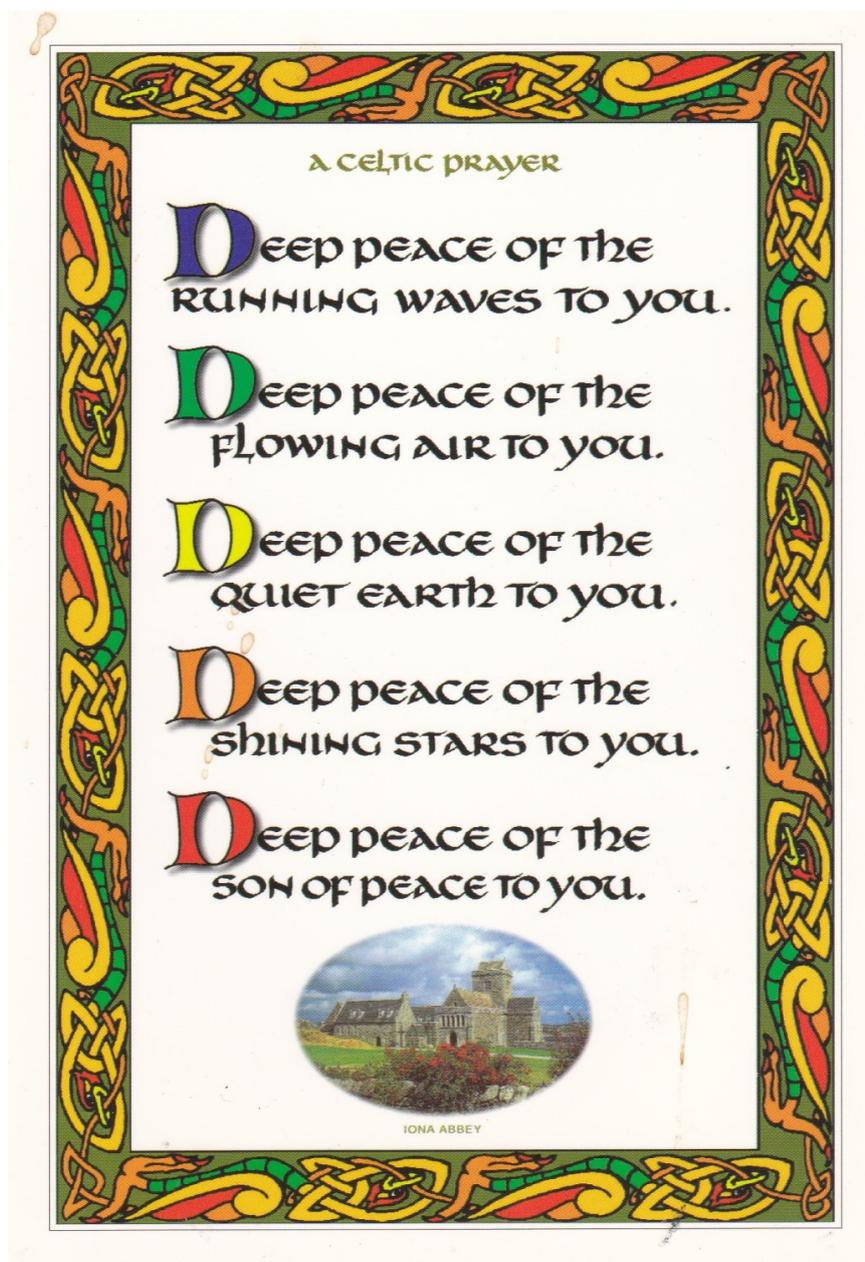


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- connecting local meetings



October 2023

West Scotland Quaker Newsletter

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Frontipiece is an old Gaelic blessing from a postcard by the Iona Community.

Give over thine own willing, give over thy own running,
give over thine own desire to know or be anything and
sink down to the seed which God sows in the heart, and
let that grow in thee and act in thee; and thou shalt find
by sweet experience that the Lord knows that and loves
and owns that, and will lead it to the inheritance of Life,
which is its portion.

Isaac Pennington 1661. QF&P 26:70

All Truth is a shadow except the last, except the utmost;
Yet every Truth is true in its kind. It is substance in its own
place, though it be but a shadow in another place (for it is
but a reflection from an intenser substance); and the
shadow is a true shadow, as the substance is
a true substance.

Isaac Pennington 1653. QF&P 27:22

Isaac Pennington was a contemporary of George Fox and thus one of our earliest Quaker spokespersons. He worked deeply with images of the Inner Light and the seed.

Exploring Isaac Pennington is a new book by Ruth Tod in the Quaker Quicks series. The Learning Group will take this up as a book study in the new year.

Report on West Scotland Area Meeting (AM) 19 August 2023 in Lochgilphead and online - a personal view

It had been a stormy night. Nevertheless people arrived from Islay (about 20 miles to the ferry, a 2-hour boat journey plus 20 miles, possibly by bus, on the mainland), and in good number from Ayrshire, about 120 miles away by road. As a member of the hosting meeting, I should have been there. My distance is only 20 miles, but it includes a 25-minute boat journey and I found out in the morning that my boat had been cancelled, so I took part by Zoom. Altogether there were about 30 Friends.

There were some teething problems with the online sound, but I think most of them were resolved fairly well. One difficulty was that there was a lip-reader online, and people speaking in the hall had to face the camera, rather than the other people in the hall.

We made several appointments, and Gill Reid, the clerk of Nominations reminded us that we have as yet no clerk for the AM after December. Please have a think about whether you or someone else you know might like to try taking on this role (or a part of it). Training is available and you can discuss the matter with a member of the Nominations Committee to find out more. We need also several new Elders/ Pastoral Carers. Dumfries Meeting is experimenting with a shared voluntary scheme for elders at their meetings. The AM heard about this with interest, and will keep an eye on how it develops. The details can be found in Paper 2 for the meeting.

The Treasurer reported on the year so far, and noted that direct giving to the AM by Friends is about 12% down compared with last year. The work on repairing the Meeting House roof is almost all paid for. We agreed to send £6000 from the sale of Wigton Meeting House to Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM), which had supported our original purchase.

We heard with sorrow that Isobel Thomson of Arran Meeting has died. She had been ill for some time, and had asked Kate Gulliver, who was her visitor when she joined, to take her funeral and see her on her way,

Sheila Semple presented a paper (Paper 3 for the meeting) from the elders' Learning Group. It noted a great contrast in the size of local meetings and in what they felt able to put on. Glasgow, Ayrshire, Dumfries and Mull & Iona are operating successful study groups. Some of the smaller meetings cannot do it alone. Therefore they suggest that those arranging events that are mainly online should invite others to join their events, if this is possible. The value of a

study group is not just the topic studied but also getting to know each other. Perhaps there should be a web site or other notice board where things can be seen. We understand that not everyone can benefit from study groups on line. We shouldn't forget them. We noted the value of occasional residential events, such as the Westerly Friends gathering (recently in Crianlarich) for remote communities and individuals. Perhaps Friends might visit smaller meetings. Individuals can of course use courses provided by Woodbrooke and others.

In the afternoon had a discussion on membership, in response to BYM - How do we encourage the idea of belonging in a way that helps us? One Friend made a helpful analogy by pointing out that a few decades ago society generally expected those forming committed personal relationships to marry, but nowadays many people do not see this as a needful step.

One contributor used the quotation "truth is the daughter of experience, not of authority", but I find this is attributed to Francis Bacon with the wording "For rightly, is truth called the daughter of *time*, not of authority" (1620). But Quakerism is surely an experiential religion, so our Friend's wording was apposite.

We were reminded that we become members of the Religious Society of Friends (Britain), not just of our worshipping community. Quakers have always felt it necessary to keep tabs on its members.

A brief review of the western cluster of meetings noted that Mull & Iona was doing well; the others, Argyll, Arran and Islay & Jura, have meetings about once a month with small numbers, but some of their members join other online meetings, so there some degree of mutual support.

Wendy Reynolds urged members to return the questionnaire about our understanding of gender-based violence by the end of August.

The meeting at Faslane Naval Base (six times a year) has been poorly attended recently, and Glasgow Meeting is unable to continue arranging it. Dunblane and Castle Douglas Meetings have offered to be involved.

The business was closed early at around 2.30 and the sun had come out.

Jane Mitchell, Argyll local meeting

' If words are of any use at all, they are the words of the poet. For poetry has the ability to point us towards the truth then stand aside, while prose stands in the doorway relating all the wonders on the other side but rarely let us pass.'

Red Pine - Buddhist author.

Options for Scotland – Minute of General Meeting

23/09/08

Further to minute 23/06/11, we receive the further report of the Options for Scotland 2 Working Group (Paper A1). This has been before all four Area Meetings in Scotland, and we receive their minutes as follows (Paper A2):

- 23.08.04 of East Scotland AM held 12 th August 2023;
- 035/23 of West Scotland AM held 19 th August 2023;
- 15/23 of North Scotland AM held 26th August 2023;
- 2023/09/08 of South East Scotland AM held 6th September 2023.

