

August 2022

Walking Cheerfully

Founded 1926



Newsletter of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) South Australia - Northern Territory Regional Meeting.

On climate injustice: I'd be lying if I said that I didn't have moments of despair and I don't always deal with it as well as I should. Do you know sometimes I just get unbelievably angry. There are days when I see the oblivion of people as to what's happening, and it's infuriating; but mostly what I do is go out to the salt marshes and sit. You know you can reach that of God anywhere, you just have to stop. It doesn't really matter where you are. If you stop and listen you will hear little stirrings and then you know the world is working so hard to pull it self back into equilibrium.

Peri Coleman in Backhouse Lecture 2022



New book arrives for David Evans, dedicated to Topsy Evans. An easy to read academic book with great stories

YEARLY MEETING 2022

In a number of ways YM 2022 was significant. It was held by zoom from Saturday 2nd July until the following Sunday. It was the end of Ann Zubrick's term as Presiding Clerk, a most difficult three years admirably clerked. The new Presiding Clerk is Bruce Henry, a Melbourne Friend of many years standing.

For several Friends the highlight was the State of the Society address delivered by Aletia Dundas. She examined the Society as it is, but took heart that the Spirit is leading us to unexpected places in spite of the burden of maintaining meeting houses with an ageing and declining membership. There are signs of renewal and reinvention. Aletia Dundas saw positives in the Society of 2022. She said that pestilence and plague had always brought change to society. She pondered what post Covid would mean for the Society of Friends.

No less significant was the Backhouse Lecture delivered by Yarrow Goodley. Many Friends found the lecture heartfelt and compassionate. (see p3 for a fine review of the lecture).

Other important developments out of this year's Yearly Meeting is the Silver Wattle Elder Enrichment Program which is open to all Australian Friends, especially those involved in Eldering, Pastoral Care and spiritual nurture. This has been widely circulated.

Heartening is the *Integrity Project* which was given unanimous support at a formal session. The project will be known as the "*Integrity in Public Office Project*". Sue Ennis (Melbourne) and Wies Schuiringa (Sydney) are coordinating the project. Information about this program has also been widely circulated. To summarise however: Quakers in Australia are going public with the Testimony to Integrity. It is a Concern that is taken into the public realm, as Quakers have done for centuries. The project is independent from politicians and other organisations. Like-minded organisations have informed the project and are informed of the project. The project contributes to the groundswell in Australia for Integrity in Public Office and the establishment of a strong federal commission. Friends are invited to participate in the first action on Thursday 4 August in Canberra.

Another exciting project is the Friendly Discussion Group. This initiative has arisen after Friends Zooming together at the recent YM22 expressed a desire to meet via Zoom on a more regular basis with other Friends across Australia (and the world).

The Zoom link is every **Wednesday evening from 9pm AEST (8:30pm Adelaide time):**
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7709725207?pwd=bmlzeEdKT1ZYV0x1Q2lxcGxVRWltdz09>
Meeting ID: 770 972 5207

Passcode: Friends

Dial by your location - Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7709725207?pwd=bmlzeEdKT1ZYV0x1Q2lxcGxVRWltdz09>
Meeting ID: 770 972 5207

Passcode: 1085575

This project has also been widely circulated. The coordinator is .David Tehr

BACKHOUSE LECTURE

Kerry O'Regan

The Epistle from the Yearly Meeting just gone observed that Yarrow Goodley “did not mince words” when they delivered this year’s Backhouse Lecture on the topic of *Creating hope: Working for justice in catastrophic times*, and there was certainly a confronting directness in the lecture’s message. Being the current convenor of the Backhouse Lecture Committee and having the good fortune to live in the same city as Yarrow, I was privileged to be part of the small group (mostly activists whose words and experiences formed part of the lecture) who were actually there in the room with Yarrow when they delivered the lecture by zoom to a wider audience. So for me there was an immediacy about the presentation which I thought may or may not have been there for others.

