

# ***West Scotland***

## ***Quaker News***

***November 2014***

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***The opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of individuals. They do not necessarily represent the views of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).***

## **West Scotland Area Meeting by Telephone Conference. Monday, 1st December at 7.30pm**

1. Opening worship (7:00-7:30, with reading of Quaker faith & practice 20.06)
2. Roll call and appointed representatives
3. Report for West Scotland Quaker News
4. Deaths (none notified to date)
5. Clerk's report
6. Upcoming conferences & courses: proposals for sending representatives
7. Membership business  
Application reports on Maris Armfield (Dunblane)  
Application update: Robin Nauman (Mull & Iona)  
Transfer in: Frances Keenan (Glasgow)
8. General Meeting for Scotland 15/16 November 2014  
Brief report and any matters arising. A report will be written for the Scottish Friend.
9. Treasurer's Report  
Including: continued use of the Barbara Organ legacy;  
Information on the 2015 Budget (see separate paper).
10. Nominations Committee Report  
Further nominations for the new Triennium. (Paper to come)
11. Minutes and correspondence  
Appointment of Press Officer (Glasgow)
12. Any other business (please notify the clerk beforehand)



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***The deadline for the next issue of WSQN is 12 December. Copy should be sent to the editor Bryan Bowes at [botany64@waitrose.com](mailto:botany64@waitrose.com) or by post to 3 West Chapelton Lane, Bearsden, Glasgow G61 2DF.***

## Clerk's Letter

At the Community Gathering in Ayr on 11th October, we were joined by the young people of the Quaker Link Group from all Scotland, and they made the ceilidh go with a swing. We had energetic country dancing, with lots of groups following the calls from Jennifer Hodson. Not all of us were up to it!

It, perhaps inevitably, made me think of that favourite modern hymn:

Dance, then, wherever you may be,  
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,  
And I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,  
And I'll lead you all in the Dance, said he.

Dance gives us movement and involvement in an almost four-dimensional activity. It can be energising even if we ourselves can't be or feel part of it directly. When I first started attending Quaker Meeting it all seemed simple. I came; it was there and gave me nurture, and I went again. I had little concept of how it got there, the lives of the others there and how it worked, and was able to be there. I took it for granted. At times since, especially with doubts, feeling insecure and finding life hard, it becomes like that again. It was something I needed to take from. I couldn't face any more. And it is a great gift the Meeting can give - to be there.

But of course the Meeting is a dance. The Caller works through those in it in all sorts of ways, leading us on, sometimes to our surprise, in all sorts of ways and witness. We share the roles which change as the dance develops. We need others to form the 'sets' of activity, leadership, care and witness. Sometimes we can't start until all of us are there, participating. And we constantly reform in different groups and ways. And the Caller can even allow several differing dances to go on at the same time!

Quakers are particularly good at that. But it may be only superficially different – there is a unity underneath from the Caller, if we are listening. Sometimes too we are holding the framework of the dance, like when two form an arch for others to dance through. And at other times we are the active ones and do the moving.

We can dance on our own; should dance on our own; but together in the Meeting we can dance further. We can dance together in ways we might not on our own. But we need to pay attention to the whole dance, the whole Meeting. Some sets can't make it up to the right number and can't dance; others can't find a set to join and have to sit it out. We may need to change the dance to include those who otherwise might not take part. At times the music (the external environment) changes and we tread on each other's toes. But listening to the Caller gives us the lead to foster a right dance of a Meeting. Whatever the Caller is.

**Michael Hutchinson** (*Glasgow Meeting*)

## Equal Marriage in Scotland update

Martin Burnell, the clerk of General Meeting for Scotland, has circulated the following update regarding same sex marriages under Quaker auspices.

I have been formally advised that an order is being laid before the Scottish Parliament this month which will authorise the Society of Friends to conduct same sex marriages in the same way that we are currently authorised to conduct opposite sex marriages. This authorisation will take effect from 16th December 2014. It will not be possible to give notice of a same sex marriage until this date, so in practice the first date on which a same sex Quaker marriage could take place is 31st December 2014.