Copies of these minutes and the introductory paper from the Options 2 Group are filed with our minutes.

The report includes this paragraph:

“In order to make progress we want Friends to feel that they will enjoy and be energised by being part of a single community of Quakers in Scotland. To get there we have to undertake the administrative and legal steps required to make the transition to new arrangements. This transition must be flexible to accommodate the pace of change at which the AMs and GM feel ready to move. We imagine that the Options for Scotland 3 group will undertake its work by involving Friends across Scotland so that what emerges feels realistic, hopeful and worthwhile.”

The clerk has summarised the path to this point. We have heard from members of the current working group, giving personal reflections on their service. The experience of becoming in unity felt wonderful, as well as the benefit of being together with Friends across Scotland. There was hope coming from the sense of adventure. Our structures are like windows which give access to the Light beyond.

We have to care for our windows and ensure they can be seen through, but it is the Light beyond that is our purpose.

The clerk wrote to Paul Parker, Recording Clerk, to seek advice on the constitutional status of General Meeting for Scotland in relation to a possible merger into a new charity. This is because General Meeting is defined in section 5.03 of Quaker faith & practice, which may only be changed in substance by Yearly Meeting in session.

Paul Parker has replied to say:

“I’m encouraged to see that General Meeting for Scotland is progressing with its consideration of options for Scotland. I’m comfortable that if a single body were created to provide governance of all Quaker activities in Scotland, replacing or absorbing the functions of the current GM and the four AMs, then BYM would see that as the successor body to General Meeting for Scotland for the purposes of Quaker faith & practice 5.03.

“Meeting for Sufferings has already given its encouragement to Friends in Wales & the Marches and in London to move to having an overarching body, and, as you say, Scottish Friends would need to do the same. I don’t think it would be necessary to seek additional endorsement in advance from Yearly Meeting before proceeding to put in place arrangements for the duties laid upon the GM in 5.03 to be carried out by the new overarching body. I would assume that the current financial arrangement whereby the GM receives a grant from BYM for those functions would continue also.

“Once the arrangements are in place, the book of discipline can be amended to reflect them. This could probably be carried out by Meeting for Sufferings under the arrangement whereby minor amendments can be handled by them and reported to Yearly Meeting after the event. It’s likely that the new book of discipline will focus on underlying principles more than on the detail of how they are reflected in structures.

That means the current 5.03 may well be considerably simplified and more explanatory in nature, so it will just be a question of keeping the current text in line with practice until that can be approved by YM.

The questions asked of Area Meetings (and General Meeting) were:

1. Is the AM interested in taking the planning for a single charity further? (A definite commitment will come later when we have done more detailed work on things like the constitution so that Friends can have a clear idea what they are considering joining.)

2. Is the AM happy to have the GM nominations committee find any further names needed for Friends to serve in particular ways in relation to Quakers in Scotland?

(For example they may need to find Friends to serve as the first trustees of a new SCIO.)

3. Are Friends happy to work with Friends across Scotland in fleshing out the various aspects of Quakers in Scotland beyond the work towards the single charity?

4. Are Friends content that General Meeting write to Meeting for Sufferings on behalf of all Area Meetings explaining the work we are engaged in?

All four Area Meetings answered in the affirmative to all four questions.

Dundee Friends Property Trust also wishes to be part of this process.

We note the comments and affirmation from area meetings and also note the concerns expressed in the South East Scotland AM minute. Friends have spoken to and considered those concerns.

We, as a General Meeting, also agree affirmatively to these four questions.

We asked last time for a new working group, Options for Scotland 3, to be set

up and will hear nominations to it, and consider its convenorship, shortly. The clerk, as asked, drew up terms of reference for this group and we ask the clerk to update these in the light of comments made today, and to bring the revised document to our November meeting for approval. We agree to change the name of the group to **Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group**.

What we have agreed to today gives authority to the new group for our Scotland-wide process to work with our structures so that our diverse and active community of Friends can adapt to the situation we are now in. We are giving authority for:

- draft documents to be brought to us for the decision on having a single charity, following liaison with the six trustee bodies;
- wider options to be brought to General Meeting and the four Area Meetings on how best our meetings might evolve, if they wish, and be grouped together;
- how we could improve common ways of working together, such as for eldership and pastoral care, and for learning and grow In moving forward, we need to ensure we maintain the Quaker principle whereby all can take part in decision making in a structure that allows for that. We also need to ensure that a new trustee body is able to continue the broader long-term work currently undertaken by GM Trustees within the context of a wider remit that would include finance and property.

We are grateful to the Options for Scotland Working Group 2 for their service on our behalf as it is laid down today.

We began this wider process some five years ago, starting with a reading of Advices & queries 27:

“Live adventurously. When choices arise, do you take the way that offers the fullest opportunity for the use of your gifts in the service of God and the community? Let your life speak. When decisions have to be made, are you ready to join with others in seeking clearness, asking for God’s guidance and offering counsel to one another?”

This is still very relevant for us today. We have celebrated what we are already, and hope what we can become will give us new adventure.

*You look in the mirror and sometimes
see a mess of a human being
But you don't see the lives you have touched
and the people you have saved
You don't see all the love you've
given freely, or the extraordinary memories you've made
You are a book of
Beautiful moments and feelings*

Tiny Buddha

West Scotland AM Quaker Concerns

Climate Change

Real Talk: Alastair McIntosh's Thought for the week in The Friend 11th August

Last month, just as the welcome news came in that the Dundonian Jim Skea had been elected chair of the United Nations Intergovernmental panel on Climate Change, it was reported that over forty people had died in the wildfires that are ravaging the Mediterranean coasts of Africa and Europe.

The reasons for these fires are compound. They can include lightning strikes, accidents, arson, and changes in how people live with and use the forests. But the bottom line is that drought has made the forest floors tinder-dry, and few scientists now doubt that climate change is playing a driving role in contributing to such exceptional conditions.

But what to do about it? Politically there seems to be a stuckness. Voters want to see global warming tackled, but fewer will vote for measures that they think might weigh upon their freedoms. We can blame the world's governments, but it is also true that stuckness hides in many of us.

And the consequences! There's a poem by W.B. Yeats, called 'The Second Coming', that speaks of a time when 'Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold.' And when that connection to our spiritual centre is lost, says Yeats, 'mere anarchy is loosed upon the world'.

Yet there is an antidote. As the Hebrew prophet Habakkuk puts it, 'vision awaits its appointed time' (Habakkuk 2:3). And vision in this sense isn't just another strategic plan. Vision is a reordering of how we see reality.

Without it, we will never reach the roots of climate change, or war, or poverty. We'd just wallow in the same old stuckness of our limitations.

The Hindu scriptures say that vision is of 'a light that shines in our heart . . . smaller than a grain of rice . . . or . . . mustard seen (yet) greater than the Earth' (Chandogya Upanishad, 3.14.3). And so great things begin from the smallest steps that are taken by the least of us.

We can't buy the vision that restores right relationship with each other and the planet. But in the still small moments we can reach into the 'centre', and ask. For, just as the poet Hugh MacDiarmid wrote in 'On a Raised Beach':

*The inward gates of a bird are always open,
It does not know how to shut them.
That is the secret of its song.*

Microplastics

from Ekō e mail

Our oceans are rapidly turning into a plastic soup – awash with **14 billion tons of tiny, toxic particles that will never break down**. And every day, more microplastics flow out of our drains into once-pristine rivers and seas.

The maddening thing is **there's an easy way** to stem this pollution – it's just not being done. A **full third of microplastics come from laundry**, and can be stopped with a simple filter, but **washing machine manufacturers have been reluctant to fit them to save costs**.

Now **France has made it mandatory for all new machines to have filters**, and if other countries follow suit, the impact on our oceans would be massive. That's why we have a team of campaigners ready to roll out a huge campaign on this – **but for them to get to work, we need your help**.

If everyone reading this chips in, **we can launch an all out advocacy surge** – going from government to government to push them to get on board, running media-grabbing actions and **naming and shaming washing machine companies who'd rather destroy the oceans** than lose a fraction of their profits. We've done this before – pushing McDonald's to stop using plastic straws and eventually getting them banned across Europe. **We can do it again on microplastics – are you in?**

Washing machine filters may not sound exciting, but they are literally world-changing – these simple devices capture 90% of the plastic microfibers that shed from material like polyester and nylon as it spins, preventing these toxic threads reaching our waterways and poisoning sealife.

This is a moment that the Ekō community was made for, but it's a massive undertaking and we can't do it alone – **will you chip in to help save our oceans from microplastics?** [Donate £3](#) [Donate another amount](#)

More information:

[Microplastics found in ocean samples across the world](#) BBC. 7 June 2023.