The Reflection Session provided reassurance that the passion and intensity that was there for us in that room was not diminished by the technology. The many Friends who shared their reflections all spoke of how they had been moved, and challenged, by the presentation, several appreciating the “poetry” that was there in Yarrow’s language. I’m currently reading the Apocrypha, that part of the Bible that Catholics include and Protestants don’t, and the very last verse of the very last book tells us that “Speech finely framed delighteth the ears of them that read the story”. (Maccabees 15:39 if you want to check it out.) But Yarrow’s fine framing was just the medium for the message, an aid to us accessing it. The power was in the message itself.

In terms of the content, I think I could not do better than quote from the Minute of Record that was presented during a formal session of Yearly Meeting:

Yarrow ‘led us through the broad sweep of climate injustice and humankind’s contribution to that, beginning with the emergence of agriculture and accelerating through the progress of industrialisation and its associated activities. They shared the experiences of the activists in dealing with the inevitable despair they encountered. For some, it threatened to be paralysing, whereas some had learned ‘to sit with it ... because it comes with a lesson’.

Rather than remaining lost in despair, Yarrow invited us to imagine a just future, and told some possible future stories of those for whom climate justice had become a reality—possible if we work towards that end, avoiding the paralysis of despair and the possible complacency of hope. Hope can, in the words of one activist, ‘shove you out the door’, and Yarrow invited us to be so shoved.

We were encouraged to consider our action as Quakers, and Yarrow particularly challenged our attitude towards finances, which we are carefully saving for some future use, whereas ‘we will never face a challenge this great’.

Yarrow ended the lecture by reframing George Fox’s famous question into ‘What can we do?’”

The presentation is now available on youtube, and, if you have not yet listened to it, I strongly recommend that you do. Also send the link to any nonQuakers who may be open to receiving Yarrow’s message. (I have a funny story about that. My Mercy Sister Ann, in Brisbane, has a fellow Sister, Mary Tinney, who has a PhD in and has written a book about ecospiritually. Anyway, Mary, not knowing my connection with Yarrow and the Backhouse Lecture, sent me the link. So, networks being what they are, you may eventually have the link sent back to you.) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WEqIDFRZKrc>

The extended, written version of the lecture is now also available both in printed form and as an ebook. Having been part of its development, I can assure you that it too is “finely framed” with the same powerful and challenging message. During the live presentation, Yarrow invited us to pause and be silent at various points, to be still and absorb what had been said. Those invitations are there in the written version as well, times where Yarrow asks us to stop and be silent and just hold the message within us for a while. Hold the message and then respond to the challenge: “What can we do?”

https://ipoz.biz/ipstore/index.php?route=product%2Fsearch&search=Creating%20hope&fbclid=IwAR3JaZ8zl1AwN_LdFolzqjacDnuHB18L6dYREPgGKUBrM-eZBEvfJUijjs

State of the Society

Aletia Dundas gave a powerful address on this subject. She is a prophet for our time. Her address can be watched in full on YouTube.

She spoke about important developments in the Society: Emily Chapman Searle’s ‘Australian Quaker Voices’, gender diversity, the Climate Emergency and Species Extinction Group, the work of the QPLC (Quaker Peace and Legislation Committee) with its briefs and action alerts, and the work of QSA.

She quoted a Friend who said we seem to be forever stuck on the shores of the ocean of Light, and never really take a few steps in it.

She sees gender diversity as the next big area of growth. She says we must challenge our souls and our own prejudices and not be afraid to reach out to those on the margins.

She asks what is holding us back from our radical roots? There are difficult conversations we need to have but don’t know how to begin. Aletia Dundas spoke about being broken and tender - broken in the sense that we need to open our hearts to the Light, tenderness she sees as a community open to the Spirit which leads us to unexpected places.

As our land has been ravaged by flood and fire so society in general has been traumatised, as well as our own religious society; but we must find new signs of renewal, hope and reinvention, mending the broken areas at the margins. How are we to break with the past and imagine our society now? It must be open, connected, thriving and nourished by the Spirit.

Public Statement from the Climate Emergency and Species Extinction Working Group of Australia Yearly Meeting

Quakers in Australia call for sustained action in all areas of human activity to transform the root causes of environmental destruction and climate change to create a fairer, healthier and more equal society. We continue to be deeply concerned about the slow progress towards climate justice both in Australia and other countries.

