

AUGUST 2020

WALKING CHEERFULLY

FOUNDED 1926



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NEWSLETTER OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS
(QUAKERS) SOUTH AUSTRALIA - NORTHERN TERRITORY
REGIONAL MEETING.

Incomparably the most important thing is that each of us should be sensitive to the call of God in ourselves ...to some the call will be ... perhaps to live in an Indian village or a London slum ... but perhaps most of us will be called to the humdrum tasks of serving an employer supremely well, or running a house, bringing up a family, keeping the peace with difficult neighbours, serving the community in little things – the tasks which, because they are simple, are in fact more difficult to do with dedication ... Our duty is to be sensitive to what God is asking us to do.

Quaker Faith and Practice 20:25.



Edward Gibbon Wakefield (see p 6)

AUSTRALIA YEARLY MEETING 2020 – CONDUCTED BY ZOOM



ANN ZUBRICK, PRESIDING CLERK

In the annals of Australia Yearly Meeting there has never been such a Yearly Meeting or General Meeting (1902-1963). It was totally on-line. It was a great success. Much discussion and committee work were done prior to the actual Yearly Meeting sessions. Ann Zubrick shined as a capable, well-prepared, unflappable presiding clerk. The Epistle said it magnificently: “Australian Friends gathered in Spirit this July mid-Winter, called to walk unfamiliar paths with an open heart, courage and curiosity, in our first experiment with an online Yearly

Meeting. Presenting novel opportunities in this time of novel coronavirus, we gathered across the country and around the world, in kitchens, loungerooms, studies, dining rooms, meeting houses and outside.”

Some issues are on-going: the very important QSA (Quaker Service Australia) Linkages Committee, and the issue of child protection. There were sessions of helpful clarification, for example, the email system throughout the Yearly meeting, and how to make most use of the AYM site on the internet.

It was gratifying to scroll through to see who were attending a particular session. The pulse quickens a little to see well-loved Friends. Apparently 300 persons had enrolled. Of course there was a drawback, a very big drawback. This was the inability to meet face-to-face, to chat, to discuss one’s thinking, and hear at first hand the work being done by Friends in so many fields. Yearly Meeting, and General Meeting before it, has long been a place where lasting friendships have been made. It would be interesting to know how many marriages began through contact at Yearly Meeting.

Commendable was the daily bulletin which gave excellent coverage of what was on, plus a clear daily time table, helped by AEST being presented at the top – Australia’s different time zones are confusing.

The Quaker business procedure is an unhurried affair. It is important to allow everyone to have the opportunity of expressing their opinions, and slowly an acceptable minute emerges out of the discussion. This was no better observed than in the last business session where the future care of the meeting, child protection, the national redress scheme was a difficult matter to discern the way forward. However, a minute acceptable to all was finally reached. It was the genius of the Quaker business method in action.

One leaves Yearly Meeting spurred by knowing one another in the things that are eternal. The importance of a yearly gathering to sharpen our thoughts, our commitment, and the sense of belonging to a like-minded group. How fulfilling to have found a place where we belong. Our lives are nourished by these personal relationships and the pervading spirituality that lies behind it all.

Charles Stevenson.

For a full report of Yearly Meeting we suggest the Secretary’s Newsletter and also Documents in Retrospect– on line.

The big, beautiful silence.....

Anne Johnson

During a recent discussion that included experiences about silence, I recalled a very meaningful experience I had in the desert country in the far north of South Australia, where I was living at the time.

On reflection, I see how that connects now with my Quaker experience of silence; with my personal spiritual feelings.

I often walked in that desert bushland, enjoying the solace of the profound silence, the seemingly infinite space (a very big sky!), and vast remote landscape. On one of those walks, I had an awareness of a profound sense of oneness, a deep sense of connectedness with that environment. It was such a strong feeling that I felt I could simply remain there very peacefully into eternity. I think it had to do with the very wide-open space and infinite silence... so receptive, inclusive.

I suppose this experience could be seen by some as “losing it”, but I see it as “finding it”. A bigger, all-encompassing, beautiful silence, with limitless possibilities? Not at all the silence that is simply the absence of sound....

Anne found words to be somewhat limiting when attempting to express these feelings.



INFINITE SPACE

THE QUAKER SHOP – INTO THE 21ST CENTURY.

Jo Jordan.

Quaker Shop stepped into the 21st century on July 14th with the arrival of an EFTPOS machine. The Shop accepted cash only until that day. The move to EFTPOS was hastened by the pandemic because most people prefer to purchase by card rather than cash. Moreover, government expects all organisations to offer non-contact transactions in the interests of public health and safety. Volunteers were reassured to find that operating the machine was very easy, that the additional costs to the Shop were not onerous and that there has been an increase in sales.