[Our clothes shed microfibres – here's what we can do...](#) Fashion Revolution.

Ekō is a worldwide movement of people like you, working together to hold corporations accountable for their actions and forge a new, sustainable path for our global economy.

ED: I would not normally print an appeal from an outside body, but I think you can see where it fits in. There's a simple solution to save our oceans from drowning in microplastics. It's up to us to make it happen.

Climate Café

Next meeting Tuesday 17 October at 5.30 in the Glasgow Meeting House

Simple food followed by discussion.

Please contact glasgowquakers.climatecafe@gmail.com for further details.

There is also a lot of other information available. You can read it all on the Climate Cafe Google Drive.

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1FdfaTZLvWCog330o1NmG7Or5kzB9ne2p?usp=drive_link

The Unexpected Item in the Baggage Area

And again, and too often,
I had arrived to buy just one thing,
So left my multi use bag in the back of the car,
And now my basket had more than I could comfortably carry,
I felt the first world guilt for the trivia,
Of another plastic bag.

Because the weight of the bombs,
The floods, the hunger, the dying children,
And the drug ridden streets of the South Americas,
And the tragedy of Uyghurs, Rohingyas, Hazaras, Palestinians,
And the impact of our careless disregard,
For the marine life in our oceans, choking on our debris,
Were too heavy to carry to the check out,
And I looked around for a cardboard box.

My dates were from Tunisia,
Unsettled unstable yet an oasis,
In the moral desert and epidemic of violence in the region,
Created by Empires, Tribes, Shifting Allegiances,
Colonialism and Betrayal.

My Olives were Italian,
And I remembered the heart-breaking footage of the Italian villages,
And the Covid devastation,
And wondered how they were recovering,
I used to buy Palestinian Olives,
I rarely see Palestinians Olives now,
And I never buy Israeli anything,
And I thought of the unequal battle between the Israelis and the Palestinians,
And wondered if the Olive groves knew,

And thought of the affront to the God of the ancestors,
That soil could be possessed and Olives weaponised,
As surely as slash and burn and deliberative warfare,
And I thought of Dust after I thought of the soil,
Primordial Soup Dust
And the moral fabric of the Dust,
That contentious Dust,
And wondered how humanity thought that it could hold that Dust,
And possess that Dust,
And use that Dust as weapons of war,
In origin myths and claimed ownership,
An affront an affront an affront.

I thought I heard the Dust weep, Weep in anguish,
For us and of us,
And my heart was stabbed through,
And bled invisible blood on the floor of the supermarket,
And I had to walk through it to the next aisle.

My coffee was from Columbia and the coffee growers,
Eschewing the option of more lucrative cocaine,
And the Astronomical price of their safety,
And I thought to remember them when I drank the coffee,
The rice noodles were Chinese, and I wondered who produced them,
The tea from Kenya made me shiver with unease at the latest news of
exploitation,

And I wondered what tea was safe to buy and whether,
When I bought the milk, our farmers were getting a fair price,
And how the livestock was treated,
And then I felt unequal to the task,
And now I was adrift,
And my feet were blood drenched,
And tears were gathering unhelpfully,
So, I found the box,
And I sought the safety of the checkout.

And I placed the box in the bagging area,
And the not yet I in the AI objected,
Programmed for a bag and not for a box,
And we needed a human, a human response,
A simple metaphor for the human condition,
One human looking into the face of one human and then smiling together,
An understanding single human response for the unexpected,
Because we do stupid things like I do,
Like forget our bags, and reject the pre-programmed,

And because it was a trivial first world problem,
We could deal with the missing I in the AI,
And laugh about it, not taking over the world any time soon,
As the guided AI dropped its bombs, spied upon and located new targets,
Where death unseen is euphemised as casualties and devastation wrought,
As ground gained or lost,
No chance of human-to-human connectivity and correction,
We persuaded the in- house AI to recognise a cardboard box.

And I packed my box which spoke to me,
Of human connectedness, sought and avoided,
Of history, of pain, of dislocation and,
The transformational power of Recognition,
The possibility of change from,
And to coffee from cocaine
If we paid for our coffee properly,
If we bought the right Olives,
And if we heard the Dust weep,
Could Eden be (re)-possessed for us all,

And I carried the box, the unexpected item in the bagging area,
Out to my car,
And sat it beside the unused multi use bag,
And got into the car and looked at my blood drenched shoes,
And my tears fell on them.

Laura McMurtrie. From: Blurred Lenses

The Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network

Report to Justice Interest Group/ Quakers in Criminal Justice for 23rd June 2023
From: Mike Nellis, Scottish rep on the Justice Interest Group/QICJ

The Scottish Quaker Community Justice Network (SQCJN) was re-convened in 2021 – an earlier iteration of it having lapsed - with approximately 17 members from across Scotland, although not all four Area meetings are yet represented. A Working Group of five members drawn from the Network have been appointed as a “nominated group” by General Meeting (GM) and they are authorised to speak publicly on community justice issues, to respond to relevant Scottish Government consultations and to engage with other institutions as need arises. Several consultations – notably on the future of criminal justice social work, and the proposed Community Justice Scotland strategy document - have been responded to, often in conjunction with GM’s Parliamentary Engagement Officer. The SQCJN as a whole has only ever met on Zoom, usually monthly, for 90 minutes or so each time, sometimes with an

external speaker, often just talking among ourselves around our respective interests and discoveries, our contacts with third sector organisations in the community justice field, or addressing a pre-set agenda.

In consultation with the Network, the Working Group drew up a Position Statement which was adopted by General Meeting in March 2022. The Statement is largely based on the Minute from Canadian YM in 1981 in which the abolition of prisons is described as a 'process and a long term goal'. Our statement highlights how the roots of crime lie in the violence and inequality in our society and how the overuse of prisons as a response to crime is a destructive and expensive failure. We nonetheless stopped short of calling for prison abolition, but there has been a general openness in the Network – a few of whose members are abolitionists - to reflecting on what this might or should entail. The Working Group subsequently organised discussion sessions for Friends in Area Meetings on our Statement and the Canadian Minute. One of these sessions was summarised thus in the relevant Area Meeting report thus:

[After a short quiz on aspects of Scottish penal issues] we ... went into small groups and considered how we can help reduce the overuse of prisons and achieve justice by fostering peace and inclusion, and whether we should consider in future adopting a minute leading towards prison abolition. Most people in my group agreed that there needs to be a change of ethos within the prison service away from containment towards rehabilitation, following the Scandinavian model. Maybe we should bring the statistics from Finland and other countries to the attention of Scottish politicians. Some felt the word 'abolition' might be misunderstood as simply opening the prison gates, rather than establishing a different more humane, therapeutic alternative – perhaps another word could be used?

In March 2022 an appointed sub-group from the Network organised an in-person/hybrid "reflection day" (workshop), open to Friends and others on "Trauma, Justice and Imprisonment". Speakers from the Network spoke on experiences of responding to trauma, restorative justice, AVP, HMP Dovegate's therapeutic community, involvement in penal reform and becoming abolitionists. A young man spoke of his own traumatising experience in his family and in prison, becoming a Christian, and of the work he now does with young people who offend, who are often so traumatised that they do not know how to make changes when they leave prison. A booklet resulted from this event, *Breaking the Chains and Building Change*, designed by a Network member with considerable design talents. <https://bit.ly/breakingchainsbuildingchange>

Unlike England and Wales, there is no formal arrangement for appointing Quaker

Prison Chaplains to Scottish prison chaplaincy teams. Many discussions have taken place over the years with the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) with a view to altering this, but to no avail. Nonetheless, individual Quakers have periodically worked in prisons on a grace and favour basis when individual chaplains have been approached. One such, who is a member of the Network and the Working Group, described her involvement thus:

About 5 years ago while in the Scottish Borders I became the Area Meeting Quaker Chaplaincy representative for HMP Edinburgh. After some initial difficulties in gaining access to the prison a new Church of Scotland Minister became the fulltime Chaplain there and he made me welcome and facilitated my starting a Quaker Meeting for Creative Listening and Worship with five of the long term prisoners. I also visited three prisoners individually who requested this.

The Working Group has continued to explore the question of QPM's with SPS. One result of that ongoing dialogue has been a recognition that in their places of work SPS chaplains are not well supported. Reflecting on that, in May 2023, the Working Group organised "Time for Self and Soul Care", a day-long (11am-3pm), in-person retreat, for them at Glasgow Meeting House. 22 chaplains attended. One of the days's organisers wrote:

"Throughout we felt a sense of engagement and a thirst to spend time in silence and reflection. We had prepared a program in which - next to silent worship - creative listening and communication had a role to play."

The evaluation forms indicated a need for this type of meeting for SPS chaplains. Their answers included: 'so valuable'. "very precious time" "meeting others" ... "space and silence" " everyone got an equal chance to speak" "informative and enriching". "opportunity to share". We may repeat this work.