Australian Quakers believe we must consider the world as an en-Spirited whole, to accept no boundary to repairing and sustaining the Earth for the future, and to appreciate more deeply the creative energy in all living things and life processes. We seek to mend what has been hurt, and to strengthen our courage to discern and bear witness to this spiritual care for the Earth.

We call on the new Australian Government to carefully consider the voice of Australian people who have so clearly expressed similar impatience with Australia’s response so far.

That voice has heard the authoritative warnings from climate scientists, emergency response leaders and many others with expertise in disaster relief following fire, flood and crop failure. Many Australians understand the existential nature of the climate emergency and the ominous implications of continued decline in our biodiversity and unique natural ecosystems. But others feel threatened and are worried by the changes required of them, in addition to those now suffering enormously from the effects of the climate crisis. They need our love, support and government assistance during the difficult years of transition that lie ahead.

Australian Quakers share the concerns of many people worldwide that yearn for global peace and justice. We endorse the statement by our Quaker representatives at the United Nations who say to the international community: “Our human existence is dependent on the health of the planet. Yet we exploit nature and human beings for profit over wellbeing, resulting in environmental crises that threaten the survival of our and other species. We can heal these relationships and protect future generations.

The Earth is our spaceship; its natural resources are limited. Unsustainable and unjust economic approaches are driving environmental crises, including climate change. The “global economy is almost five times the size it was half a century ago and has already been accompanied by the degradation of an estimated 60% of the world’s ecosystems.”

In this part of the world we must heed the voices of our Pacific Island neighbours and others in the region who are already bearing the burden of rising sea-levels, growing salination of land, and cry out for help. Our neighbours did not cause the climate crisis but are suffering its consequences. As good neighbours we must respond by playing our full part in addressing the causes of climate change and in helping communities mitigate its impacts.

We grieve with those who are so saddened and concerned about the world they currently live in or will inherit that they feel driven to take direct action. We must find ways to hear their voices, and not ignore their cries for help and more urgent action. Quakers recognise the climate emergency is more than physics and chemistry. It is about humanity recognising the value of being guided by the interdependent values of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, community and earthcare.

Bruce Henry Presiding Clerk

NEWS OF FRIENDS

Inga and Michael Tolley have spent some time in Kenya with Inga’s brother, accompanied by their daughter, Ann Roffe.

Both Jenny and Bert Stock are members of the South Australian Professional Historians Association. They both have rather than gripping articles in the Association’s recent publication *South Australia 1919 to 1939*. Jenny’s article is ‘Premier Butler and the curious case of the quinquennial parliament 1933 to 1938’. Bert’s article is ‘Erasing Germans from the map: The 1918 geographical name changes’.

Barbara Talbot has sustained a very serious fall. She is in rehabilitation at Daw Park where she is cheerful and delights in visitors.

Friends wish Helen Inglis well. She has now moved into Resthaven at Port Elliot.

Kevin McFadden has moved to Penola in South Australia from the Blue Mountains meeting. His wife, Nicole, is the local chemist. Their son Max attends the Mary McKillop school. Charles Stevenson was recently in Penola and was able to welcome Kevin to South Australia on behalf of Friends.



Beth Melius died on June 30th aged 90. For a number of years both she and her husband, Ray, were attenders of the Eastern Suburbs Meeting. They retained warm memories of those years. Beth was formidable worker for earthcare. Most Sundays there was a meeting after meeting on sustainable living, Beth's gospel one could say. Beth was almost a larger than life individual, dedicated to her strong sense of right. The Mylius family lived in many parts of Asia over many years, settling up self-help communities. In North Adelaide they lived in a community in Brougham Place. There were twelve of them. Friends remember their eco friendly purpose built home in Batams Road, Rosslyn Park. In her last years Beth Mylius campaigned for voluntary euthanasia.

