to three, and had more tea and cakes.

Robin Davis, Dunblane

Report on Meeting for Sufferings held 4-6th March 2022

Meeting for Sufferings is the representative body for Quakers in Britain.

I am standing in the lobby at Friends House in London, waiting to go in for the third day of business at Meeting for Sufferings. A polite young man wanders in and says he is the risen Lord and his mother is Mary. Can he do voluntary work? Before we can react, he goes out again, saying he doesn't mean any harm.

What is this to do with the report on Meeting for Sufferings? Well, the incident remained on my mind and reminded me of the lesson Zoe White explained in her 1988 entry in *Quaker faith & practice*:

22.87 On the morning of Frances' death, as I stood by her bedside, I made a secret resolve somewhere deep in my being which has only recently come to the surface. I made an agreement with God that from that day onward, everything I have to say about God, everything I have to say theologically, has to stand with me by Frances' bedside. If it cannot stand at the side of death, if it cannot stand by the side of a fifty-five-year-old woman who wanted to live to see the trees again, it had better not stand at all because it is probably not worth very much.

This, then is a reflection on this Meeting for Sufferings. There are several accounts already published of what happened at the March meeting. Ann Kerr has written one for last General Meeting and it will be in the *Scottish Friend*. *The Friend* has published detailed accounts and you can look at all the papers and minutes on the BYM website: <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/meeting-for-sufferings>

My anecdote and quotation, above, illustrate for me something that relates deeply: what is the Religious Society of Friends and what is it for? Many of us can get distrustful of organisations. We can feel uncomfortable about those alongside us; impatient over lengthy processes; resentful at the time commitment; appalled at what is being done or not being done; worried we're straying from our purpose and roots. Some of us would prefer that we just stick to meeting for worship and ignore everything else, or just involve ourselves in activism such as Extinction Rebellion or in direct support for those

in need. Why squander money on talking shops and archaic structures when we could give it all to the poor? Like caring for the young man at the door.

We can find ourselves as an organisation in tension: being at the edges or lost in archaic business. A tension that veers towards lack of commitment to each other as a group, or a privileged few undertaking its own rituals outside the world. Either way is death. Yet many of us know why we felt at home on discovering Friends: the depth in worship, the sense of spiritual energy and being at the still centre that moves us to build our faith and a better world. In fact this tension is important. It is through it that we gain the stimulation to think, explore and act, to remain alive. And at the same time, we need to be able to stand 'at Frances' bedside'. We must continually test what we do and say as individuals and as a Society so that it can stand there at her side. To me, this is our purpose at Meeting for Sufferings, to help find a way through the issues that beset us, to strengthen the Society in Britain so we can build community that we all need and help build the 'kingdom on earth'.

So when we look at the business before last Meeting for Sufferings in that light, it can make new sense. I got a strong feeling of an organisation spending time to review itself so it is fitter for the changing outside world, reflecting too how we are in our meetings. At the same time, we continue with our concern on testimony, including peace and climate justice. Oliver Robertson, Head of Worship and Witness at Friends House, led us into an extended period of worship to focus on the war in Europe on the Sunday, beginning as follows:

"Friends, let us hold in the Light the people of Ukraine. Let us hold in the Light the people of Russia. Let us hold in the Light the people of Afghanistan. Let us hold in the Light the people of Ethiopia. Let us hold in the Light the people of Myanmar. Let us hold in the Light those affected by conflicts we have forgotten or have never even heard of, because the consequences of war will scar lives just as they do in Kyiv. Let us hold in the Light the people working for peace. Let us hold in the Light the people who are not. Prayer can be a great comfort, and a powerful spur to action. But what will comfort us and what will comfort others may be very different. We need to hear the voices of people affected by today's wars, so that their lived experience can help us better understand how God is leading us in that situation...."

It was a moving worship period, reminding us of our requirement to sow the seeds of peace where we can.

We also received a minute from Mid-Wales Area Meeting on racism, that complements our own in West Scotland. All Area Meetings are asked to consider how we replace the term 'overseer'. Many meetings are

experimenting and there was a formal call to report to Meeting for Sufferings by the end of the year.

The other main items on the agenda were about developing Quaker structures to suit where we are: with lesser numbers, different make-up and changing demographic. I got a sense that there is a real link between thinking through how we might simplify things, and looking at the purpose and function of Yearly Meeting, Gatherings and Meeting for Sufferings. It is about renewal, whilst keeping faithful to Quaker insights such as recognising where power is and designing our structures to even it.

There was a lot else, of smaller items, all helping to keep the Society in Britain going and up front. The other point about this Meeting for Sufferings was that it had the time over a weekend to give to the business properly, many being in person helped strengthen the community of response, even for those online who are equally part of the Meeting. And it involved both representatives and the alternates from each Area Meeting, making us all feel part of the whole. Having a lot of Scots there also helped build up a sense of belonging. I went with mistrust and came away strengthened and wanting to be involved. A strong Society can speak truth to power, such as the need for government to provide for mental health, and to be clear that our processes are a tool for the Spirit, so we can stand by Frances' bedside.

Do contact me at mjhriddrie@btinternet.com or on 0141 770 7865 if you want to talk about anything or find out more.

The next Meeting for Sufferings is called for 2 July and will be online only. The agenda and papers are available to anyone online.

Michael Hutchinson, Glasgow

QUAKER DISCERNMENT

I was asked recently how I described the Quaker use of 'discernment', as it is rather taken for granted in *Quaker faith & practice*. So, I had a think about this, and a rummage around in books and online. This is where I got to, but it would be good to hear from others as to their take too.

John Punshon, in his useful *Portrait in Grey, a short history of the Quakers*, says: 'Quaker business meetings..are.. held on the basis of silent consideration of verbal contributions in an attempt not to achieve consensus, but to discern the will of God.'

OhhKayy. But this needs some unpacking, and what is 'the will of God'?

Discernment is not just a Quaker process of course, with the Oxford dictionary defining it as "the ability to show good judgement about". As a spiritual practice, the activity of being discerning has been thoroughly explored by St Ignatius and others and their process and commentary are widely available.

Quakers early on developed a discipline of discernment as a way of making collective decisions in a bottom-up organisation committed to the equality of those taking part. More than that, it is grounded in the belief that when several people come together to "labour in the Spirit" they can discern a truth that exceeds the reach of any one individual. It is based on the idea that we can reach something greater and deeper than ourselves that can show us possibilities we previously might not be aware of. This is what was called finding the 'will of God', and this is available to us today even if we don't use that term. It is what is 'underneath' that meaning: that we can attune together to find a way forward. We recognise the truth of this experience, even if the words used to try and describe change over the generations.

So, discernment is a process and means of seeking, in any given set of circumstances, what a decision for the best might be. That means dealing with ourselves so we are ready to be able to do that, as well as looking at the collective process. It is entirely different from a debate or method where we want to prevail in our views over others who might not think the same. It is not even about democracy, in the sense of seeking a majority view: it is about finding the right path; where we are being led, not confusing ends with means.