The SQCJN and its Working Group are pleased with what has been accomplished so far, remains in a good place and looks forward to its future engagements.

Peace

Ukrainian pacifist Yuri Sheliashenko is executive director of the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement who has taken part in Quaker talks on the Ukrainian invasion. He has been arrested by the Ukrainian authorities for 'justifying Russian aggression'.



The charge is based solely on his paper 'Peace Agenda for Ukraine and the World', a document that explicitly condemns the Russian invasion of Ukraine and promotes peace, justice and the right to conscientious objection to military service.

For more detail see news@thefriend.org or contact Quaker Council for European Affairs.

Weekly Meeting for Worship to pray for peace in Ukraine every Tuesday at 13.30 UK time.

FWCC/EMES, the collective body for Quaker Meetings in Europe and the Middle East, holds a weekly Meeting for Worship to uphold the situation in Ukraine for 30 minutes every Tuesday at 13.30 UK time.

Details and how to register are available on are available on the FWCC/EMES website

Sign the FWCC letter of solidarity for Ukrainian Conscientious Objector Yuri Sheliashenko, currently under house arrest.

"The Peace and Service Network of the FWCC Europe and Middle East Section wrote and circulated a letter of solidarity for Ukrainian Conscientious Objector Yuri Sheliashenko, currently under house arrest after having his personal electronics confiscated for charges of supporting Russia. The letter, signed by over 40 individual and organisation PSN members, has been received and acknowledged by the Ukrainian president, Chief prosecutor, and Kyiv prosecutor offices, though no state representative arrived at his last hearing on September 20th to present their case. His next hearing will be on October 5th. If you are interested in signing or sharing the letter, write to Evan at evan@fwccemes.org".

Quakers in Europe Prayer Group (Mary Troup)

Saturdays 08:30 to 9.30 am

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88555071012?pwd=WWRYT1Z0U1ZtMitvRnlyY0FwYVU3QT09>

Meeting ID: 885 5507 1012

Passcode: 421947

Prayer for Ukraine MfW

A Rumour of War

Baffle wa's in front o' close,
rafters in the entrance rose.
Shelters built aroon' the back ,
nae lights were lit 'twis awfu' dark.
The sirens wailed tae gie us warnin',
o' aeroplanes abin us swarmin',
drappin' bombs frae sky above,
ignorin' the Eternal Dove.

The men o' war hid played their game,
dictator fun' a race tae blame,
curses screamed 'neath scornful flag,
o' racial purity did brag.
Yet men still squabble an' they ficht,
o'er wha is wrang and wha' is richt,
the britherhood o' man, a coin lost,
carved headstones tell the awfu' cost.

'Ah ken the truth!' false teachers say,
promotin' death an' no' 'The Way',
the sufferin's o' the human race,
are no' say difficult tae trace.
Dae untae ithers wis the plan,
o' sages born tae every clan.
Confucius, Buddha, peaceful dharma,
Yeshua faced the Roman Drama.

Betrayal py'd a silver piece,
payments made that never cease,
the broken child, the woman shamed,
men wha's hearts'll no' be tamed.
Tae live by sword, tae kill an' maim,
tae claim "God telt me!" voiced insane.
Tam Merton, an' the monk Nhat Hahn,
both rose within the ranks o' man.

They saw the Dove o' Peace in flight
tae live an' teach an' poems write.
We read o' justice frae their pens,
an' see their world thru' sacred lense.
Holy cell an' silent cave whaur demons

meet wha' wid be brave.
The still small voice, the great "I AM"
still brings tae men the Voice o' Calm

Bill Bingham, Glasgow.

In 1941 when I was three years of age some adults in aeroplanes tried to kill me. In 1945 the adults in my own street built a great bonfire to celebrate 'Victory'. The following morning I went to the place where the bonfire had been lit the night before. All that remained was a circle of melted tar in the street. There was no evidence that any of the adults had tied someone to a stake, and burned them to death, but I was too young to be aware then that a Paradise had been Lost.

" Unless you become as a little child, you shall not enter the kingdom." - Yeshua of Nazareth

Northern Friends Peace Board news Rosie Horsley, Castle Douglas

NFPB recently held a blended meeting at Edinburgh Quaker Meeting house, and had a report from what peace news is occurring in Scotland by Janet Fenton, from which an exciting opportunity to attend the 'Festival of Survival', which will take place in Glasgow on November 4th. This is organised by Scottish CND and will host the new Executive Director of ICAN, Melissa Parke. Ellis Brookes from The Peace Education team at QPSW spoke about the Peace at the Heart exhibition, which is building on the report of the same name published in 2022. The exhibition highlights the importance of peace education in schools and will travel around various locations in Scotland. We also heard from Till Geiger, who spoke about a paper that draws on Friends different views and experiences in relation to the war in Ukraine. Geiger invites more Friends to take part in this paper, which he hopes will become a publication. If you are interested in contributing, please feel free to get in touch with the Northern Friends Peace Board.

Quaker Roots

Rosie Horsley, Castle Douglas

A number of Friends joined for Witness outside the EXCeL centre in London at the beginning of September to highlight the Defence and Security Equipment International (DSEI) Arms fair that was taking place. We joined in a day of Witness with other faiths before the fair opened, to try and disrupt the set up. Nine people were arrested, six of whom were Quakers. A couple of days later Quakers met at Friends House to take part in a Walk of Witness, we held meetings for worship outside three companies that are involved in making weapons. The mood was peaceful and reflective, it also gave us an opportunity to let Londoners know about

what is happening in their city, which Mayor Sadiq Khan even condemned. The same evening, we joined other Faiths and individuals in a candlelit vigil outside the EXCeL centre, this was led by PAX Christie and QPSW, with spoken contribution from Quaker Roots who brought the voices of people with lived experience of war and conflict. On the day of the Arms Fair opening people gathered again outside the EXCeL centre, this time in the front of the building. There was a strong Quaker presence and many people interacting in different ways with the delegates attending the Fair. Again, Quaker Roots brought the voices of those most effected by the weapons and industry sold and exhibited at DSEI. Hearing moving experiences from Yemin, Bahrain, Sudan, and Syria. The day also included, dancing, plays, singing and films. The work of Quaker Roots will continue, and if you would like to know more, please check out our website quaker-roots.org.uk and come and get involved.



Gender- based Violence

UN 16 days action on Violence against women and girls.



The United Nations is marking the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence from **25 November to 10 December**, under the global theme set by the UN Secretary-General's UNiTE campaign: "Orange the World: End Violence against Women Now!"

Nearly 1 in 3 women experience violence in their lifetime. And as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, in times of crisis, the numbers rise.

A [new report from UN Women](#), based on data from 13 countries, shows that 2 in 3 women reported that they or a woman they know experienced some form of violence since the pandemic. Only 1 in 10 women said that victims would go to the police for help.

"Violence against women is a global crisis. In all of our own neighbourhoods, there are women and girls living in danger. Around the world, conflict, climate-related natural disasters, food insecurity and human rights violations are exacerbating violence against women," Sima Bahous, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of UN Women, **said on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.**

"More than 70 per cent of women have experienced gender-based violence in some crisis settings. And in countries, both rich and poor, gender prejudice has fuelled acts of violence toward women and girls," she said.

While pervasive, gender-based violence is not inevitable. It can and must be prevented.

Stopping this violence starts with believing survivors, adopting comprehensive and inclusive approaches that tackle the root causes, transform harmful social norms, and empower women and girls.

With survivor-centred essential services across policing, justice, health and social sectors, along with sufficient financing for the women's rights agenda, we can end gender-based violence.

Take action

- Know the issue: [Learn more about violence against women and girls](#)
- Orange the World on social media: [Download the social media package](#) and use the hashtags #orangetheworld #16days to show your solidarity with survivors of gender-based violence

Glasgow Cathedral

There will be a short period of worship each day starting with a longer service on 25th November to be addressed by the moderator of the Church of Scotland, Rev. Sally Foster-Fulton.

TARA Human Trafficking

Human Trafficking is happening closer than you think

A campaign to make people aware that human trafficking is happening in Scotland has launched to bring the hidden crime out in the open.

Latest figures show there were 150 potential victims of trafficking identified in Scotland in 2016 - a 52 per cent increase since 2013, however the Home Office estimate this is a tip of the iceberg with around 10-13,000 victims in the UK.

Human trafficking is a complex crime which involves adults and children being traded and exploited for personal benefit. It is an abuse of human rights which causes victims lasting physical and psychological damage.

Trafficking can involve victims being forced into the role of a servant, being sexually exploited or trapped in forced labour, with nail bars, car washes and fishing amongst the industries where potential cases in Scotland have been reported.

For more information on the signs of human trafficking and to report concerns visit [Modern Slavery Helpline](#)

NOTE: Glasgow is regarded as one of the hotspots when it comes to trafficking. What are the facts? How can we respond to trafficking as Glaswegians?