Death of Ann Walker. The Walker family of Yinnar in Gippsland have had integral connection with Adelaide Meeting. Edith Ashby, The mother of both Enid Robertson and Eric Ashby was a member of the Walker family. Jocelyn Duggan, a daughter of Adrian and Ann Walker, is a member of our Regional Meeting. Several hundred people attended (in person and by zoom) the memorial meeting to Ann Walker who died on 21st June aged 83. Ann was a member of the well known Gare family of Perth. (See book review *Outback Teacher* for her sister, Sally's, story). Ann and Adrian met at a Young Friends Camp held at Lake Ileshenaultia in 1955. Among her many interests Ann Walker was involved in the Quaker Embroidery Group. Her contribution being a panel about the work of Friends War Victims' Relief Committee after the First World War, based on the work of Adrian's father, Martin Walker.

The Secretary's Newsletter is always a crucial source for information about the work of the Society of Friends in Australia, and elsewhere. It is obtainable on the web. It really should be compulsory reading!

One of the most exciting developments in 2022 in the Australian Quaker world is Adrian Glamorgan's comprehensive newsletter which gives news and activities of Friends in the Asian area. It is published by FWCC-AWPS which means the Friends World Committee for Consultation – Asia-West Pacific Section.

ACCOMMODATION AT DEVONSHIRE STREET



Friends' House at Devonshire Street in Sydney welcomes accommodation bookings from travellers. We have Covid-safe precautions in place, and are currently taking bookings. Please contact volunteer wardens Brian and Marie on RMNSWBookings@quakersaustralia.info; 0466 265 915; or 02 9698 7158 to make a booking enquiry.

REVIEW: OUTBACK TEACHER.

Sally Gare with Freda Marnie, Allen and Unwin, 2022, price \$22.

Charles Stevenson

This account of a time long since past is an easy read. Sally Gare is a cheerful, engaging and spirited Friend who meets challenges with equanimity.

Present day Friends will remember Sally's 2015 Backhouse Lecture *This We Can Do* which was about the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) in prisons

Older Friends will remember Sally's parents, Cyril and Elsie Gare, who were heavily involved in First Nations issues, especially at Allawah Grove which was a Quaker Service project. Cyril was anxious to establish an Asia-West Pacific section of Friends. He also spent some time at the Quaker United Nations office in New York.



Sally Gare at the 1961
Young Friends Camp
(with Elizabeth
Edwards)

OutbackTeacher, based on the Sally's letters home, begins with her time on an Anglican mission in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. She survived willie willies, snakes, crocodiles, wild dogs, mosquitoes, flies, dust, as well as a squabbling staff. Communication was via wireless, electricity was by a generator which only operated in certain hours because of fuel. Contact with the rest of the world was by launch which could only operate on high tides. The outback was a hideout for misfits. There was the fraudster matron and the control freak head teacher. On the other hand there were outstanding individuals: Randolph Stow, Harry Butler, and Father Coldrake.

Sally quickly integrated with the First Nations people and eventually went on a walkabout, learning about their culture, their generosity and problems. Without their friendship, teaching would have been dreary routine.

The later part of *Outback Teacher* was about Sally's time at Port Hedland where she ran a staging school for children of the Pindan mob, famous for the 1946 Pilbara Aboriginal strike. She taught 37 students in the loco shed, some of the 'boys' were her age or a little older. As well as teaching English and arithmetic there was woodwork, cooking, sewing and sports. There was a night class for adults who were anxious to learn these things.

Eventually some of her students were able to attend the State School. But there was a good deal of conflict between the different mobs, and bigotry and racism amongst the White population. The success of the staging students in the annual Wittenoom sports went a long way to reduce tension. Their cleanliness and perfect manners helped in reducing prejudice against the Aboriginal population. The story of *Outback Teacher* occurred in the years where the Aboriginal people were not regarded as citizens!

The greatest event of the Port Hedland years was meeting Tom Herzfeld who became Sally's husband! He was then a young Public Works engineer working in Western Australia's far north.

Of great inspiration to Sally was Molly Skinner, an extraordinary and adventurous Friend who achieved much despite physical impairments. In a sense Sally has followed in Molly's footsteps, though as a teacher rather than a nurse.