Exactly the same forms and procedure will be used for same sex marriages as for opposite sex marriages. Each of the parties wishing to marry should complete the marriage notice form (M10) and return it to the District Registrar for the area in which the marriage will take place. The M10 form is currently being revised to accommodate same sex couples and the revised version will be available to download from [www.nrscotland.gov.uk](http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk) prior to 16th December. Same sex couples are advised to check that the form they have downloaded is the revised version. Once the District Registrar has received the marriage notice, he will issue a marriage schedule as happens at present.

Section 16 of Quaker Faith and Practice has been revised so that the form of words used in the marriage declaration can apply to same sex couples. If you are in any doubt whether you have the latest version, this is available at <http://qfp.quaker.org.uk/chapter/16/>

Where a same sex couple are already in a civil partnership which is registered in Scotland, they can either make a direct approach to the District Registrar to have the civil partnership converted to a marriage through an administrative procedure, or they can apply for a Quaker marriage ceremony in the same way as other couples. In the latter case, when completing the M10 form, they should record their status as "existing civil partner". For civil partnerships registered in Scotland, the Quaker marriage will be backdated by the Registrar to the original date of the civil partnership.

Couples with a civil partnership registered outside Scotland (eg in England) cannot at present have their civil partnership converted to a marriage in Scotland, although we hope further regulations will be published towards the end of 2015 which will allow this. This does not prevent a couple in an English-registered civil partnership having a Quaker marriage in Scotland, but the marriage would not be backdated. Couples who hope to have an English-registered civil partnership recognised as a marriage from the original date of the civil partnership are advised either to investigate English conversion procedures, or to await the further regulations in Scotland.

The Society of Friends in Scotland has not sought authorisation to conduct Quaker civil partnership ceremonies. These are obviously available as a civil ceremony



conducted by the District Registrar, but Quakers regard marriage as the appropriate religious ceremony for same sex couples.

If you have any queries on the procedures concerning the District Registrar, you should address them to me. Any queries on the Quaker forms and procedures should be addressed to Michael S Booth - [michaelsb@quaker.org.uk](mailto:michaelsb@quaker.org.uk) . If you receive an application for a same sex marriage, I would be interested to know, as I suspect would Michael.

**Martin Burnell** (*Clerk GMS*)

## **Report on Area Meeting & Community Gathering Saturday 11th October 2014 at Ayr**

Saturday 11th of October was a bright autumn day as Friends gathered at Holy Trinity Church, in Ayr for Area Meeting and a Community Gathering

Area Meeting Clerk Michael Hutchison and Assistant Margaret Morton bade us a warm welcome and worship and business soon got underway. We sat in pews which for AM is a little unusual but interesting. I was in a good mood which resulted in me offering to write this report for WSQN when Michael sought a volunteer.

As the Community Gathering and viewing of the Quaker Memorial Trust Exhibition were to be held in the afternoon, Michael proposed that formal AM business be kept to a minimum and finished before lunch if possible. This was a tall order as the main topic of business was our triennial appointments for the period 2015-17.

It was very heart-warming to see that the Nominations Committee Report brought forward a substantial list of Friends willing to offer service for the next three years. With discernment and in good time we have now appointed Friends to serve in all the posts needed to administer our Area Meeting.

I personally feel that we are very fortunate to have so many Friends who are able and willing to offer their skills and talents in such a wide variety of ways. There are several new names on our appointments list who are serving for the first time in some roles, which is good to see.

Peter Christy spoke on the Long Term Framework Working Group and reminded us that Local Meetings should be considering 4 main questions:-

- What is distinctive about Quaker work and witness, to us and to others?
- What is your vision of the ministry that your local meeting and Quakers in Britain are called to, now and in the future?
- What are we led to do together?
- How could Quaker structures and networks help Quakers in Britain to flourish?

As the Church was rather cold and our seating arrangement being in a formal manner rather than in our usual friendly circle, Friends were relieved that the rest of our Community activities were to take place in the Church hall which was more comfortable.