Thursdays in Black

This is an initiative of the World Council of Churches when people all over the world dress in black on Thursdays to draw attention to gender-based violence.

The scheme arose out of solidarity with four causes:

The Mothers of the Disappeared In Buenos Aires, Argentina, who protested against the disappearance of their children during the violent dictatorship .

The Women in Black in Israel and Palestine against war and violence.

Women in Rwanda and Bosnia protested against the use of rape as a weapon of war in the genocide.

Black Sash movement in South Africa protesting against apartheid and its use of violence against black people.

Our Gender-based Violence group produced an up-to-date leaflet on the Scottish situation (in 2019) that includes where to go for help if you are the subject of gender-based violence. Contact margaret.roy@btinternet.com for copies of our leaflet. And if you intend to hold a vigil, especially during the UN 16 days of action, do let us know.

Calendar of Women's Achievements in the 20th century.

1907 **Women in the UK can be elected onto Borough and County Councils. They can also be elected mayor.**

1914 First police women.

1917 Formation of Women's Army Auxiliary Cops and Women's Royal Navy Service.

1918 **Women over 30 get the vote if they meet a property qualification.**

1919 **Sex Discrimination Act allows women to be lawyers, vets and civil servants.**
First female magistrate, Ada Summers. **First women MP.**

1922 First woman solicitor in England, Carrie Morrison.

1926 First woman to swim the Channel, Gertrude Ederle..

1928 **Votes for women over 21, the same as men.**

1929 First woman cabinet minister, Margaret Bondfield.

1946 First woman president of the British Dental Association.

1955 First woman newsreader on British TV, Barbara Mandell.

1958 First woman bank manager, Hilary Harding.

1968 **First woman high court judge.**

1972 Rose Heilbron first woman judge at the Old Bailey.

1956 **Civil Service Reforms means teachers and women in other government positions have the right to equal pay.**

1965 Barbara Castle becomes the first female Minister of State. She is appointed Minister of Transport.

1968 Women strike at Ford car factory, Dagenham, leading directly to Equal Pay Act

1970 Feminist activists protest at Miss World Competition

1971 First Women's Liberation march in London

1972 Erin Pizzey sets up the first women's refuge in Chiswick , London

1973 Sybil Phoenix is the first black woman to be given an MBE

1974 **National Women's Aid Federation set up in the U.K.**

1976 **Equal Opportunities Commission comes into effect, Race Relations Act is passed. Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings Act is passed**

1978 Women's Aid Federation formed in Northern Ireland. Organisation of Women of African and Asian Descent set up in the U.K.

1980 **Women in the UK are allowed to apply for a loan or credit in their own name**

1981 Baroness Young becomes the first woman leader of the House of Lords

1982 **In the UK Bars and pubs are no longer allowed to refuse to serve women.**

1984 The National Black Feminist Conference is held

1985 **The Equal Pay Act is passed**

1986 **The Sex Discrimination Act is passed**

1987 Diane Abbot becomes the first black female MP. Elizabeth Butler-Sloss becomes the first female Lord of Justice and Appeal

1990 **Independent taxation for women in the U.K. is introduced.**

1994 **The C. Of E. ordained 32 women as its first female priests
Rape in marriage is made a crime**

1997 101 female MP's are elected

1999 **The House of Lords delivers a historic judgement that women who fear gender persecution should be recognised as refugees.**

Sex Discrimination Regulations make it illegal for employers to discriminate against trans people.

The GBV Questionnaire

The group were delighted with the response to our questionnaire. Our full response will be delivered to AM on Saturday 7th October. Meanwhile a few interesting points came out: Most saw women as the victims of GBV and connected this with domestic violence in the home. It was mainly committed by men who were related to the victim. Usually there was a sexual element. However, when it came to violent crime committed by strangers it was more evenly spread with men 29% and women 40%. And alas, 91% of those responding to the questionnaire believed children could also be victims. Slightly fewer, 84% thought transsexual people could be victimised violently.

20th century Quaker Women of Note

Fiona Powrie director of Kennedy Institute of Rheumatology and a Professor of Musculoskeletal ...and Dame Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (DBE), for services to Medical Sciences.

Deborah Fowell Department chair microbiology & immunology Cornell University Her research focuses on the spatiotemporal regulation of T cell immunity at tissues sites of infection and inflammation.

Dame Kathleen Lonsdale DBE FRS (née **Yardley**) was an Irish pacifist, prison reformer and crystallographer. She proved, in 1929, that the benzene ring is flat. During her career she attained several firsts for female scientists, including being one of the first two women elected a Fellow of the Royal Society (FRS) in 1945^[1] (along with Marjory Stephenson), first woman tenured professor at University College London, first woman president of the International Union of Crystallography, and first woman president of the British Association for the Advancement of Science.

Dame Susan **Jocelyn Bell** Burnell is an astrophysicist from Northern Ireland who, as a postgraduate student, discovered the first radio pulsars in 1967. The discovery eventually earned the Nobel Prize.



@SeanchasStorytellingandLore.

Some of our own women today.

Alis Ballance

Alis has created an organization called SEANCHAS to keep alive our ancient Scottish Gaelic myths, songs and lore. She is pictured here as Sgàthach, legendary warrior-queen of the Isle of Skye, who ran a Mystery School for women. As such Sgàthach was above all a spiritual warrior – her greatest strength came not from her tremendous skills in staff-fighting, but from her study and understanding of the Mysteries. Alis organises storytelling and song events and trainings in the Highlands – you can view her work and contact her via her Facebook page

Dr Sheila Peacock (Distinguished Service Award)



Dr Sheila Peacock's contribution to the field and community of UK geophysics spans more than three decades. During this time, she has been the driving force behind the British Geophysical Association and acted in multiple trustee roles within learned societies, devoting her time freely and enthusiastically and ensuring that the geophysics community in the UK remains strong and supported. Her academic career began with a PhD at the University of Edinburgh, researching seismic anisotropy and shear-wave splitting.

During her subsequent research career, she continued to use the effect of cracks and pores on seismic waves to investigate rock properties and tectonic processes.

After leaving academia in 2005 to join AWE Blacknest as a senior seismologist, she has remained a stalwart supporter of the academic community, devoting her time to the promotion of geophysics, to encouraging the next generation of students, and to championing outreach, diversity, equality and inclusivity efforts within the geosciences. At the British Geophysical Association, she has worked tirelessly for more than two decades, including acting as Secretary between 2007 and 2010. She has served in multiple trustee roles on the Councils of both the Geological Society and the Royal Astronomical Society, and has sat on many of their sub-committees. She is, put simply, "the glue that holds the geophysics community together", and this award is presented with our sincere thanks to Dr Sheila Peacock.

Sheila adds, in addition to being on the Geological Society Council 2016-19, I served two three-year stints on the Council of the Royal Astronomical Society. The problem with being a geophysicist is that there isn't a single society in the UK that represents us all, so I belong to three professional societies (the third is the Institute of Physics, of which Jocelyn Bell Burnell served a stint as President but I have never done any service).

Sheila is one of our own, daughter of Margaret Peacock of Milngavie Meeting.

A Subtle Correction *The word "transgender" is an umbrella term that describes those who have a gender that's different from the sex (male, female, or intersex) or binary gender (boy or girl) they were assigned at birth.*

"Transsexual" is a more specific term that fits under the transgender umbrella. This word can be contentious and shouldn't be used unless someone specifically asks to be referred to this way.

Book Review: Politics and Religion Richard Holloway, from 'Godless Morality'

Bill Bingham – Glasgow

Most political systems have been structures of domination in which the vast majority of the population worked to support and provide comforts for a tiny elite. Human sacrifice seems to have been a part of religious systems in certain highly authoritarian cultures, and it is not difficult to follow its sociologic in a society that was governed by obedience to a commanding power.

As social and religious systems change, codes and practices change with them, but the underlying notion of obedience to authority remains, though it is usually converted into a metaphor for loyalty to a relationship that has been freely adopted. The monarchy in Britain provides an example of the survival of a vocabulary that once applied absolutely in one context, and is now applied metaphorically in another. Though British monarchs no longer have the kind of power and authority they once had, the vocabulary of absolute power is preserved in documents and semantic style, so the people of Britain are still *subjects* not *citizens*, and the monarch *commands* his loyal subjects to appear at this or that event or to receive this or that privilege or responsibility. The form and vocabulary of a previous dispensation are retained long after they have lost any substantive meaning. A similar evolution occurs in religious traditions. However, the evolutionary or historical approach to these matters creates difficulty for those who retain traditional ideas of God. If we are prepared to admit that previous generations were wrong to believe that God wanted them to kill their children as a sacrifice then we have already moved to a dynamic understanding of God and sin.