Margaret Benefiel, an American Quaker and executive director of Shalem Institute, describes discernment as "a process of going deeper. It is drawing on one's whole self, heart, mind, soul, and spirit. ... Through being deeply spiritually grounded, the discernor cuts through the usual distractions and attachments that obscure accurate perception, and seeks to see reality clearly." Margaret Benefield observes that discernment can be practised by an

individual but that individual discernment needs the support of a community and the checks and balances of accountability. We try this in supporting individuals through the clearness process for example. Collective, or corporate, discernment requires individual discerners to come prepared in mind and heart for a wider process. It is that that I'm thinking about here.

Nonetheless, collective discernment rests on the experience of individuals who are faithful to, and learn to practice, the idea that we can sit quietly and listen inwardly to ourselves; ask "where am I listening in myself?"; letting the matter run through us, noting what seems to be driving our decisions, especially where we are aware of uncomfortable emotions.

I like to think of preparing for discernment as "coming with our hearts and minds prepared". We're familiar with that idea from Advice and query 9. In fact I often think that the whole of *Advices & queries* is a text book for discernment preparation.

So we have a spiritual practice, a discipline, a process, an attitude, based on preparation. Hearts and minds prepared.

By "hearts" I mean emotional preparation. This is the same as we need and develop for a gathered meeting for worship. Basically, it about developing awareness: of ourselves as much as of others. It is about "letting go" our own thoughts so that we enlarge our spiritual understanding of what is going on outside us. If we come sure we know what is right, we haven't got there. Our ability to let go reflects the degree to which we are able to be dispassionate about our own deep needs, wants and understanding. The irony of course, is that we may still be 'right', but that we need to let it go to truly find it. We can also ask ourselves questions at any point in the process, such as "What does the Meeting need to go forward?"

Quaker practice, then, pays attention to ways of listening, even to those whom we would not usually, and waiting until the right way emerges, even if this takes longer than we anticipated. We need to reach the same point together, and in some meetings we can say: "we need to stop as we are not together and need to come back". Also, we need to be able to recognise when the truth is being said. That comes when we are gathered together in deep worship. We may still have doubts but we recognise where the Meeting has got to, and are willing to be led even to something that surprises us. We should not block the process unless we are very clear we haven't reached that point.

By "minds" I mean an awareness of right process and practicalities. These are vital. Have we fixed a proper time for the meeting so all can attend? Is there time beforehand for the preparation needed? Are the facts and history of the issue properly available beforehand so we don't go round in circles over detail?

Will we be comfortable and not distracted by inconsequential? Is the agenda structured so that we have time to go through the stages of discernment?

By the latter I mean an understanding of how we behave when faced with complex or important, and perhaps potentially divisive, issues. The clerk sets an agenda with this in mind, but we should be alert to help the process if things slip. Often, when discerning through an emotionally difficult matter, we go through an initial period where those with strong feelings or views need to unload those. I call this the cathartic phase. We need to allow that without direct response other than on facts. Once unloaded those Friends are clearer to listen, and usually do in my experience. If this takes an hour, and that is all the time on the agenda, it would not be good to make a decision before we've had a chance to go to the next stage. For difficult or complex subjects indeed, it is usually better not to try and make a decision, if possible, in one go, as we mull things over in the interval and come back better aware. A clerk may well have to tell us: "we are not ready yet, Friends". With discernment, it is the process, not the result, that is the important thing.

I came across two check lists which are useful to share for developing collective discernment.

1. Give yourself time to make a good discernment. Think of your discernment as a journey in which you will grow personally and closer to God. ...
2. Use the resources you have to learn more. ...
3. Pay attention to what's going on in your heart.

And:

1. Pay attention to your emotions. ...
2. Understand context. ...
3. Ask yourself: "Is it true, or is it just true for me?" There is a difference between actual truth and personal truth. ...
4. Widen your circle so you don't only know people like yourself. ...
5. Practice a better response "Can you help me understand?" can diffuse conflict and be the initial step towards learning and resolution.

So the principles behind discernment are to do with listening, gathering (together) and inclusion.

Discernment is not an easy skill to learn. It takes time and patience and a desire to understand ourselves and others. It's much easier to jump to conclusions based on our own experiences and assumptions... but mastering discernment is key to building inclusion and community. When we get to that point we can judge the "feeling of the meeting" often without a word being said. The clerk is listening out for it and will write it down in a draft minute to see if that is where we are. We've found the still, small voice.

Michael Hutchinson, Glasgow

What is Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM)?

At this time of year, you'll often hear Friends asking each other whether they are going to 'Yearly Meeting'. At the same time you'll have noticed on the front cover of the red book, *Quaker faith & practice*, that it is "the book of Christian discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain". Yet again, you might recall that when we are asked to contribute annually to Quaker work, that includes to our Local Meeting, Area Meeting (West Scotland) and Britain Yearly Meeting (the central work). There seem to be a lot of yearly meetings about, with different meanings.

In fact, yes, there are three meanings:

Britain Yearly Meeting – the annual event open to all Friends in Britain;

Britain Yearly Meeting – the whole organisation of Quakers in Britain;

Britain Yearly Meeting – the central work charity for Quakers in Britain.

First, note it says 'Britain', not the UK. Northern Ireland is part of a separate Yearly Meeting – the Yearly Meeting of Friends in Ireland. It is totally independent of BYM. Quakers world-wide have a large number of different Yearly Meetings, sometimes many within one country (like in Kenya or the USA, where 'BYM' means Baltimore Yearly Meeting!). Each is independent, although there are linking bodies which bring them together, such as the Friends World Committee for Consultation.

Confused yet? Let's try to unravel all this.

In 1660 Margaret Fell told Charles II that "We are a people that follow after those things that make for peace, love and unity" and eight years later, a minute made in London recorded that "We did conclude among ourselves to settle a meeting, to see one another's faces, and open our hearts one to another in the Truth of God once a year...."

Early Friends very much saw themselves as a people, based in local meetings where they came together to determine their own business and running. It soon became apparent that we needed a national structure for Britain, giving those attending the annual meeting in London the authority to draw things together. This is a bottom-up view of the world, and continues to this day. The annual Yearly Meeting is open to all Friends, and makes decisions based on soundings and discernment from the whole.

The annual assembly's decisions were collected together and became part of what we now call *Quaker faith & practice*. Over the years, the annual assembly's organisation required staff, initially the Recording Clerk, and that office remains as the head of an organisation that undertakes Quaker work best done together rather than locally. Nowadays that aspect of Britain Yearly

Meeting is a separate charity, still called Britain Yearly Meeting, with local meetings grouped in 70 different Areas, all separate charities. In Scotland, Britain Yearly Meeting is also represented by General Meeting for Scotland, that looks after relations of Quakers to government and law here.