INTERPRETATION OF THE CONSTELLATIONS BY FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE. **Olga Farnill**

The Storytellers had a fascinating guest speaker on 16th July. He was Paul Curnow of the Planetarium on the North Adelaide campus of Adelaide University. He is not only an astronomer, but also an expert on ethnoastronomy, ie, the views of First Nations peoples on the constellations and stories about the night sky. He has an encyclopaedic knowledge of the variety of interpretations of the constellations, by different groups of Aboriginal people. His knowledge and pronunciation of words in Aboriginal languages was remarkable.

An example was how the "Southern Cross" was seen as emu, or a stingray, or an eagle's talon, or other creatures. Some constellations feature in Songlines, e.g., the Pleiades constellation ("The Seven Sisters") features in the story of 7 sisters who were being chased by a man who was from a forbidden skin-group, and ran through the country, using certain waterholes, picking bushfoods at places that were detailed, but finally launching themselves up into the sky to escape. The man also threw himself into the Orion constellation, where he continues to pursue them. Interestingly, many other cultures, including Japanese, and ancient Greek have similar stories of "seven sisters" escaping from unwanted amorous advances.

It was a very professional Powerpoint presentation, with lovely pictures of constellations, Aboriginal rock-art and paintings.

FRIENDS WHO HAVE INFLUENCED MY LIFE

MARY HARRIS

Charles Stevenson

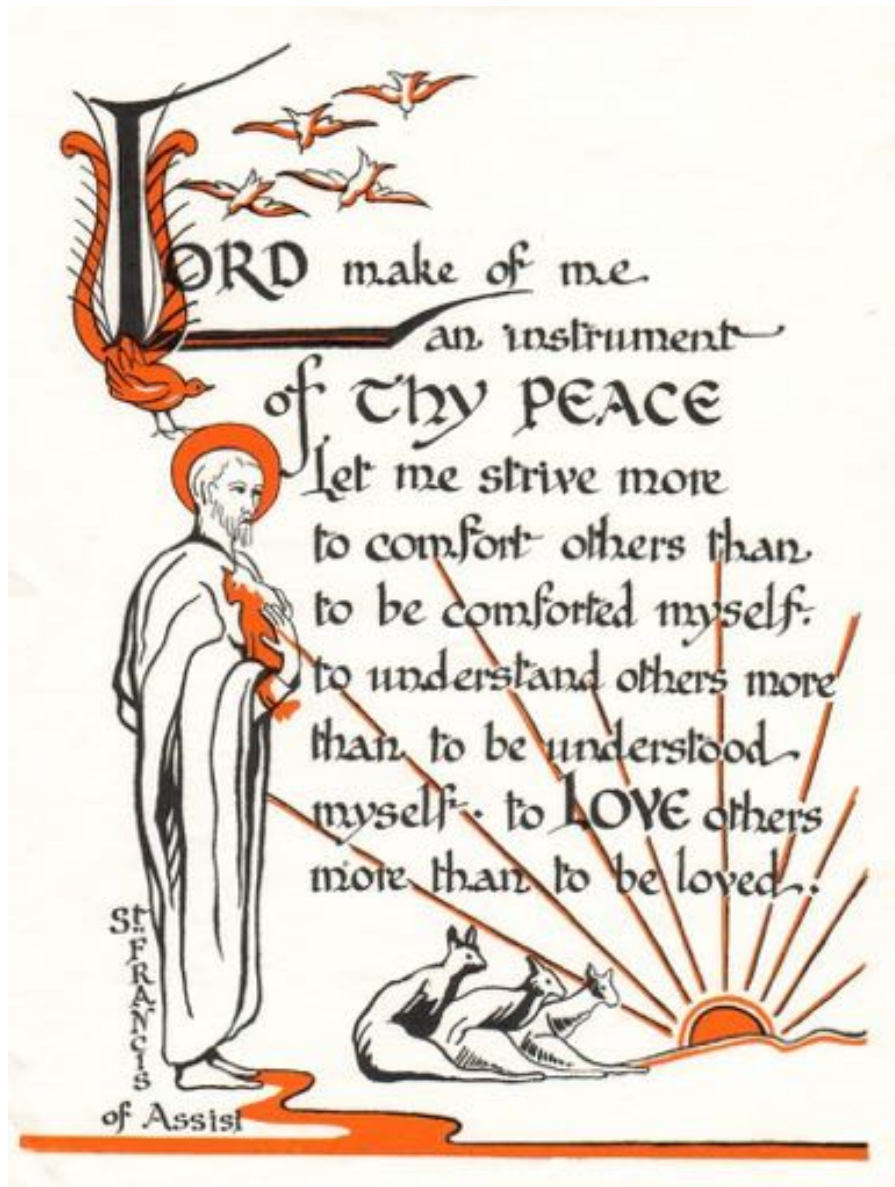


The great thing about Mary Harris was her ministry in meeting. She often imparted such inspiration from the poets that I know of at least two newcomers who afterwards brought the works of Robert Browning and the works of John Masefield (whom she had met) and maybe others. To hear her saying Rabindranath Tagore in her melodic Scottish lilt was in itself memorable. Mary Harris, invariably dressed in something grey, rode a bicycle from Walkerville to meeting.

She was a lecturer at the South Australian Art School for over thirty years. She had an innate appreciation of art. Her home, Bundilla, was full of art work. In her garden were sculptures of First Nations peoples, the work of Brother Billy (William Ricketts) of Mount Dandenong fame in Melbourne. Also some work by Quentin Harris, her beloved nephew, and husband of our dear Friend, Barbara Mather.

Quite frequently letters to the editor appeared in the *Advertiser* and other papers over the signature of Mary P. Harris. She wrote forthrightly on peace issues, and the environment. She also wrote private letters of encouragement to various people. She also encouraged the art work of people whom she considered were neglected.