After a sociable lunch we soon were engaged in a Joys & Sorrows session, led by

Christine Davis. 9 out of our 12 local Meetings were represented in person and information from those not in attendance was drawn from their annual reports. Friends were much encouraged by the huge list of Joys and the much shorter one for Sorrows. Michael Hutchinson posted up our list as we progressed and has offered them here for your study and here are some of them ... but not all!

Joys:

Meeting new Friends and visitors,  
Worshipping with other churches,  
Growth in our Meetings,  
Being able to meet weekly,  
Being a small Meeting,  
Having a quiet garden,  
Good companionship,  
Woodbrooke on the Road,  
Supporting causes through our Meeting,  
Having a Young Friend in Meeting,  
Going to events together,  
Outreach,  
Prison visits,  
Mutual Support and friendship, etc.

Sorrows:

Not so many of us now,  
Friends moving elsewhere,  
Lack of a permanent venue,  
Ferry Restrictions,  
Worship is always fully silent,  
Distances, etc

Later that day I was approached by Friends from Arran who had listened to our Meetings input to the session and were inspired to ask if we might arrange exchange visits between themselves and Wigtown LM. Since Saturday, I am pleased to say that we are now arranging a “twinning” visit between Arran & Wigtown L.M.s.

Some Joys were also Sorrows! There are things we need to think about as an Area Meeting; how we find good venues; how we support small Meetings, etc. But the general feeling is how much was going on and being done, and how Friends were supporting each other, often across meetings. It's not just hope out there, but confidence.

By mid-afternoon Friends and especially the little ones had become tired. As we stretched our legs, Young Friends from the Link Group arrived from Glasgow. The hall burst into new life with exuberance and much youthful banter and activities.

After viewing the Quaker Memorial Trust Exhibition I was moved to ask if Wigtown LM might have it for showing in our area. We have now taken charge of the huge box that contains this very professionally prepared road show of panels depicting the story of Friends activity in the two World wars and beyond. It is hoped that other

Meetings will try and have it in their areas for a few days. After a superbly prepared meal I left Ayr with Helen late in the afternoon, grateful, full of inspiration and that we have the privilege of being West Scotland Friends. I am sure, I can, on your behalf, thank Friends at Ayr Local Meeting for this wonderful day, their organising and hospitality.

### **Ian Macdonald (*Wigtown Meeting*)**

Michael Hutchinson has sent some photos (below) to illustrate Ian's report of the Community Gathering at Ayr: he has formal permission from the parents to use the images of the young people in the pictures.



*Robin Davis with Caitlin Gean  
& Brianna Fletcher*



*Robin Davis with Stefan  
Gibson & Shannon Rose*



## *Quaker Exhibition on War*



## **Kirkcudbright Training Centre (Dundrennan Camp) - a talk by the Commandant, Major (Retd) Ernie Morgan M.M.**

Since Armistice Sunday, 2003, Friends in South West Scotland, from Wigtown, Castle Douglas and Dumfries, have regularly held Meeting for Worship at the gates of Dundrennan Military Training Camp to bear witness to our Peace Testimony. Over the years, our small group have always met with civility and courtesy from the staff at the Camp.

The current commandant, Ernie Morgan and his wife, Madeleine, have occasionally joined us for a 'cuppa' after Meeting and earlier this year I asked Ernie if he would consider giving a talk to some Quakers about the Camp and its purpose and he willingly agreed.

We welcomed Ernie and Madeleine to the Gordon Hall in St Ninian's Church, Castle Douglas on Saturday, 18th October where around fifteen Friends and Attenders from the South West cluster gathered including one keen traveller from Glasgow Meeting.

Ernie gave a very professional and up-to-date presentation about the Camp. He began with a history of the base which covers about 4,700 acres of land and coast near Kirkcudbright. It has been in constant use since 1942 when Polish soldiers were trained there during World War II. As Ernie outlined the various weapons that were and are being tested at the base and the type of warfare training taking place, Friends were, as you might imagine, not quite in their comfort zone.