So, Yearly Meeting the event became the representation of all the Quaker meetings in Britain (sometimes called the 'church', meaning the people), and spawned a central organisation (now the charity). So we have:

Britain Yearly Meeting the event;

Britain Yearly Meeting the church/people;

Britain Yearly Meeting the charity.

If you look at the BYM website, you'll see that the unofficial term 'Quakers in Britain' is now being used to describe the second and third meanings.

The annual event this year is nearly on us (opening 21 May and business being held over 27-30 May). Business is normally prepared in advance so all Friends have a chance to consider it. It is not a Parliament for debate or response, but for discernment towards what the whole of Quakers in Britain need. The representative body, Meeting for Sufferings, deals with more current matters. You can find out what is happening at this annual Yearly Meeting on the website: <https://www.quaker.org.uk/ym> If you don't have access, you can request the documents in advance from Friends House. The theme for the discernment business is as follows:

Theme: **'Faith, Community and Action.'**

Faith: How do we experience worship, community and witness?

Community: How can we build Quaker communities that respond to challenges and put faith into action?

Action: How can we transform thinking and action in Quaker communities and wider society?

The event this year will be blended for the first time, and you need to register through the website so numbers can be determined.

Michael Hutchinson, Glasgow

**Britain Yearly Meeting this year will happen from 27th – 29th May
You still have time to register.**

Helen Minnis of Glasgow Meeting will deliver the Swarthmoor Lecture on Friday 27th.

Book of Discipline Revision Committee – May update

Dear Friends, I'm happy to say that my health is greatly improved: I'm not quite up to pre-lockdown vitality, but I'm a whole lot better than I was a few months ago. I have not, however, been involved personally in any work on the new Book – but I was involved in the setting up of three visits by members of your committee to Area Meetings in other parts of the UK, which I gather went well.

The current focus of the committee is on the two sessions they are presenting as part of the preparation for Yearly Meeting, which you are all most welcome to attend.

Saturday 21 May 6-7pm *Quaker faith & practice: what comes next?* will be led by our two Clerks, Rosie Carnall and Catherine Brewer, and will look at the connections of our committee to the Yearly Meeting committee structure and to the wider community of Friends in Britain. As many of our members as possible will be at that session, either in person or via Zoom, so go and have a look at us! [I will not be there, as I'll be representing Scottish Friends at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.]

Tuesday 24 May 1-2pm: *Quaker faith & practice: the story so far* will do what it says on the tin: Rhiannon Grant and Finola O'Sullivan will be leading a session introducing our work to those Friends who may not know much about our work, and updating those Friends who do with the story of our progress so far.

You will find details of how to join both sessions via Zoom on the Faith in Action section of the BYM website.

I understand that committee member Sally Kikaya was invited to give a short session at Junior Yearly Meeting, and that this will be an annual feature at JYM. Don't lose the opportunity to be up to speed yourself – sign up for one [or both!] of the above BYM sessions.

Our next full committee meeting will be in early July, at Woodbrooke for those who are comfortable travelling, and via Zoom for those who choose not to travel. I can't express how delighted and excited I am at the prospect of seeing my committee friends face-to-face and getting to know those ones who have joined us since the beginning of lockdown, while discerning our way forward with the revision process.

Please continue to uphold us in your prayers – we can't do this work without you!

Mary Woodward, Portobello and Musselburgh

Quaker Committttee for Church and Interfaith Relations – Woodbrooke conference 25-27 March

Experiencing a changed world: how are we being reshaped ?

I arrived in Birmingham after a fraught and very crowded journey from Glasgow. At Birmingham New Street, it was one of the delegates, a lovely Welsh woman who set me right for the stop to get off for Woodbrooke. It had been a long time since I had set foot on those “hallowed grounds” of Woodbrooke to take part in the Spiritual work we are called to.

The Woodbrooke welcome was as warm as ever, with good food and drink, and opportunities to wander in the 10 acres of organically managed grounds, and chance to socialise with, extend conversations with and just be with the other people.

In the first evening after introductions we were put in groups of 7 or 8 to discuss “How has the pandemic been for us ?” both as individuals and as Quaker communities. This produced a variety of experiences, from those akin to my own mental health crisis to an acceptance and making the best of what we were given – and an enjoyment of the quietness and solitude imposed due to lockdown. People shared about their increased awareness of nature. Considering the way things had changed in our meetings and the development of Zoom and blended meetings the experiences were also variable and there was a general agreement that it was good to have in person meetings again. Zoom had brought more isolated and younger people into meetings – those who had the technology, and there were various means to keep people connected.

It had been a very full day which closed with a gentle epilogue.

Next morning at Meeting for Worship 45 Friends gathered in the Cadbury Room with still more online. The morning session was led by Alistair McIntosh who titled his Zoom talk “In our doom is our Dharma”: Quickening to the Signs of Our Times. He drew on his extensive reading of the Bible and sacred books of other faith traditions, also as an environmental activist of many years standing. His roots are in the Isle of Lewis and Govan, and in the deep Quaker traditions of nonviolence and peace. His message is urgent but we need to find our place and connection to our own spiritual path.

The more conversational afternoon session was led by Jennifer Kavanagh and Alex Wildwood and was entitled “Tendered by Challenging Times – How our Spiritual Lives have Changed and might need to Change”. In sharing their spiritual journeys and experiences with each other and us the themes which emerged were: waiting on the Spirit; heart and mind prepared; technology

challenges; difficulties associated with trauma and conflict in meetings; and support structures.

I am still gathering the strands of this conference as Rhiannon Grant ably did on Saturday evening day on Zoom, as she was struck down by Covid and unable to be with us in person. This was the first conference to gather at Woodbrooke after the restrictions. It was clear that different people were at different stages of recovery from the pandemic and more recently from the raw wounds of war but in general we were able to share the journeys of others, to bear with them and uphold them in love.

On Sunday our session considered the priorities and focus for QCCIR for the year ahead.

I have to say that the conference was not what I expected. All the contributors and 99% of the delegates were Quakers and I didn't detect any visitors from other churches or faith traditions. I gather this was not the case in previous years conferences. However it was maybe what we needed. A gathering together of Friends interested in interchurch and interfaith work, an acknowledgement of the times we are living through and the meaning of signs and portents of what lies in front of us. We need to find our own way through acknowledging 'that of God' in each of us and in the people we meet, we are not alone.

On the return journey there were again crowded trains and connection issues.

In June members of QCCIR will come to Glasgow to hold a long delayed in person meeting and have extended an invitation to Friends who are interested in Interfaith and Interchurch work to attend a session on the evening of 10 June. The committee will attend a session of General Meeting on the Saturday.