A window display featuring vintage items in July has proved to be very popular. A 1940s portable sewing machine and 1920s suitcases were snapped up very quickly. It is pleasing to see that more customers are discovering treasures that can always be found at the Quaker Shop.



June and Barry Gormley and Cleo Lycos with the EFTPOS machine.

THE LIFE OF BRUCE IRVINE PAUL

(3 September 1924 – 16 May 2020)

Robin Sinclair



WINSOME AND BRUCE PAUL

Bruce was born in and lived his early years in Molong in country NSW. With his family he later moved to Sydney. After leaving school he began training as a survey draftsman, but at the outbreak of the Second World War he enlisted in the Air Force and became a radar mechanic. He spent most of the war years in Dutch New Guinea. He also began a study of psychology by correspondence. After the war he enrolled at Sydney University and completed an Arts degree. In 1949 he moved to Hobart where he worked in Vocational Guidance and furthered his studies in psychology.

In 1954 he married Winsome (nee McDowell), whom he had met through his church in Sydney. He worked in Hobart for several more years but then they moved to Adelaide, where he became a clinical psychologist at the Repatriation Hospital. He and Winsome adopted three children, Chris, Wendy and David. They moved back to Hobart in 1962 and he became Senior Clinical Psychologist at the Mental Health Service Commission. He completed an M.A. on *The Personality Characteristics of the Prison Population*.

After a trip with the family to the US, where he followed up his interest in the new encounter group movement, and the UK, where he worked in Sussex for a year, they returned to Tasmania. In 1972 they came back to Adelaide where he spent the rest of his working life. His last position was at Carramar Clinic, a community health centre. After retirement he and Winsome travelled extensively, both in Australia in their trusty campervan, and in the UK and Europe, where they made many friends.

Although he came from a conservative and evangelical Methodist background he gradually moved away from this and became much more liberal in his approach to religious and spiritual matters. In Adelaide he and Winsome were members of the Nunyara congregation, an innovative and supportive group which was important in his life and thinking. Their first encounter with Quakers was when they spent several months in Somerset and attended meetings there. After their return to Adelaide in 1986 they became attenders at North Adelaide, a connection which he valued.

Another Friend writes: Bruce found that Friends' meetings for worship were an integral strand in his experience. The silence added a new dimension to his spiritual journey. In his autobiography, *'Cracks in the Soul'* (published in 2002), he wrote, "Now", he says, "I am living with an uncertainty, a not-knowing, that drives my quest for some understanding of what it is to be human, what it is to live and act responsibly ...". Many Friends will remember Winsome and Bruce at the Quaker Shop.

WHY DO I GO TO MEETING?

Topsy Evans.

I have been asked this question on several occasions, mainly during a discussion on belief.

Mercifully such discussions are rare, because as Friends we tend to think that belief is a personal matter, shared freely if necessary, but not required as a 'passport' to membership.

My reasons for attendance at Meeting have changed over the years. Initially, when we had three smallish children, Meeting was a haven of quiet and stillness in preparation for the coming week. This was in contrast to the busyness and demands of attendance at various mainstream churches we had attended before finding Friends.

Increasingly it has become an opportunity to develop my own personal belief as opposed to a formalised belief left over from the past. Exploring this in a relaxed, unhurried and honest way is a delight and a liberation.

Bronte Collins.

One of the words I use to describe Meeting for Worship is joyful. In the silence, I find joy. I use this time to give thanks, to hold Friends in the Light and generally to experience peace. And it is in this time that intuitive thoughts come - that I attribute to a connection to the Light within. More often than not, Friends' Ministry speaks to me. In Meeting for Worship, I feel the support of Friends, each of us on our own journey, yet connected and accepted just as we are.

Explanation of front page photo.

This plaque commemorating Edward Gibbon Wakefield is on the wall of the South Australian Parliament House. Wakefield was well 'pedigreed' as a Quaker: he was the great grandson of Robert Barclay (the Quaker Apologist) and a cousin of Elizabeth Fry. South Australia was founded on Wakefield's theories of systematic colonisation written while he was in Newgate prison for having deceived and eloped with a schoolgirl. Whether he was disowned or whether he had already resigned his membership is not known. A complex man, unscrupulous as far as young girls were concerned, for many years unwell, yet he certainly did much for rational colonisation, and also for prison reform. In many ways enlightened, - no convicts, freedom of religion, equal number of men and women and so on; but the blind spot of that era was to conceive of South Australia as wasteland. This wrecked the indigenous population and destroyed the ecosystem.

The wording on the plaque reads:

In honour of Edward Gibbon Wakefield 1796-1862.

The author of the system of land-sales colonization, upon which the Province of South Australia was founded for free settlers with freehold lands and resultant self-government.

RED LEAVES SKITTERING...