Many questions were asked and our concerns expressed especially about the use of depleted uranium on the site. However, we were told that tests on the land and in the 8



sea showed low levels of this dangerous substance. On a more positive note, because the land has not been 'worked' since the early forties, plant life is flourishing and various experts are delighted that they can easily obtain access to study some rare plants, insects and small mammals. Paths are also accessible at specific times for dog walkers. Timetables are available in Kirkcudbright post office! There are also quite a few archeological sites and these are carefully safeguarded.

We now know much more about the base and its use and can appreciate the humanitarian role British service personnel often undertake with very little media attention such as assisting when the Somerset Levels flooded, manning Green Goddess fire engines during strikes, and providing security during the London Olympic Games. There is also the aid provided in global disasters such as earthquakes, volcanoes erupting and the current Ebola outbreak in Africa.

Ian Macdonald thanked Ernie for a well structured talk and offered some points for reflection ending with a reading of *Advices & Queries* No.5.

Our Peace Testimony is often the one that is most difficult for individual Friends to come to terms with in our violent world. Good communication between Friends and those in the armed forces can surely lead to a better understanding of each other and our human condition.

**Helen Macdonald** (*Wigtown Meeting*)

## West Scotland's Youngest Meeting



Islay & Jura Local Quaker Meeting formally came into being early in 2014. We had previously been part of Argyll Meeting, but logistics (a 2-hour ferry ride involving a 13-hour round trip to Meeting for Worship – and that was just from Islay) and Friends' working commitments meant that only one of us ever realistically was able to worship with Argyll Friends.

We are very small, and in contrast to some local Meetings, most of us are working, and in jobs that do not conform to 9-5 days with weekends off! This makes finding a time when all of us can meet together almost impossible. But we manage to meet twice a month. On the final Sunday of the month we meet in Kilmeny church (see photo), where several years ago the congregation replaced half the pews with chairs, enabling us to create a circular, worshipful “Quaker” space in what is a wonderfully peaceful setting. And on the second Monday of the month we have a morning Meeting in a Friend’s home. This proves to be a valuable calming and spiritual basis for our forthcoming week’s work for several of us.

We are blessed with the frequent presence of Eliza and Lily (aged 8 and 6) at many of our Sunday Meetings, and by the presence of “ecumenical attenders” (Friends who are loyal members of other churches but who value Quaker Meeting too) at both our Meetings. But we have one or two challenges.... One of these is distance from the mainland, making participation in the activities of the wider family of AM and GM Friends difficult owing to time constraints and cost. Another is the fact that of course we are still split: there is a narrow, but fierce, strait of water and several miles of challenging road separating Islay and Jura Friends. Our one attempt to have a Meeting for Worship on Jura this year was scuppered (in August!) by storms. But we are not giving up, and plan to attempt a Meeting on Jura next Spring.

And we do take what opportunities arise to meet with other “westerly” Friends. Some of us (including Eliza and Lily) have enjoyed joining Argyll and Arran Friends for Meetings in Skipness in Kintyre, and also the annual weekend gathering of westerly Friends in Inveraray (which in 2015 will be in Crianlarich - we are very much looking forward to it!)

### **Bronwen Currie (*Islay & Jura Meeting*)**

## **Remembrance Events in Milngavie**

*Margaret Peacock dedicates Poppy Garden outside Fraser Centre on 27th October*





## Remembrance Sunday at Milngavie War Memorial

Good morning, everybody. Thank you for coming to support the relatives and friends of the slain men who are listed here. There are 110 names from the first world war. If you think about the size of the population here in 1914 it was much smaller than it is now - possibly only 3000, so the 110 names must have been a significant proportion - nearly a whole generation. There are 47 names here too for those who died in the second World War I don't think they include the many who died in the merchant navy or in the blitz, or those who died in subsequent conflicts - in the Falklands or Afghanistan or Iraq - each one a tragedy. Today we are here to remember them all.