Derek Read, Glasgow



Quaker Concerns

Scottish Quaker Criminal Justice Network

Scottish Quaker Community Justice Working Group

Since General Meeting appointed a working group to act on its behalf in liaising with the Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network last June, it has been working closely with the network and responding to government consultations where it seems relevant on community justice as in the new proposed national care service which would merge criminal justice social work within all other care services. Currently we are considering how to hold the government to account on its new ambitious “vision for justice”, including its plans to offer restorative justice nationally. Restorative justice engages the person who is offended against with the person who has harmed them and offers resolution for both “victim” and “offender” - a way of allowing society to reintegrate and move on. We will be suggesting this as an alternative to a Conservative MSP private member’s bill which is seeking more retributive justice for victims. We have been greatly helped through developing a relationship with our Scottish Quaker parliamentary liaison officer so that we can follow relevant parliamentary activity as well as start to put forward our distinctly Quaker voice.

The working group will be reporting to General Meeting in June and offering a space for Quakers to consider their responses to crime and punishment and we hope as many as possible will be involved in this. How can we get away from national retributive rhetoric so that a sentence, and in most circumstances a community sentence, is the only calling to account people who offend face? At the moment, the stigma of having been a prisoner dogs people all their lives way beyond their sentence, and this affects their children too. Many people who offend act criminally as an emotional response arising from previous trauma rather than deliberately deciding to commit a crime; they are not influenced by notions of punishment and deterrence. Scotland is committed to trauma informed work - how can we advocate to ensure it is delivered effectively and at the right stages of the justice process? How should we respond to the fact that so many prisoners come from areas of deprivation?

How can we achieve transformative justice? Do we need to consider adopting a minute like the Canadian one on abolition?

Kate Philbrick, Glasgow

What Does Justice Look Like Without Prisons?

This is the start of an article by [Oonagh Ryder](#) 14 January 2018. *A full version is available from Editor.*

While crime and punishment are staples of the news cycle, the state of British prisons and their failure to rehabilitate have been under the spotlight during the past two years to an extent not seen since the Strangeways riot in 1990. Rates of self-harm by prisoners are at the highest levels since records began, the death rate is close to one per day and it is estimated that a prisoner attempts suicide once every three hours in England and Wales. The response to this ‘prisons crisis’ has been calls for additional funding to reform prisons in order to make them safer and more effective. This narrative often implies that the solution to the failure of prisons is to bring them back to their true purpose: to rehabilitate prisoners and to keep the public safe from crime. . . .

In Britain today, the function of prisons has changed very little. The majority of people locked up have experienced extreme poverty and hardship, and many were criminalised from a young age as a result. At least 24% of adult prisoners have been in the care system (compared to 2% of the general population), 42% were excluded from school and while NHS data on prisoners’ mental health needs is poor, the Bradley Review in 2009 estimated that rates of mental illness could be as high as 90%. BAME people are roughly 14% of the general population but make up 25% of the adult prison population and 41% of the youth prison population. The re-offending rate has always been high and currently sits at 49%. Prison categorically does not achieve its stated aims of reducing crime and rehabilitating offenders, but it continues to play its historical role of disguising social problems as individual flaws and dividing the population into deserving and undeserving.

Too often we approach the question of whether we need prisons with the question of “How do we prevent and respond to crime?”. The problem with this question is that it blurs crime and harm into one category and allows us to ignore all the harm that isn’t categorised as crime. Harms on a grand scale go unpunished. The actions of corporations, aided by governments, which cause the air pollution killing thousands in Britain alone continue with little to no consequences for those responsible. . . . Meanwhile, much low harm or no harm behaviour is criminalised. 71% of people who received prison sentences in 2016-17 had committed non-violent offences and we continue to send people to prison for failing to pay their TV licence or being unable to secure their child’s school attendance.

Shifting the question to “How do we prevent and respond to harm?” broadens our analysis. While focusing on crime only allows us to consider the behaviour

of individuals, looking at harm enables us to include the ways in which violence is perpetuated structurally and culturally.

Further on in the article she uses crimes of sexual violence as an example. Worth a read.

Understanding harm can be complex. . .

I've taken sexual violence as an example here in order to address the inevitable 'what about the rapists?' question, but of course this is relevant to many other kinds of harm. It means doing the work to understand with both victims and perpetrators (bearing in mind almost everyone fits into both categories in some way) to understand why people harm, the ways in which society is complicit and how we can collectively become accountable for producing cultures and structures that prevent harm.

This potentially means a transformation of our definition of justice. Justice, as enacted by our criminal justice system, means reducing our understanding of conflict and harm to an analysis of individual character defects and attempting to solve social problems by punishing individuals. We have to ask ourselves what we – as a society, a community, a group of friends, a family, a couple etc. – want to achieve in our responses to harm. Do we genuinely want to prevent violence and trauma? Do we want to open ourselves up to hearing and validating the pain of others, even when we may be complicit in the causes? Or do we only want the catharsis of retribution, even when this replicates or intensifies the very harm we're responding to? If it is to lead to a better society, 'justice' cannot mean individual retribution. It must be a process of transforming the structures of society as well as our relationships with each other. We must be willing to practice interpretive generosity in our everyday lives.

Gender based Violence

Human trafficking in South Glasgow

When I interviewed the Rev. Elizabeth MacKay for our booklet ***Women Do Count***, I was very much taken by how much she said that would be difficult to put into print. It was so intimate.

And, since this was South Glasgow, inequality and injustice on our doorstep, we arranged for Elizabeth to give a talk on Zoom for International Women's Day.

Twelve folks came, but only one from Glasgow.

Most of us were impressed by Elizabeth's quiet persistence. Dressed in her 'jaiket' she would saunter forth to meet and talk to people in the district where

she is the United Free Church minister. She is a well-known figure in the community with her kindly face, grey hair and quiet voice. She would 'poke her nose in' but never forceful as she is aware of the sensitivity of many of the issues.

The Church set up a centre called The Well in this most deprived area of Glasgow. Over the years the need has changed to cater mainly for an immigrant population from India and Pakistan. More recently, these have been joined by many of a Romany background. The Centre helps them negotiate the system in a new country and with its sessions of *Chai and chat* it enables many Asian women to come together to learn English. One very sensitive issue is older Asian women isolated in widowhood or even divorced but who have never learned English so end up very lonely. *See the website for more details.*

On the trafficking side Elizabeth notices things! She talks to people; she is a presence.

To me, this epitomizes the quiet Quaker style - make yourselves pattern . . . However, it must be said that one of our number was alarmed that Elizabeth put herself in danger. That was a very interesting conversation as to how differently things we go about things these days with health and safety.

What disturbs you most in society these days?