A GUST OF AUTUMN PASSES
ACROSS THE GRAVEL

Robin Sinclair

SEEKING UNION WITH SPIRIT. EXPERIENCES OF SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS
The 2020 BACKHOUSE LECTURE given by Fiona Gardner



Fiona Gardner

Childhood experiences and the imperceptible influence of parents, inform the adult. The place we know as children, its beauty, its sense of eternity, its ineffable *spirit*, is an anchor for lasting stability in one's life. Fiona Gardner, by relating her *personal* experiences, expressed the *universal* experience.

In this landmark lecture Fiona spoke of dualities. The great dichotomy of the Quaker faith: Action on the one hand, and contemplation on the other. She emphasised the need to accept one another's different language to express the same experience, the paradox of the spiritual journey - that different experiences reach the same depth. We must accept our diversity. She pointed out that it is hard to get people to realise that there are many ways besides their own in the religious quest.

Fiona Gardner spoke of challenges: "Am I being genuinely led?" Again a universal dilemma that one must continually ask. She emphasised the need to be open to the wisdom of others, to have the courage to ask what we might need, and to acknowledge that we each do have individual problems that may require help from others. Our inner life and our actions must coincide. If things are not quite right then we must focus on getting things right.

She spoke of the power of silence – the heart of Quakerism. By quoting apt Advices she brought them to life afresh. "Seek to know an inward stillness, even amid the activities of daily life."

QUAKER PEACE AND LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Commission for Human future – Watching Brief (July 2020.) This Brief outlines the formation and plans of the Commission for the Human Future, a group of eminent academics and scientists concerned about the many dangers facing humanity, and identifies ways in which Friends can support its vision.

ASIO BILL: Action Alert (June 2020) draws attention to the recent legislation amending the ASIO Act, offers some analysis and comment, and gives information on where advocacy can be pursued.

DEATH PENALTY: Watching Brief (April 2020) The imposition of the death penalty remains a significant challenge to Quakers and others committed to restorative and nonviolent approaches to crime and punishment. The Australian Government has now become more active in promoting abolition of the death penalty around the world. This Brief outlines what is being done by government and NGOs.

VALIANT FOR THE TRUTH - COURAGEOUS AND FUTILE.

Charles Stevenson

In 17th century England the woman not only had to be obedient to her husband, but her place was in the home. An organisation like the Society of Friends must have been a boon liberation for women of intelligence and vitality.

Two remarkable women Friends, usually relegated to fanatical excess, were Katherine Evans and Sarah Chivers, both married with family, one fifty, the other forty. Theirs was adventure in real life!

Their limited education was no obstacle. They had already been placed in the stocks, and endured the whipping post for preaching what those first Friends called The Truth. Like Jean d'Arc and her voices, it was their inner Light that revealed what their Lord required of them: this was nothing less than to go to the Middle East to convert 'the Infidels'.

Nothing daunted - suffering meant nothing - they were so blindly zealous that they didn't see themselves as truculent. They got as far as Malta where the captain of the vessel dumped them. Our two stalwarts saw this as their Lord's doing: the conversion of Malta to the Truth.

The kindly English consul took them under his wing but, finding them insufferably unable to be cautioned, had them imprisoned; but not before they had befriended some nuns until – on being shown the chapel our two courageous Friends lectured the nuns on the evils of idolatry.

Nevertheless, they had sympathisers in the Catholic community because they were never arraigned before the inquisition. In fact, from prison they wrote a letter to 'the Lord Inquisitor (so-called)', pointing out the errors of his ways. Wiser minds intercepted the letter and took the precaution of removing writing material from our two Friends. It seems incongruous but the inquisitor once sent them a present of "two plump fowls." This they refused to accept, intent on scrupulously paying their way. Likewise, they resisted offers to send them back to England – because they could not accept the strings attached.

Ever resourceful, Sarah, who had a loud voice, preached to passers-by from her cell window. "Go not forth to murder, nor kill one another" she cried out to soldiers on their way to fight 'the Turks'. On their victorious return she loudly condemned the great "triumphing and glorying in blood."

Eventually George Fox arranged for some mediator to approach the Pope, to seek their unconditional release. This the Pope readily agreed to do, presumably well aware of difficult personalities in his own communion.

However, to the consternation of the Maltese British community the two women declined this offer of release - until they met in silence to hear their Lord's command in the matter. To the utter relief of that community the Lord gave them liberty to depart, but not before they implored their Lord's mercy upon their persecutors.

They were women of their era. Their courage was epic. But such iconoclasm has long been unacceptable. Their mission, and those of several others who set off to convert those in foreign parts, achieved nothing, except their heroics. Far more acceptable has been the mature attitude of John Woolman: "Love was the first motion, and then a concern arose to spend some time with the Indians, that I might feel and understand their life ..."