In this book, Holloway is not arguing the case against God, but rather he is casting light on how God has been used to maintain archaic notions about Royalty and about how God has been used to promote our questionable political agendas in places like Northern Ireland and in Palestine. I believe that all Quakers who are serious about truth, justice, peace and simplicity owe it to themselves to read the former Bishop of Edinburgh's publication.

.....

“ It's our land, God gave it to us.” - Benjamin Netanyahu

“ God told me to attack Iraq.” - George W.Bush

“ No surrender!” - Rev. Ian Paisley (whilst waving a pistol in the air.)

***Being a Quaker, Being an Activist* (2023) Canadian Friends Service Committee**

(available at <https://quakerservice.ca/news/being-a-quaker-being-an-activist/>)

Reviewed by Mike Nellis, Glasgow LM.

Mending the world, as William Penn put it, on scales large and small, has always been central to Quaker thought and practice. We have made the living out of our faith – beyond mere evangelism, through “testimony” - more central to our sense of ourselves than creed or ritual, though we have a little of those, and we rarely decry the world-mending efforts of other religious bodies. Quaker faith in action today is expressed on multiple, often interconnected, fronts: individually, at work and in everyday life; corporately as a Religious Society (locally, nationally and/or globally); as well as in varying degrees of alignment with secular and/or interfaith campaigns for social justice. The new publication from the Canadian Friends Service Committee speaks to the outward forms of them all.

Essentially, it explores and illuminates what being a Quaker activist might nowadays mean and entail. It touches on the importance of mystical and activist dimensions of faith being entwined, to ensure political undertakings are properly discerned. To my mind, it still has too little to say on the ways in which interbeing, holiness and prayer should inform faith-based activism, invariably setting it somewhat apart from merely secular approaches. It surprised me that German theologian Dorothee Soelle’s (2001) *The Silent Cry* gets no mention in the bibliography here, not least because she is famously complimentary towards the specifically Quaker combination of mysticism and resistance.

Scottish Friends will doubtless be pleased to learn that when the CFSC do emphasise the power of the Spirit in guiding and shaping world-mending activities they quote peacebuilder and anti-nuclear activist Helen Stevens:

By making ourselves totally open to the working of the Spirit, by reaching down beyond our deepest selves to the very ground of our being, who knows what may happen? We are in effect offering a blank cheque of our lives. This may lead us in directions we had never dreamed of, to new challenges and new ways of living adventurously (Stevens 2005:66)

This reflection clearly allows for the possibility of Quakers distancing themselves from orthodoxy and becoming involved in radical movements for social and cultural change, as they often have been in the past. Gratifyingly,

the CFSC supports such endeavours in the present time, notably demands for climate justice, defending the rights of indigenous people, opposing gender-based violence and attempts to re-orienting approaches to penal reform. But at the same time they accept there is a broad spectrum of legitimate Quaker activism, and that quiet and persistent service also has its place. Not all Friends are called to be radical all the time: not all the ways in which we might be the “salt of the earth” require that.

Friend Bill Moyes sees the activist spectrum in terms of *advocates* (demanding better arrangements and opportunities within the system); *helpers* (offering kindness and practical support to vulnerable or marginalised people); *organisers* (builders of networks and coalitions) and *rebels* (working for systemic change). There may be differing judgements among Friends as to which is best or more important at any given moment, but in decades-long campaigns, eg the abolition of capital punishment, all may have a role, separately or in concert. Friend Gianne Broughton describes the same spectrum a little differently, speaking of rights-based work, compassion-based work, interest-based work and power-based work.

Generally, the CFSC validates progressive, social justice politics, but it is discomfited by Friends’ embrace of - or alignment with - some versions of “identity politics”. It warns that this tends to create “contrarian identities” and unbridgeable social divides across which people cannot speak or hear each other. Listening and bestowing recognition - not cancelling - remain pre-eminent virtues for Quakers, epitomised by the behind-closed-doors diplomacy undertaken by Quaker embassies in the past and by QUNO and QCEA now. Nonetheless, the CFSC draws impeccably on Quaker tradition to affirm that unduly deferential engagement with the powers-that-be has its moral limits, that official agendas can be conscientiously objected to when they obscure truth, deny justice and defile dignity, and that even non-violent disruption of the status quo has its place, nodding respectfully to George Lakey’s bracing example in such matters.

Ultimately, though, CFSC is less exercised by unduly secular, leftist excess, and more by the complacency and conservatism of modern Friends who distance themselves from resistance. This is not a new phenomenon. In a brief case study of Quaker involvement in the abolition of slavery CFSC reminds us that John Woolman and Anthony Benezet, among the first Friends to agitate effectively for it (and people who are revered now) were held at arm’s length by many contemporaneous Meetings. The undiscerning Quakers in their day believed it morally sufficient to treat ones chattels kindly, even

saw this as God's final word, and could not envisage a viable economic order without slavery. The CFSC lament:

What was true of slavery has been true in most cases: some Friends take bold action, some Friends support them in various ways, and still others work against them, at times by merely conforming to the injustices of their day (p26).

A sad thought, but for Friends who are committed to world-mending all that the CFSC says here is useful. Managing the tensions between certainty and openness in social movements, abjuring the pursuit of holier-than-thou purity in otherwise just causes, formulating relevant theories of change and assessing their feasibility will be familiar to many spirit-driven activists, as will its tips on recovering energy at low moments in campaigns. The pamphlet does not say all that could be said about mysticism and resistance, if Dorothy Soelle is taken as the template for this. It probably won't suit more Biblically-minded Friends, although sometimes the vocabulary overlaps. **Yet, despite its limitations, this very readable publication could probably form the basis of a study day, or two, wherever one stands in Quakers today.**

References

Dorothy Soelle (2001) *The Silent Cry: mysticism and resistance*. New York: Fortress Press
Helen Steven (2005), *No Extraordinary Power: Prayer, Stillness and Activism*. London: Quaker Books

***The Truth About Modern Slavery* Emily Kenway, Pluto Press 2021**

Margaret Roy

Emily Kenway was the UK's first Anti-slavery Commissioner and wrote for the Guardian and the TLS.

It is claimed 'the book shows how modern slavery has been created as a political tool by those in power. . . it reveals how anti-slavery action acts as a moral cloak, hiding the harms of the 'hostile environment' towards migrants, legitimizing big brands' exploitation of the poorest workers and opposing sex workers'.

'Modern slavery is all around us, operating in plain sight.'

'Modern slavery isn't what you think it is.'

Her basic premise is that slavery is all around us but not in the form of the old stereotypes. UN Organisation for Migration (IOM) defines modern slavery as

referring to 'situations of exploitation in which a person cannot refuse or leave an exploitative situation due to threats, violence, coercion, deception or abuse of power'. This may be too broad to be useful and it may be seen as an insult to those involved in historical phenomena such as the transatlantic slave trade of Africans to the Americas, and elsewhere.

So what is modern slavery?

She quotes the theory of George Latoff who talks of frames, 'mental structures that shape the way we see the world . . .' which '. . . are part of what cognitive scientists call the "cognitive unconsciousness" – the structures in our brain that we cannot consciously access, but know their consequences: the way we reason and what counts for common sense. We also know frames through language. All words are defined relative to conceptual frames. When you hear a word, its frame . . . is activated in your brain.'

This is important in understanding truth in modern media. When it does not have overt emotional partiality, reality can still be biased from experience and cultural norms. **Recollections** may differ said our Queen. Just so, and how often is this at the basis of conflict, or even war. Here it blinds us to reality. And so, the phrase 'modern slavery piggybacks on understanding of the historical transatlantic slave trade to draw a connection between the two, so that we sit up and pay attention.

How do we free ourselves from such mental associations and brain shorthand to access judgement in today's situations? Where do we set our moral compass now? It is not enough to be emotionally riled or to invoke images that belong to another context.

Yet, modern slavery is real and 'all around us'.

Can we look deep into the fundamental structures of our society based on a patriarchal economic system that creates hierarchy, inequality and misogyny, and exploits people and our planet?

What are the factual situations we are dealing with? Information is the first step. The book has plenty of examples but she puts them into headings such as the New abolitionists – 'a way of seeing is also a way of not seeing; at the borders of humanity – political language . . . is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidarity to pure wind; Sex, slavery and women divided – the politics of prostitution should not be a feud between women but a collaboration; behind the brands – *see the quote from Adam Smith*; spotting the signs – a story of ignorance production.

She is challenging our perception that slavery is of the past. 100 years after abolition, it is estimated that 30 Million people left India as indentured workers, whilst in the Caribbean, emancipated slaves were redesignated as forced apprentices so would work without pay for 4 – 6 years. She quotes Joel Quirk as saying that the end of slavery was not about anti-racism or commitments to human dignity but ‘had more to do with questions about collective horror and identity . . . civilised status and national virtue’. Here is a question that arises for us today as we cast an eye around our own surrounds asking how we support modern slavery. Our current situation is described as a ‘wasting moral disease’ that has inveighed its way into our communities as we are deliberately blinded to it by the manipulation of information.