Are we natural grumblers? We certainly have much to grumble about at present. One of the issues very much in the media is wokeness especially as it applied to sexual violence and the safety of women. There has been a huge increase in domestic violence over these lockdowns. There is also a lot of fear, and maybe fantasy, of the intrusion of self-determined trans people into women's safe places. There is much hype and much confusion, and fear around this issue. Some fear we have lost ground on women's rights if not allowed to talk of breasts, vaginas, and even the word 'woman'. Beside this is the genuine pain and suffering of many trans people who feel very isolated and threatened at the moment. The right wing press, some politicians and celebrities feed on and amplify divisive, controversial views, creating unnecessary fear. Our group has a very difficult task of exposing the hidden and addressing confusion. Hence, we hope to bring folks together, not a conference or a seminar, just together over lunch or a cuppa to talk, holding in the Light and looking for deeper understanding. If any of this disturbs you, contact Margaret Roy or Wendy Reynolds to fix up dates.

Enheduanna

Now, we would like to introduce you to one of Iraq's most celebrated women -- the first human whose name was recorded along with her writing, Enheduanna.

She lived more than 4,200 years ago in ancient Mesopotamia. She was a poet, a priestess, and an Akkadian princess. She hailed from the Sumerian city-state of Ur, birthplace of the written word, stringed instruments, the Prophet Abraham, and one of the world's earliest civilizations.



Enheduanna was the first person known to have ever signed her name to her writings, which included evocative prayers, incantations, and even first-person narratives.

The art historian Janet Roberts writes, "Enheduanna represented a strong and creative personality, an educated woman, and one who fulfilled diverse roles in a complex society, not unlike women's aspirations today."

On this Day (Mother's Day) in solidarity with every woman who has ever had to endure the senseless violence of war and whose strength we need more than ever, we would like to share these words of Enheduanna. And more than 4,000 years later, we are still asking the same question.

Lament to the Spirit of War

You hack everything down in battle....
God of War, with your fierce wings
you slice away the land and charge
disguised as a raging storm,
growl as a roaring hurricane,
yell like a tempest yells,
thunder, rage, roar, and drum,
expel evil winds!
Men falter at your approaching footsteps.
On your lyre of despair, tortured dirges
scream.
Like a fiery monster you fill the land with
poison.

As thunder you growl over the earth,
trees and bushes collapse before you.
You are blood rushing down a mountain,
Spirit of hate, greed and anger,
dominator of heaven and earth!
Your fire wafts over our land,
riding on a beast,
with indomitable commands,
you decide all fate.
You triumph over all our rites.
Who can explain why you go on so?

The Peace Testimony

The Spirit of Christ and Our Historic Peace Testimony By David Hadley Finke is another deeply questioning article from **Friends Journal**, April 18, 2022

You will find the full article at: ED@friendsjournal.org.

<https://www.friendsjournal.org/the-spirit-of-christ-and-our-historic-peace-testimony/>

With activities in Ukraine, many Friends are deeply challenged by our Peace Testimony. Here are a few questions posed by David Hadley Finke:

I hope to remind fellow Quakers that—then and now—ours is a *corporate* witness, which goes beyond any call to individual conscientious objection. This declaration of what had been a transformative experience (*of Early Friends*) arose not from an analysis of political factors. Rather, it was saying what the Divine Presence had led us to, which of course we would wish for others as well.

. . . a reading of their entire statement reveals that they had an immediate and intimate sense of what Jesus's example was, both historically and as it had transformed their own lives. This was a call to faithfulness, and showed elements of joy as well as determination. . .

Is morality simply up to individual perception and definition. Alternatively, can our sense of the rightness of a course of action be guided by our submission to God's presence experienced in community?

Jesus's calling to "Follow me" (both within us and among us) is a voice which I hope we can still hear and heed. Discipleship may be costly, but it leads to life. And the Light given through us—although our numbers may always be small—may bring healing and hope to our troubled world.

David Hadley Finke was peace education secretary in the Chicago office of American Friends Service Committee during the Vietnam conflict.

QF&P 1.31 We are called to live 'in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars'. Do you faithfully maintain our testimony that war and the preparation for war are inconsistent with the spirit of Christ? Search out whatever in your own way of life may contain the seeds of war. Stand firm in our testimony, even when others commit or prepare to commit acts of violence, yet always remember that they too are children of God.

I can't always remember who said which wise words and when, but we are taught as Quakers today to see peace as a process, rather than a product, and peacebuilding as a commitment, however limited and ineffectual it may feel. I remain humbled by the nonviolence that continues in occupied Palestine, when everyday life after sixty years still contains so much everyday structural violence **Jane Mace**

Fold Your Flags

Fold your flags for they deceive,
They tell young men that they must cleave,
To politician's darkened schemes,
Come waken from your fractious dreams.

Eden had no walls nor fences,
Saw no need for such defences,
Towers and stones and moats and ditches,
The sword and shield provides no riches

Like children now we play with fire,
The Gods of War they would aspire,
To leave the Earth in spoiled condition,
Of such is foolish man's ambition!

The Earth spins on, thru space and time,
Whilst we pollute the soil and clime,
Seeing not that greed defiles,
As bombs destroy the hallowed miles.

Mother's weep and children cry,
As missiles fall from Slavic sky,
The Vision lost that once bore fruit,
Cold death now sits, with desk in suit.

Fold your flags for they deceive,
They tell young men that they must cleave,
To politician's darkened schemes,
Come waken from your fractious dreams.

W.J.B.

The Old and New Testicle

Testicles shouldn't really have anything to do with the Old and New Testaments, but they do.

The Testaments of the Bible testify to God's truth. This is because the Latin for witness was testis. From that one root, testis, English has inherited protest (bear witness for), detest (bear witness against), contest (bear witness competitively), and testicle. What are testicles doing there? They are testifying to a man's virility. Do you want to prove that you're a real man? Well, your testicles will testify in your favour.

That's the usual explanation, anyway. There's another, more interesting theory that in bygone days witnesses used to swear to things with their hands, not on their hearts, but elsewhere on their bodies! In Genesis, Abraham makes his servant swear not to marry his son to a Canaanite girl. Put your hand under my thigh, and I will make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from among the daughters of the Canaanites Genesis 24:2

I wasn't sure if this was kosher, so to speak, but indeed, my Bible Commentary states the following..

Putting the hand under the thigh, an old form of oath taking, reflected the view that the fountain of reproductivity was sacred to the deity. So there you have it! This U3A Etymology Group has a lot to answer for!

From the U3A magazine.

CAMPAIGNS.PROSTATECANCERUK.ORG

I'm supporting men with prostate cancer, you can too!

Join @prostatecanceruk and help support the workforce amendment to the Health and Care Bill. This is an opportunity to change the law to improve the cancer workforce in England.