Nevertheless, one feels sympathy for two honest women prepared to crack out of the stifling shell of 17th century values.

THE QUAKER UNITED NATIONS OFFICE

QUNO (Quaker United Nations Office) is 75 years old, its presence dating back to the signing of the UN Charter in San Francisco in June 1945. At present Covid-19 has affected the normal operations of the United Nations. The QUNO New York director, Andrew Tomlinson, says “in many ways the current crisis, horrendous as it is, feels like a dress rehearsal for the global social and economic disruption that will likely arise as a consequence of climate change ... it has become even clearer than ever before how much we need global solutions to global problems.” The Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) conducts a monthly webinar series with Friends around the world called ‘Quaker conversations’.

World Quaker Day 4 October 2020

‘What does it mean to be a Quaker today?
This is to celebrate all expressions of Quaker worship.

SILVER WATTLE QUAKER CENTRE IS OPEN AGAIN!

Silver Wattle is COVID-safe with distancing and disinfecting protocols in place. Courses are limited to 12 people, single room accommodation only. Our upcoming courses are:

- Living Simply: Letting Go of Stuff – Su-Rose McIntyre (online course, 2 sessions), 29 Aug and 19 Sept

- Contemplative Prayer Cycles – David Johnson, 10 – 13 September

- Confronting Climate Change, Finding Renewal – Marie Jamieson & Christine Larkin, 3 – 8 Oct

- End of Year Retreat. – Fiona Gardner & Drew Lawson, 28 Dec 2020 – 3 Jan 2021

Details on <https://www.silverwattle.org.au> What dost thou say? If there’s anything you wish to know about Silver Wattle Quaker Centre or provide feedback on, please do not hesitate to contact any of our convenors: Elders: Felicity Rose admin.office@silverwattle.org.au 0499 918 071 Program & Learning: Di Bretherton programs@silverwattle.org.au Land & Property: David Liversidge plumtree.david@gmail.com Finance: David Johnson treasurer@silverwattle.org.au Silver Wattle Board: Sheila Keane sheila.keane@silverwattle.org.au

WOODBROOKE STUDY COURSE – on-line.

To book, please email Ronis Chapman: ronisc@fwccawps.org This is an exciting new project developed by Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in partnership with FWCC Asia-West Pacific Section. This study program explores the spiritual roots of Quaker practices and concerns.

The program is made up of four modules. Each module includes two recorded presentations, backed up by written resources, and is rounded off with a live online webinar meeting. You may choose to meet in groups to share your responses, reflections and questions in preparation for the webinars. Module One – Quaker Foundations: 27 July to 16 August

Module two - Quaker Testimony 1: 17 August to 6 September

Module Three – Quaker testimony: 7 September to 27 September

Module Four – Quakers and Christianity: 28 September to 18 October.

MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Adelaide: Zoom meetings during coronavirus pandemic, otherwise 11 am every Sunday and 1st Wednesday of month 5.30 pm

Friends Meeting House, 40a Pennington Terrace, North Adelaide.

Clerk: Geoff Greeves.

Fellowship of Healing: 2nd Wed and 4th Fri of month 12.30 pm

WMSAdelaide@quakersaustralia.info

Meeting House bookings: RMSANTBookings@quakersaustralia.info

Eastern Suburbs: 10 am every Sunday. Leabrook Guide Hall, Rochester St., Leabrook

Clerk: David Evans (08) 8338 2143 WMSEastern@quakersaustralia.info

Fleurieu: in recess, otherwise 11 am second & last Sunday of each month. Old Council

Chambers, The Strand, Port Elliot. Chris Collins (08) 8552 1654

WMSFleurieu@quakersaustralia.info

Hills: In recess, otherwise 0.30 am second Sunday of each month. Various venues.

Contact: Robin Sinclair 0418 908 163 WMSHills@quakersaustralia.info

Southern: In recess, otherwise Third Sunday of month. Contact: Barbara Talbot

WMSSouthern@quakersaustralia.info

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Alice Springs: In individual homes until the pandemic is over, otherwise 4 pm every Sunday at Campfire in the Heart, Ragnesi Road, Alice Springs.

Contact Diana Campbell 0422 472 918 WMSAlice@quakersaustralia.info

Darwin: In individual homes at present, otherwise at 4.45 pm first & third Sunday of each month.

Salvation Army Community Centre. Cnr Lee Point Rd & Yanyula Dr., Anula, Darwin.

Contacts: John Duguid (08) 7978 7080 Barbara Sampson 0447 201489

WMSDarwin@quakersaustralia.info

REGIONAL MEETING.

Business meetings: 1 pm first Sundays of February, April, June, August, October, December.

Clerks: David Barry and Yarrow Andrew RMSANTClerk@quakersaustralia.info

Treasurer: Lee Harradine RMSANTTreasurer@quakersaustralia.info

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