In conclusion she asks us not to hide behind the emotional horror but to look to real change in the underlying conditions. She is not a Quaker so she is not asking us to live a simple life based on need not want.

The UN recognizes ‘ positions of vulnerability, the driving cause of which is that people have no alternatives to avoid abuse. We need to ‘challenge the power structures and the distribution of wealth and resources currently working so well for those in power.’ ‘Instead of raid and rescue, or public vigilantism and ethical consumerism, real eradication would mean finding the roots of our problems. . . It would mean system change, so we no longer have an economy that privileges profit over people, nor power concentrated in very few hands, nor institutions and cultures that entrench racist and discriminatory practices.’

Can we envisage such change?

Correction

Can I correct the statement that Rev Susan Brown was the first female Moderator of the Church of Scotland. She is in fact the fourth, the first being as far back as 2004. The good people of Skye may indeed have objected to a female presence in the pulpit but may rather have taken exception to some of the more interesting things she has done during her ministry.

The Power of Holding in the Light

Mike Shilson, Mull

When we listen to the news, many of us feel overwhelmed by the events that are happening.

But there is some encouragement from an experiment in meditation that was carried out in the summer of 1993, which reduced the violent crime rate in Washington DC, USA. by 23%. Additional benefits were a reduction in car accidents, and accident and emergency admissions to hospitals.

The chief of police said it was comparable to the effect of a snowstorm happening in July.

<https://www.lifeintherightdirection.com/meditation-reduces-crime/>

Wouldn't it be wonderful if a group of Quakers could do something similar: to improve the "quality of life" for everyone in Scotland?

It is calculated that it only needs 1% of the square root of a population to influence a change.

Scotland's population = 6 million

Square root = 2,450

1% = 25

That's amazing: 25 people sharing their intent, could influence the well-being of everyone in Scotland.

There is also scientific credibility to the power of intent:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/24042451_Evidence_about_the_power_of_intention

George Fox said "*The Light of God is in everyone*".

Maybe we can help them clean their light bulbs so the Light can shine.

"For with God nothing will be impossible". Luke 1:37

Meditation reduces crime in Washington

In the book [Supernormal](#), Dean Radin talked about an experiment in Washington in 1993 that caught my attention. It was an experiment where a group of meditators tried to use meditation alone, over a period of two months, to reduce the crime rate in Washington. Of course, the experiment was closely monitored, and it worked out that the crime rate reduced by up to 23% during the experiment and then went back up again afterwards.

"Subtle but real effects of consciousness are important scientifically, but their real power is more direct. They encourage us to make essential, healthy changes in the great systems that dominate our world."

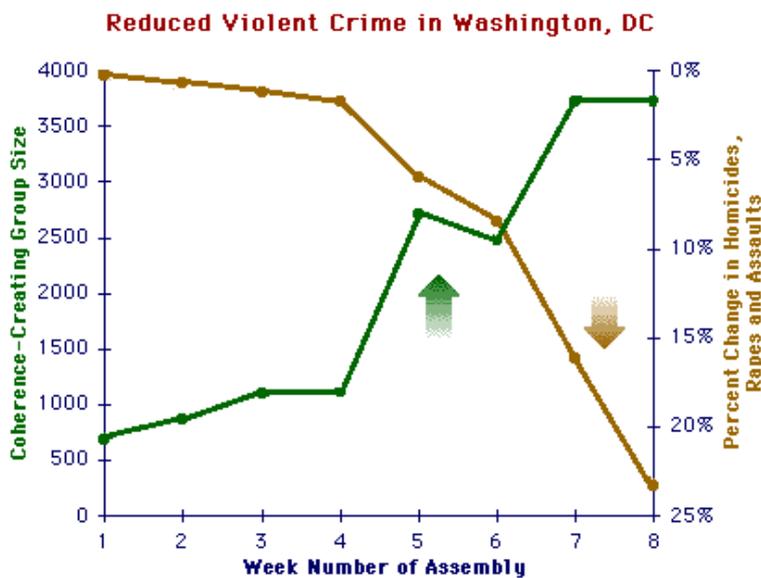
Large scale group consciousness has effects in the physical world.

Knowing this, we can intentionally work toward a brighter, more conscious future.”

Reading this caused me to have another one of those “What?!” moments. It doesn’t fit with what we’ve told about the world. How can some people meditating have any effect on what other people do? If this really is true, then I have to question everything I think I know about the world.

The experiment shows that meditation reduces crime

The results of the experiment are best summarized with this graph;



The decrease in crime rate reduces most as the number of meditators increases.

There’s a remarkable correlation here between the number of people meditating for reduced crime in Washington and the decrease in the crime rate. The experiment was well controlled and they tried hard to make sure that no other factors could be the cause of the decrease in crime rate. In the end, nobody

can find an explanation for it except for the meditation. Statistically, the results obtained have only a 1 in 500 million chance of arising through luck. It all appears pretty convincing.

The results of the experiment have been published in a scientific journal;

Hagelin, J.S., Rainforth, M.V., Orme-Johnson, D.W., Cavanaugh, K. L., Alexander, C.N., Shatkin, S.F., Davies, J.L, Hughes, A.O, and Ross, E. 1999. **Effects of group practice of the Transcendental Meditation program on preventing violent crime in Washington D.C.: Results of the National Demonstration Project, June-July, 1993.** Social Indicators Research, 47(2): 153-201.

Meditation reduces crime, but it’s not easy

If the results can be so good, why not just meditate for reduced crime rates in every city in the world? Well, it’s not so easy to do. Notice in the graph above that the number of meditators started at around 600 and ended at around 4000 at the end of the two months. and, all these people were experienced meditators, not just randomly selected people. So it’s actually a lot of effort to get the results shown above.

If it’s true, what does it mean

This is where it gets interesting for me. If meditation reduces crime for real, then what does that mean? Well maybe;

- our minds are much more powerful than we've ever been led to believe
- somehow all our minds are connected
- intentions that we have in our minds can have a material effect on the world

and probably a whole lot more. Considering this along with the recent posts of [Can our minds predict the future?](#) and [Double-slit experiment defines weirdness](#) makes me ponder what's real and what's not.

I'm starting to get the pretty clear feeling that reality is not what I thought it was.

What do you think? Do you know of anything else like this that's a bit astonishing?

Would you be willing to join a group of Quakers sitting for five minutes before their regular MfW to open their hearts and hold in the Light love and goodwill to all beings? Contact Mike Shilson honeyrock@mac.com or Margaret Roy on margaret.roy@btinternet.com We are looking for 25 Quakers.

The Tree

Three hundred years I've stood and scanned
as beasts and humans crossed the land.
Those who sheltered in my lee
said thanks to God for me 'The Tree'.
But stupid man he came with saw
and with his grimy little paw
he pulled me down to lie in waste
like other deeds of his disgrace.

And what was point of vandal's plan?
of course to watch the flames he fanned
the anger of the hiking ones
and stupid grins of tarnished sons.
To see a treasure such as me
brought reverence to who saw 'The Tree'
but some are blind to nature's gift
and so from worship they will drift
great trees who fall they make no sound.
their silence is the more profound.

Sycamore she is no more
because of such unworthy chore
by foolish man with ghastly tool
displayed to world that he's a fool
who did not shelter in the lee
and brought defilement to 'The Tree'

Bill Bingham, Glasgow

West Scotland Area Meeting Learning Group

The Learning Group plans to develop a regular newsletter with opportunities for learning across the Area Meeting. We are not there yet, but here are some opportunities in the short term.

Immediate! 2 October 2023 from 10.30 to 12 there will be a panel discussion, by Zoom (or in person if in Edinburgh) entitled '**Poverty in Scotland 2023** and Challenge Poverty Week' led by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

This needs an immediate registration as the session is on Monday coming.

<https://www.irf.org.uk/event/poverty-scotland-2023>

It will present the results of annual research on poverty in Scotland and features a range of other interesting speakers. For information, when you register you have to put in your organisation and your role in it. I just put Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) and member... and that was accepted.

14 October 2023 Minimalism: the Joy of Less. A full day course from the Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre tutors, in person at the Glasgow Quaker Meeting House. There are currently 9 places left. To register, go to the Woodbrooke catalogue of courses (see link below.)

18 November 2023 Naming the Mystery. A full day course from the Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre tutors, in person at the Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House. There are currently 19 places left. To register, go to the Woodbrooke catalogue of courses (see link below)

From **October 2023 Five Spiritual Way Markers for Quakers**, information previously circulated. There are still some places available for these group discussions/worship sharing. These will be in small groups, either by Zoom or physically present, facilitated by a West Scotland Quaker. There will be one session per month from October through to February/March. The timings for groups are:

Monday afternoons by Zoom

Tuesday evenings by Zoom

Monday afternoons physically present in Glasgow Quaker Meeting House

Wednesday evenings physically present with a Quaker host in the West End of Glasgow

Thursday afternoons or evenings (still to be decided) physically present with a Quaker host in the Southside of Glasgow

Enquiries asap to Kate Philbrick katephilbrick2@gmail.com 07811352780

The Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre catalogue. A wide range of in-person and Zoom courses are listed here for interested individuals.