Email your MP today to ask them to support the workforce amendment. *And in Scotland?*

A little light relief



**Well, I
printed cat
jokes! Ed**

Book Reviews

We do this til we free us **Mariame Kaba, 2021**

Ren Clark, Glasgow

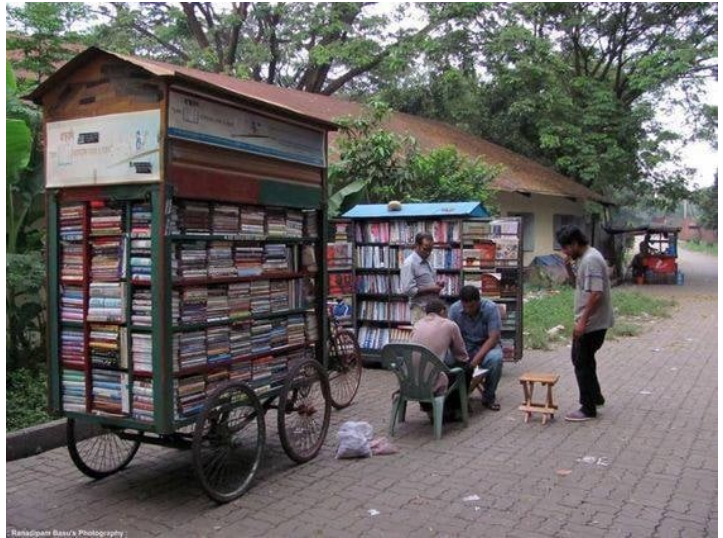
Mariame Kaba is, as the back of 'We do this til we free us' says, 'an organizer, educator and curator who is active in movements for racial, gender and transformative justice'. In this bestselling book published in 2021, Kaba combines

short articles with extracts from interviews and talks to present a powerful and accessible case for police and prison abolition.

Kaba is a black woman living in Chicago, and her perspective is borne from the aggressively racist and destructive policing of her own neighbourhood, as well as the history of the prison industrial complex in the United States system as 'a structurally anti-Black apparatus'. One of her concerns is with the histories of black women, and names reappear throughout the book: Rekia Boyd, Breonna Taylor, Marissa Alexander, Cyntoia Brown — women who have been killed by the police, or who have been brutally punished by the prison system.

Kaba argues that the criminal justice system (or, as she calls it, the criminal punishment system) isn't broken — it's working exactly as it's meant to, punishing the poorest and most oppressed members of society. In Scotland, our own justice system is not as obviously abhorrent as that of the US (or even as England and Wales), however, I believe her point still stands. Figures in the Scottish government's recent Vision for Justice document indicate that 33% of people arriving in prison come from areas categorised as the absolute most deprived in Scotland, with only 1% coming from areas at the top of that scale.

Kaba does not believe that the state can offer justice. And in that belief, there is a certain freedom. If we are not putting faith in a system that is never going to deliver real justice, the question becomes that of what we can we put faith in instead, and Kaba is a powerful advocate for the strength of local organising and community building. In Angela Y. Davis's incredibly influential abolitionist text 'Are Prisons Obsolete?', she talks about there not being one single alternative to prisons, but hundreds, and Kaba takes up this theme. In one interview in the book she talks about experimentation and failure, and



that she wants abolitionists to ‘be building a million different experiments’, without being scared of failure.

This feeds into another important theme of the book: imagination.

In one interview Kaba talks about the tendency to see police and prisons as permanent, immovable institutions rather than the relatively recent inventions that they are: ‘Once things are actualized into the world and exist, you can’t imagine how the world functioned before it. It’s like we develop amnesia. You just assume things have always been as they are. I see this in myself...’.

Imagination is needed to overcome this tendency, and it is therefore fitting that the book includes a chapter of speculative fiction — a short story by Kaba about a society where justice is approached very differently from on Earth. *We Do This Til We Free Us* is a book that provokes abolitionist imaginations, with Kaba determined not to hold any single project up as a model to be copied, even as she gives examples of alternative approaches to justice that have inspired her. We need to use our imaginations and experiment for ourselves.

In an interview transcribed in an early chapter of the book, Kaba recounts a discussion she had with a nun about ‘making sure we were of the world and in the world’. She says that this nun used the phrase ‘hope is a discipline’, and that this idea is one she has turned to ever since. If being hopeful means making an active choice to keep engaging with the world, and working towards a better one, it isn’t dependent on what political party is in power, or discouraged by being seen as ‘too utopian’.

As Kaba says, ‘there will never be a day when the skies open up and the angels sing, “Abolition!”’ — so therefore it is up to us to create the circumstances where it can happen ourselves, one piece at a time.

We Do This Til We Free Us is not just a book for people who consider themselves prison and police abolitionists, but for everyone who cares about justice and inequality. You will probably be challenged, and possibly even affronted by some of the stances that Kaba takes, but I think there is a good chance you will also be inspired. I found this to be a book that is rich with insight and experience, and one that I will continue to return to in my thinking on punishment, justice and abolition.

QF&P 23.94 The terrible sufferings of our forebears in the prisons of the seventeenth century have given us as a people a special interest in the management of prisons and the treatment of crime. George Fox protested to the judges of his day ‘concerning their putting men to death for cattle and money and small matters’; and laid before them ‘what a hurtful thing it was that prisoners should lie so long in jail’; showing how ‘they learned wickedness from one another in talking of their bad deeds.

**Africa is not a country, *breaking stereotypes of modern Africa*. Dipo Faloyin
2022 Harvill Secker Margaret Roy, Glasgow**

This is a book you must read. How often have you heard that? ***This is a book you must read*** because it gives the real to colonialism. The *real* horror that is still perpetuated in our stereotypes of Africa including the portrayal of Africa and Africans in films and books. One example sums it up. During the FIFA world cup, South Africa scored a goal. The ITV commentator screamed 'Goal for South Africa!' but added 'A goal for all of Africa!' The author comments, if Italy *et al* had scored a goal, would the commentator have said 'A goal for Europe'?

So what are the stereotypes? The author challenges the culture of helping 'poor' Africa, throwing money at problems(?) without addressing the underlying causes. In Nigeria they have a phrase for it – MONEY MISS ROAD *when someone suddenly gets a hold of a large amount of cash they were not prepared for. It's a reflection that money has a way of making its own journey, regardless of the path you may have expected it to go down.* He gives copious examples of photographs of smiling children in gruesome scenes when there is more to the picture. He gives copious examples and criticises the fallacy and hypocrisy of such as film stars and band leaders. He follows Jorgen Lissner in calling such like 'Merchants of misery' – the profitability of the starving child – *the image is seen as unethical, firstly because it comes dangerously close to being pornographic . . . because it exposes something in human life that is as delicate and deeply personal as sexuality, that is suffering.* He is exposing the **White Saviour Complex** as a new form of colonialism.

We seldom look at the view of modern Africa as an urban phenomenon. Most Africans live in towns and may not have seen a zebra except on TV. In films the African takes a subordinate or token role, often amazed at western 'civilisation' such as seeing running water from a tap! He sees this parodied in the Eddie Murphy film *Coming to America*. For the real Africa he points us to the film made 30 years ago *Black Panther*.

There is an excellent section on the history of African kingdoms and their destruction and pillage by European powers. The story depends who is telling it. The looting is still a matter of dissent as museums seek to guard their treasures which they keep 'safe', the majority often in vaults and not on display. He interprets this as racist and bigoted. However, the *Black Lives Matter* movement has encouraged museums to part with some artefacts.