Let us not forget the maimed - those who are condemned to a lifetime of being unable to follow the lifestyle they used to consider normal. And let us not forget those other suffering people who had and have no choice in the matter - the conscripted soldiers on the losing side, the collaterally damaged civilians, the refugees who have escaped from misery to misery and see no prospect of going home. The returned soldiers were often reluctant to talk about their experiences, but World War one generated some remarkable poems. And one stirs me particularly. *Christ in Flanders*, by Lucy Whitmell, is written in the form of a prayer from a soldier, but these verses from it could fit me or any of us in our times of trouble

1. *We had forgotten You, or very nearly;  
You did not seem to touch us very nearly;  
Of course we thought about You now and then,  
Especially in any time of trouble. - - -*
2. *And there were always other things to think of - - -  
And so we only thought of You on Sunday -  
Sometimes, perhaps, not even on a Sunday,  
Because there's always lots to fill one's life.*
4. *But now that we are far away from England,  
We have no doubts; we know that You are here.*
5. *You stood beside us in our pain and weakness - - -*
6. *Though we forgot You, You will not forget us.  
We feel so sure that You will not forget us - - -  
but - - - stand beside us to the last.*

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, in our turn we ask you to be with each one of us, to guide and support us. Imbue all negotiating politicians with a spirit of justice and respect, so that they may avoid military action which stirs up resentment for generations to come. Maintain our faith in your loving care, and help us constantly to recognise your presence and inspiration in ourselves and in every human being, however difficult it may seem. Grant faith, and comfort, to the bereaved; hope, and fortitude, to the sufferers and refugees; and surround us all with your infectious love. We ask this in the confidence given us by Jesus in the sermon on the mount. Amen.

Reminding you now of what the psalmist wrote:-

Let me hear the words of the Lord - are they not words of peace, peace to his people and his loyal servants and to all who turn and trust in him? Love and fidelity have come together; justice and peace join hands. Justice shall go in front of Him and the path before His feet shall be peace.



Laurence Binyon's poem *For the Fallen*, was written only 7 weeks after the outbreak of the Great War. In the fourth stanza he has caught a spirit of respect and remembrance which has united the bereaved all over the world, in many languages:- *They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old - - -*

Following the two minutes' silence, the *Kohima epitaph* (by JM Edmonds) was read *When you go home, tell them of us and say For your tomorrow we gave our today.*

After the wreath-laying and the national anthem, the final prayer:- Heavenly Father, this year we are remembering especially the first World War and its mass slaughter - the horror behind the incongruous beauty of the poppies. But all deaths are important to you, so let us not forget the deaths of the second World War - those lost at sea, or dying in prison camps, or buried in rubble. Help us to extend our imagination to all who have suffered and still suffer in subsequent violent conflicts in the world, and support today all who try to reconcile the opponents and break the cycle of revenge. May peace prevail. Let it spread from us all who pray for it. May we now take half a minute to say the Lord's prayer in silence using whatever words we are used to.

Our Father - - - Now the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

**Margaret Peacock (*Milngavie Meeting*)**

## **Woodbrooke on the Road in Dunblane**

Woodbrooke is always a challenge and a delight. On the Road there is not the wonderful surroundings of the College and gardens but Dunblane more than made up for that with the historical surroundings of the Abbey and the rushing sounds of the river in full spate. With the Methodists meeting below us and another group at the far end of the building we were truly part of something happening in Scotland. Five local meetings were represented by the 15 people who met with John Lampden to look at Deepening the Spirituality in meetings.

John led us through a series of exercises to focus our inquiry. What did we see as most important: fellowship & friendship, Quaker social testimonies, Quaker Christian tradition, or Meeting for Worship. Later, if you were to array yourselves on a line between two books, the Bible and Faith and Practice, where would you find yourself, i.e. which are you most influenced by.

We looked at conflict in Meeting. In groups we explored what we would do if a Friend approached us with a problem between themselves and another member of the Meeting. We created an 'Advice'. We looked at the words we use. Do they help or hinder the process of Meeting? Gradually we were getting around to see what Meeting meant to each of us. And what we held most dear? From a pile of postcards we each sought out that which had most meaning for us and explained why to the group.

What would I like to do as routine that would be part of deepening the spirituality of the Meeting? There was much sharing and deep exploration of our own meaning of spirituality.

**Margaret Roy (*Lanark Meeting*)**