<http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk>

BRITISH QUAKER SURVEY

Believing and Belonging in Britain Yearly Meeting

From Woodbrooke

‘Many of us are very interested in where British Quakerism is at present and what its future may hold but we often lack very basic information about who we are and what we believe. This survey, following one we ran in 1990, 2003 and 2013, is a vital piece of that information-gathering.

The survey is quite long and may take up to half an hour to complete but previous experience is that many people have found it helpful in helping them think through their ideas.

<https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/research/our-current-projects/british-quaker-survey/>

*It took me about 20 minutes. I would encourage Friends to participate.
Daphne Wassermann*

Giving Advocates

Could you talk about money and giving with Friends in your local or area meeting?
Could you offer encouragement to Friends who may not know how vital their support is to Quakerism?

If yes, BYM needs you to be part of our network of Giving Advocates.

Giving Advocates are Friends from all over Britain supported by the BYM Fundraising Team. Some are treasurers or collectors and others simply want to make sure that the work of area meeting and yearly meeting is resourced.

As one Friend said, 'Quaker work cannot live on air and love alone'.

We meet four or five times a year via Zoom. We provide support to each other, discuss challenges and share ideas and resources. Whether you are a treasurer, collector or just someone interested in talking about money/giving, we'd love to see you there. Email bethf@quaker.org.uk for more information

News from Local Meetings

Ayrshire Quaker Meeting

Ayrshire Meeting is doing ok.

We have 12 members and 6 attenders, 13 of whom attend Sunday worship on a regular basis. We don't often get everyone attending, so we're generally between 6 – 12 Friends at worship each week. We sometimes have Friends from other meetings join us which we always appreciate, and we are hoping that we might start up an occasional children's meeting in the future once various grandchildren are old enough to come along.

We recognise that we are very fortunate to have a proper AV set up and are of a manageable size which means our blended meetings do work effectively. Friends in the room have to remain disciplined in using the microphone and Friends online have to speak up if they can't hear what is being said. We all share the responsibility of making sure the system works for everyone.

We do aim to have a physical meeting place every time, but on occasions when there is no-one available to host the physical worship we revert to online only. In which case we update the webpage. We also have a WhatsApp group so reminders can be sent round and any other between meeting messages.

We have recently reverted to only meeting 4 times a month, keeping the 5th Sunday when they happen free for us to visit other meetings or meet elsewhere. *Wild card Sunday*. We hope this will enable us to get to make more connections in the community.

For our next wild card 5th Sunday, which will be 29th October, we will be holding Meeting for Worship in Millport, Isle of Cumbrae in the Hub and online at 2pm. You are welcome to join us, please contact the Clerk for the Zoom link.

We have held discussions on membership in response to the questions from Meeting for Sufferings, on roles & responsibilities in preparation for the new triennium, two on the draft text for the Book of Discipline Revision, on the suggestion that Quakers sign the Stop Ecocide International petition and had the Woodbrooke course on Exploring Quaker Business Method to which we invited Friends from other meetings to join. We don't have discussions over the summer but hope to resume monthly meetings soon.

Also, some Friends attend other courses individually and then share with the meeting what they have experienced or learnt.

To keep ourselves informed we have a meeting subscription to Friends Quarterly and paper copies of The Friend are shared around the meeting. Everyone subscribes to Quake! and receives WSQN and Scottish Friend, either by post or email.

We try to ensure someone from the meeting attends Area Meeting, General Meeting and Yearly Meeting, and reports back after each meeting.

Glasgow Meeting

Community gardening Saturday 7 October, 11am

This continues on the 1st Saturday of every month in the morning.

So please join us for this reflective working party at Steve's labyrinth garden, Duncruin St, G20 0EZ, near Maryhill railway station, (1 minute down on the right from Helen and Steph's house).

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

Around 12.30 we will down tools: when the weather is good we have a short period of quiet reflection, share some refreshments, tidy up, and rejoice in the views from this bit of lovely rescued land.

Further Information from Steve Koeplinger: 07766 708363

Quaker Walks Saturdays 21 October, 18 November and 16 December.

Everyone is invited to join us for these walks. Sometimes we climb up hills and sometimes have a flatter walk. If you have a favourite walk that you would like to share, please contact Daphne.

For further information or to join the walking email list, **contact Daphne Wassermann: daphne@aquarius1000.plus.com.**

Learning Group

Members will be meeting in person and on Zoom to discuss the Five Spiritual Way Markers for Quakers. There is still time to be included and it is open to all across the Area Meeting. Contact: **Kate Philbrick katephilbrick2@gmail.com 07811352780**

Dunblane

Our experiment, started in March, of having non blended meetings for worship on the first Sunday of the month is going well. We now have a parallel zoom meetings as it turns out not to be as divisive as we had feared.

Earlier this year, as a way of getting to know each other better, we set up an online book group. Usually just 5 or 6 Friends meet and so far we have discussed mainly non fiction including works by Oliver Sacks and Richard Holloway. Our first work of fiction was 'Small things like these' by Claire Keegan. The setting for this is rural Ireland in the 1980s and the author says it is a book about love not about the Magdalen Laundry which features in the story. It is a beautifully written thought provoking short book. The next choice is Betsy, a biography of Elizabeth Fry by Jean Hatton.

We recently had a learning group after MfW in which Friends were able to share reflections on the topic of Peace. In advance of the worship sharing we were asked to ponder some challenging questions.

What is peace?

What do I do to foster peace?

How do I deal with conflict?

What is the place of worship in preparing for peace?

Looking outward from the meeting on 24 September 3 members attended MfW at Faslane along with 11 others from Glasgow meeting, NFPB and the Peace Camp. And later in November we will host the PATH exhibition at the public library in Alloa.

Castle Douglas

Castle Douglas meeting has been upholding both of our Pastoral Care Friends while they were in London for several days recently, witnessing the Defence and Security Equipment International (DSEI) Arms Fair, which is reported on elsewhere in this newsletter.

Some of us have been pleased to see photos and videos of the event via our brand new Castle Douglas Quaker WhatsApp group.

In Person or Online?

Kate Gulliver, Ayrshire

I know we have been through a lot in recent years and are still adapting to post pandemic life and practices as we develop how we hold our meetings.

- Pre-pandemic we just met at wherever a meeting was held.
- During the pandemic we just met online.
- Now we have blended meetings and attend either at the venue or online.

And we need to work out the best way to refer to these meetings and the correct terminology to use.

My request Friends is that we stop describing the options for attending meetings as 'in person or online'. This was shorthand that developed as we came out of lockdown, but its continued use is unhelpful and divisive. I attend every meeting I go to in person whether I am in the room or online.

For me the use of 'in person' as a term to refer to those attending in the room and comments about 'getting back to in person meetings', de-values those attending online implying they are not there in person or of equal value to those attending 'in person'.

Please in the spirit of Quaker simplicity and equality can we consider the use of phrasing such as:

- A meeting will be at *name of venue* and online.
- We welcome Friends attending in the room/at *name of venue* and online
- It will be good to see you at *name of venue*
- For those Friends unable to attend at *name of venue* there will be online access

And not perpetuate the use of the term 'in person' and implying others are not there in person. Let us be patterns and examples of a more thoughtful use of wording.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

7 th October	Area Meeting	Ayr 11.30am – 4pm
13 th January 2024	Area Meeting	Glasgow and Milngavie
4 th March	Area Meeting	by Zoom
20 th April	Area Meeting	South Cluster: Castle Douglas, Dumfries, Wigtown
3 rd June	Area Meeting	by Zoom
17 th August	Area Meeting	West Cluster: Ayrshire, Argyll, Arran, Islay &Jura, Mull & Iona
5 th October	Area Meeting	East Cluster Dunblane and Lanark



Hold in the Light

Alison and Bob Mandeville

Edie Phoenix

Bob Williamson in hospital after a fall.

Paul Burton

There is a meeting of Friends Fellowship of Healing on first Monday of each month.

Contact Nicola on <nicola.james53@gmail.com>

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

The opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of individuals, They do not necessarily present the views of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). The deadline for contributions or the next issue of WSQN is 15th December 2023.

And, good to see the enthusiasm, but please do not send in articles over 1000 words should be send in Word format only to the editor Margaret Roy margaret.roy@btinternet.com.

Helps for this issue are Laura MacMurtie and Edie Phoenix, and of course our proof reader Ruth Bacon.

We are still looking for a distribution editor who will deal with sending out the hard copies.