Mary Harris also had a sharp tongue. She was proud of the crack in her front door caused when the exasperated mayor of Walkerville banged it too hard after she had been uncompromising over planned interference with the River Torrens which ran past her home. Her Testimony to Raymond Wilton had to be rewritten because she failed to mention his second wife! Mary Harris had come back to the Society of her upbringing through the influence of Annie Wilton, the first wife. Like others who returned to the Society of Friends after a time away, she was a most fervent Friend. Too much an individual, and indeed perhaps impractical, she was never an officeholder in the meeting. Her great strength, indeed her great contribution to the meeting, was her mystical mind blended with her powerful interest in art as well as poetry. Her major work was *The Cosmic Rhythm of Art and Literature*. Her autobiography, *In One Splendour Spun, the autobiography of Quaker Artist* was published in 1971. Mary Harris was profoundly unique and independent. She was an affirmative beacon in the patriarchal culture of the 1920s and 30s. She died in 1978 at the age of 87. Here is one of her pieces of work.



**Sitting and thinking
shoulders hunched against the cold ...
a winter breeze stirs**

Robin Sinclair

Meetings for Worship

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Adelaide: 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 .
zoom link every 2nd and last Sunday of the month.
Clerk: Topsy Evans 0417 517 471 WMSEastern@quakersaustralia.info

Fleurieu: 11 am second Sunday of each month. Contact: Chris Collins 0407 049 535
WMSFleurieu@quakersaustralia.info

Hills: 10.30 am second Sunday of each month. Various venues.
Contact: Robin Sinclair 0418 908 163 WMSHills@quakersaustralia.info

Southern: Third Sunday of month. Contact: Barbara Talbot
WMSSouthern@quakersaustralia.info

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Alice Springs: 4 pm every Sunday at Campfire in the Heart, Ragnesi Road, Alice Springs.
Contact Diana Campbell 0422 472 918 WMSAlice@quakersaustralia.info

Darwin: 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.
Clerk: Charles Stevenson RMSANTClerk@quakersaustralia.info
Treasurer: Lee Harradine RMSANTTreasurer@quakersaustralia.info

WALKING CHEERFULLY, South Australian – Northern Territory Regional Meeting Quaker Newsletter. August 2022. Walking Cheerfully is published bi-monthly. Editor: Charles Stevenson. cestev@adam.com.au or RMSANTNews@quakersaustralia.info