Towards the end he tells of Jamie Oliver offering a recipe for Jollof rice on his website. This traditional African dish has so many varieties, is claimed by all countries in the Jollof wars. There are many hilarious caricatures in the book to entertain as well as stimulate an examination of white consciousness.

And he ends with detailed comment on modern politics especially as so many countries are moving away from their (very) old leaders, former independence heroes who have served as presidents for decades, to new people-orientated and originated governance. He speaks of leaderless organisations such as #ShutItDown addressing sexual violence in Namibia and the Feminist Coalition in Nigeria. There are stories of personalities such as Bobi Wine in Kenya and Suluhu Hassan of Tanzania who is one of five female presidents since the independence era. Rwanda leads the world with more than 60% of its parliament and 53% of ministerial position held by women. And then Botswana , *the continent's longest continuous democracy has enjoyed an economic growth that is faster than almost any country in the world.*

But then, although the continent contributes around 3% in total to the world's greenhouse gas emissions . . it is on course to suffer the most from its adverse effects. Amongst the top ten in the Global Climate Watch Index 2021 are Mozambique, Zimbabwe, South Sudan, Malawi, and Niger.



**Quaker Concern Over Population
Art Competition Spring 2022
Invitation to enter**

QCOP are a Quaker recognised body established to raise concern about population. We believe there are too many people on the planet currently using far too much of the Earth's renewable resources. Each extra birth increases consumption and each extra birth in the rich countries increases consumption far more than a birth in the developing world. It is obvious to us that this cannot go on!

To help spread our concern we are organising an art competition for a picture or poster which highlights the issue. These can be up to A3 size, in any medium but must be 2D. There will be three categories: **12 and under, Teenage and Adult**

Entries will be displayed on a special page on the QCOP Website (qcop.org.uk) and Friends will be invited to choose one from each category which they feel best conveys our concern. These views, along with the views of our 3 QCOP judges, will decide the winning entries. There will be a prize of £100 for the entry in each category which is considered to deliver the message most effectively. The three winning entries will be displayed on the website.

Closing date of May 31st. Entries should be submitted by email as a photograph to davidtinsley@yahoo.co.uk giving name, age and email address of the entrant.

Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre

Early information - date for your diary!

Woodbrooke Where You Are is coming to Glasgow. The introductory day to **Exploring Quaker Spirituality** will be on **Saturday 1 October** will be in Glasgow Quaker Meeting House, and available to join in person or online. It will be followed by 6 units of material for those individuals or groups who want to study the topic in more depth - each unit of material will be released at fortnightly intervals, with a break in December, so finishing in January. Each unit has a pre-recorded video, background reading and reflection points, and there will be an online discussion forum throughout. The tutor will be Stuart Masters.

Here are some examples of Woodbrooke courses happening in the near future:

17 May 19.30 to 21.00 Are Quakers Christian?

23 May 10.00 to 11.00 Meeting for Worship through dance

1-24 June Claiming our Collective Power: social witness among Friends
- short online sessions followed by an intensive weekend. A
partnership between Woodbrooke and Pendle Hill Study
Centre (Pennsylvania)

6 June to 3 July Non-theist approaches to religious language

6 June to 17 July Nurturing our spiritual lives: spiritual accompaniment

7 June The religious roots of the Quaker Way

8 June to 2 August Quakers and Eco-spirituality: grounded practice to
meet

 the ecological crisis

16 June Changing the conversation on asylum in the UK

Woodbrooke is starting up its residential short programme:

6-8 June Opening to the Spirit: a retreat with the first Christians

24-26 June Knowing 'a place to stand in, and what to wait in' - a
retreat with the first Quakers

Bursary support is available for all courses.

More information from the Woodbrooke website or from Sheila Semple,
Woodbrooke Correspondent sheila.semple@btinternet.com

OTHER EVENTS

Quaker walks

The next walk is on Friday 27 May. If you have suggestions as to where to go, please let Daphne know.

The following date is Saturday 25 June.

Daphne Wassermann - daphne@aquarius 1000.plus.com - 0141 357 0396

Labyrinth

Saturday 7 May from 11am

Gilshochill, off Duncruin St, Maryhill, G20 0EZ, near Maryhill railway station.

Bring a spade or other suitable tools for weeding, garden gloves and some refreshment.

Around 12.30 we will down tools for a period of quiet reflection, share some refreshments, tidy up and rejoice in this bit of lovely rescued land.

Further Information from Steph: 07766 708363

Wiston

We are very excited to be opening bookings for the South East Scotland Area Meeting Wiston Weekend 2022. It is affiliated to SESAM, but Quakers from all across Scotland are most welcome to join us. We are trying hard to make this a weekend for all in our community - individuals as well as families, all ages, those new to Quakers as well as those who have been a Quaker for many years. Over the weekend we will have lots of community activities, group adventure activities for our younger people, a bring and share ceilidh on Saturday night, stories and songs around the campfire on Friday night, an all-age Meeting for Worship on Sunday morning, and possibly a walk up Tinto Hill.

The weekend will be held Friday 9th - Sunday 11th Sept. It is fully catered, and there are multiple accommodation options - camping, cabins and staying in the lodge. You can find more info on the link below (if you would like higher quality for printing, please let us know)

Bookings are now open and we strongly encourage you to book now, or at least by 10th July. Book online > <http://ctzn.tk/QWW> <<http://ctzn.tk/QWW> >

If you are not able to book yet, but would like to be kept up to date with plans, please sign up to our mailing list here < <https://gmail.us10.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=7815673f03574f6893b4a47b4&id=0b77bd7137> >. If

you have any questions, we'd love to hear from you on

quakerwistonweekend@gmail.com <
<mailto:quakerwistonweekend@gmail.com>>

In Friendship, and looking forward to seeing many of you in September!

Other meetings for worship

Meeting for Worship at Faslane

The next Meetings will be at 11am on 22 May and 26 June.

Meet outside the north gate of Faslane naval base.

For further information contact Mary Alice Mansell mamansell54@gmail.com or Daphne Wassermann daphne@aquarius1000.plus.com

Youngish Friends' fortnightly epilogues are continuing by Zoom on Wednesdays

4 and 18 May and 1 June at 7.30pm.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81286554225?pwd=ay9GNVg5Z0JmTThocjkxc0R2dVlaUT09>

Meeting ID: 812 8655 4225

Passcode: 972888

Further information from Leilani Rabemananjara.

leilanirabemananjara@gmail.com

Early Sunday Meeting for Worship on Zoom:

Seeking a deeper connection with the Divine in silence.

Some of us will join in worship on the first and third Sunday of each month at 9.45 for 10am. The half hour session will still allow those minded to attend their own Meetings at 11am. We hope to create a space for those who want to explore the relationship with the God of their hearts. Contact Margaret Roy for further information

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/7613798296?pwd=enZDWS9iRHNHUIIZR2dBb3N2YjBoZz09>

Meeting ID 761 379 8296

Passcode EwLWed

Sunday evening Area Meeting for Worship

The meeting is open from 7.15pm to give time to say hello and settle in, the worship starts at 7.30pm for half an hour after which there is time for chat.

Details are circulated weekly.

If anyone has any difficulties please call Kate Gulliver on her mobile 07596 725387.

Friends Fellowship of Healing

2 May at 7.30

A Meeting for Worship for Healing is held 7.30pm to 8.30pm on the first Monday of each month.

Experiment with Light

Wednesdays 2pm to 4pm For further information

margaret.roy@btinternet.com

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86292595017?pwd=NWdORXY2WkJFU2NUakgrNT>

h

KVUR2UT09

Meeting ID: 862 9259 5017

Passcode: 040620

Time for Stillness'

Tuesday 10th May we will be beginning '- fortnightly periods of quiet reflection, in the Meeting House. From **8-8.30am** we welcome all to the Elizabeth Fry room for some morning stillness and reflection. And if you're lucky you may get a brew after!

It is for seasoned Friends, those dipping their toes into the Spirit and for the harried commuter. All are welcome. So please do come along and drop-by. Here are the dates through to September:

10th, 24th May
7th, 21st June
5th, 19th July

2nd, 16th, 30th August
13th September

Local Meetings

Lanark Meeting has reverted to face to face meetings at Wiston on first and third Sundays at 11am and will no longer meet on Zoom. All welcome.

Milngavie News

Our meetings at the Fraser Centre continues to be well supported by 6-8 people with a similar number joining us on Zoom. Recently we have had two friends return to meeting after time away with Covid. They were able to talk to each other about the lingering symptoms they have had, in particular fatigue. Please can we uphold all those who have long Covid ?

We have welcomed someone on Zoom who had previous experience of Quaker Meeting in another area but is now unable to travel. For the future we will need to think through how we can offer introductory materials and pastoral care to online-only people.

The informal support networks have been at work, which is a sign of a good community.

"Islay & Jura in-person Meetings

continue twice a month, but have been affected by Covid, so that we usually now get only 4 or 5 Friends and attenders present. However, a few visitors swelled our numbers into double figures at our first April Meeting, when Bronwen and Scott Currie renewed their wedding vows to celebrate their 50th anniversary. Married in an Anglican church 50 years ago, long before she became a Friend, Bron had always regretted not having had a Quaker wedding, so this was a very special occasion."



Dumfries Meeting

We have now settled back comfortably into face-to-face meetings at our former venue. As this is a Day Care Centre, we do not yet have access to the kitchen. But Peter, our clerk, has come up trumps bringing a large urn of boiling water each Sunday, plus coffee, tea, milk and biscuits, so we are able to enjoy some time after Worship for discussion or just a general catch-up. A few visitors have joined us occasionally in recent weeks, one of whom wrote favourably about her visit for our local newsletter, completely unsolicited, I might add! **Jan Lethbridge**

Our Golden Wedding



It's almost impossible to believe that 50 years have passed since that March day in 1972 when we emerged from the church to a shower of rain, following what had been a week-long heatwave! I do remember hoping that it wasn't an omen!

I guess it can't have been, as we're still together, and we duly celebrated with an Afternoon Tea in our village hall, for local friends, neighbours and old colleagues.

Afternoon Tea seemed a fitting gathering for those of our vintage! Our immediate family were with us and worked their socks off to ensure we had a relaxing time. After two years away from gatherings it was wonderful to hear the hall buzzing with chatter and laughter all afternoon. All in all, a blessing, for which we are hugely thankful. **Jan & John Lethbridge**

Glasgow report for WSQN, May 2022

Glasgow Meeting is getting busier in many directions.

Opportunities for worship have been increased with a new early morning half hour Meeting for Worship on the first and third Sundays in the month and a fortnightly 'Time for Stillness' from 8 to 8.30 am on Tuesdays starting on 24 May. Our usual Sunday Meeting for Worship is blended and our Wednesday lunchtime meeting is mainly on Zoom but with in-person blending when our warden is on duty. Youngish Friends continue their fortnightly Zoom epilogue and we are seeing new attenders of all ages at our Meetings.

The Experiment with Light group continues on Wednesdays at 2pm. There are also several learning groups that have been looking at issues around racism in preparation for Helen Minnis' Swarthmore Lecture on 28 May. Further activities are planned for the autumn.

Our healing group has resumed its meetings. There are also small social groupings and a book group.

A Climate café started up in April, meeting from time to time. A litter picking session in the Charing Cross area is planned for 29 May. Our Meetings for Worship at Faslane Naval Base continue (22 May and 26 June).

Looking to the autumn, we will be opening the Meeting House on 17 September as part of Glasgow's Doors Open Day. There will work parties in the Meeting House before this to ensure that it is as bright and welcoming as possible.

And outdoors, our monthly Quaker walks continue, mainly lower level ones but we are hoping to do some more ambitious walks over the summer. On the first Saturday of each month some of us go to the hillside in Maryhill where Steve Koeplinger has created a labyrinth and orchard and keeps the area mown and clean. We weed and plant, bringing offerings from our own gardens.

The 'big issue' is the future of the Meeting House and the process to make a final decision is now underway. This starts with reviewing our vision on 22 May, aided by Zoe Prosser, the General Meeting development worker. We will then have some information sessions in mid-June before a special Local Meeting on 26 June to make a recommendation to Area Meeting. This will be considered by Area Meeting at a special meeting, probably on 23 July. Friends are urged to attend this and help us with this very important decision. **Daphne Wassermann, Clerk**

<p>Chris Ballance, formerly of Glasgow Meeting, has been elected councillor for Highland Council standing for the Green party. Congratulations Chris!</p>
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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

6 th June	Area Meeting	by video/telephone (7-9 pm).
20 th August	Area Meeting	11:30 am – 4 pm
8 th October	Area Meeting	11:30 am – 4 pm
5 th December	Area Meeting	by video/telephone (7-9 pm).

We confirm the dates for the holding of Area Meeting in 2022 and January 2023, 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. Some venues will be announced later.

11 th June	GENERAL MEETING	10.30 am
10 th September	GENERAL MEETING	10.30 am
12 th November	GENERAL MEETING	10.30 am

27-29 th May	BRITAIN YEARLY MEETING
28 th May	



Hold in the Light

All Friends feeling the stress and loneliness of these times.

People of Ukraine and all those involved in this conflict.

Helen MacTaggart Peggy's friend now in Queen Elizabeth Hospital

Isobel Thompson formerly of Arran Meeting

Bill Bingham of Glasgow Meeting

Geoff Keating of Castle Douglas Meeting

Janette Walkinshaw of Wigtown Meeting

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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 August 2022. And, good to see the enthusiasm, but please do not sent in articles over 1000 words

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