

OCTOBER 2020

# WALKING CHEERFULLY

FOUNDED 1926

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



## PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

Helen Whitford p. 2  
Happy Endings – Robin Sinclair p 3  
News of Friends p 4  
A Visit to Iran – Wendy Hartley p 6  
Book Reviews – Christine James p 7  
- Olga Farnill p 9.

Ring out the bells that still can ring,  
Forget your perfect offering  
There's a crack in everything  
That's how the Light gets in.

Leonard Cohen.



l-r: Vivie Byrne, Ann Rees, Millie Stein, Christine Collins, Jennifer Mann,  
Julie Webb, Junette Steffersen, Mary Loftus, Robin Sinclair.  
See p. 3.

## HELEN WHITFORD

Charles Stevenson

Helen Tossell was born on 13<sup>th</sup> August, 1928 to Horace and Grace Tossell who both joined Friends by convincement in that year, having been introduced to Friends by Irene Glasson (as indeed had Alva Herbert, David and Elma Day and Winifred Wilton). Horace owned the weekly newspaper, *the South Australian Farmer*, which was based in Moonta and where he employed a number of Friends on the staff, notably Ben Kaesehagen. Grace was to become the President of the Women's Christian Temperance Union in South Australia. When the family moved to Adelaide Horace never attended meeting – because he was too deaf. However, he was the cleaner of the premises for many years. Grace Tossell was a wise, intelligent, warm-hearted and thorough Friend. She, like Kathleen Hassell before her, had won the University of Adelaide Tennyson Medal for English Literature. Grace Tossell's father had been the President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, and after amalgamation, President of the Methodist Church in South Australia.

At the age of fifteen Helen was sent all the way to Friends' School in Hobart for her education. She caught the train from Kadina to Adelaide, then the Overland to Melbourne. This was followed by the voyage to northern Tasmania, followed by another train journey down to Hobart. One afternoon her art and science teacher never arrived. Some-one else took the lesson. She subsequently found out that the usual teacher, Ernest Unwin, who was also the Headmaster, had been on the way to the class when he had a sudden heart attack and died instantly!



*Helen Whitford in  
Hobart 1947*

Helen attended all the General (now Yearly) Meetings and Young Friends' events of the era, and can always be seen in the many photographs and snapshots taken at these events. Blessed with a good memory she has remained a fruitful source of information about Friends right through from the late 1930s. She had many anecdotes, both serious and funny. One funny anecdote concerned George Hutchesson who, walking along the street at Katoomba in New South Wales, both embarrassed and amused the other young Friends by asking for a cucumber milk shake at every shop! Equally funny was Constance Crosland, not long from England, who felt the heat so intensely at the 1939 General Meeting at Mount Lofty that she ensconced herself in the cellar where younger Friends were sent to fan her!

Helen became a nurse, and married a staunch Methodist, Max Whitford. It was a happy marriage. She came regularly to Meeting, together with her three children; but eventually attendance at Meeting became difficult because, as an accomplished pianist, she was in demand as accompanist to her husband's choir. Max's chief delight was singing in the choir. Ultimately, Helen kept up her intimate contact with the Society through the Quaker Shop. She served on the Quaker Shop Premises Committee for ten years until 1991, and she was a member of Quaker Service Australia (South Australia) from 1960 to 1998 (for the first six years of this appointment QSA was known as the Friends Service Council (Australia)). In time, and with advancing age, this too, became difficult. In 1994 Helen resigned her membership, but maintained close friendship with several Friends, particularly Barbara Whitney.

She was found dead in the early morning of 1<sup>st</sup> September, having died in her sleep, and after having played the piano that evening at Resthaven where she lived in her last years.

## HAPPY ENDINGS

**Robin Sinclair**

July 31<sup>st</sup> 2020 was a significant date for South Australian members of the stitching group. It marked the completion of our eighth panel, and the end of eleven years of happy cooperation on a project which we all enjoyed and contributed to. Our first panel was *The Quaker Shop* and the last, quite fittingly we thought, was the *North Adelaide Meeting House*. In between we designed and stitched *The May Family*, *The Ashby Family*, *SA Friends War Victims Relief*, *'A Wonderful Gesture of Love'* (Darwin/East Timor), *Quaker Service Australia*, and *The Silver Wattle Quaker Centre*.

There were six core members, there for the whole eleven years. Two others, friends of Friends, joined in soon after we began. Three of us were designers as well as stitchers. We met once a month to share ideas and show and discuss what we'd done, as well, of course, to share good talk and coffee! The current panel would go home with whoever was working on a particular area, and the next month they would bring it back to show us. The rest of us would work at home on our practice pieces. We found we all preferred to stitch at home, but feedback from the group at the next gathering was asked for and appreciated. It was a system that worked well.

As we neared the end of the last panel it seemed to all of us that we had now arrived at a natural conclusion and that this was the right time to lay the project down. So at the end of July we had our last gathering, complete with cake, and took a photo of the group to mark our happy achievement. (Photo from Julie)

*Friends in Stitches* is a wonderful endeavour. We celebrate those who had the vision to begin it and see it carried through. It is doing just what it was meant to do: helping Friends and the wider community to understand and appreciate our story. May it continue!

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## ON MEETING FOR WORSHIP.

**Charles Stevenson.**

The first thing I felt in meeting this morning was thankfulness for leaving the hurries and busyness of everyday life, not to mention the commotion of the world stage. Our Friend, Kathleen Hassell, said meeting was the one hour of the week that kept her sane. I can't say the same because I don't know what it is like not to come to meeting. However, at some stage, in the silent recesses of the mind, there comes a sense of communion one with another, an infusion of love, of truth, of purity, all of which one imbibes thankfully, knowing full well that one will be returning to imperfection, our personal insufficiency, not to mention the faults of the world.

Meeting is well described as an analogy to severe winter pruning; for we have pruned right back words, words and more words, ritual and anthems, the certainty of belief and the assurance that we are forgiven. The silence of meeting is something beyond both words and music. To some it might seem that meeting as dead as that pruned bush appears to be. I always remember my nephew: "Uncle do you mean to say you come here every Sunday: there is nothing else do but go to sleep."

That might be the verdict of many, but for others, if they observe the bush further, they will see the little buds of springtime: a new insight, a new angle of thought, a new way forward perhaps. At times meeting might seem arid, but at other times it is an hour of fertile inspiration.

## NEWS OF FRIENDS

**GABRIELLA STEINER-LEE** died on 16th September, aged 85. We remember her warmly as an out-going, cheerful and sensible person. An account of her life will appear in a future *Walking Cheerfully*. Meanwhile, we up-hold in the Light her husband, John Edwards, and her three daughters and son.

**ADELAIDE LOCAL MEETING.** Meetings for worship will resume in the meeting house on 11<sup>th</sup> October. Because of Covid restrictions there will be no morning tea afterwards.

**FRIENDS HOUSE, DEVONSHIRE STREET,** Surry Hills, Sydney, is seeking two people who have a call for service on a voluntary basis as Wardens at the Devonshire Street Meeting House (also known as Friends House) – for a period of about 12 months, commencing February 2021. More information can be provided by the Convenor of the House Committee: Email: [wardensearch@friendsnsw.net](mailto:wardensearch@friendsnsw.net)

**WORLD QUAKER DAY. OCTOBER 4<sup>TH</sup>.** The theme for this year is What does it mean to be a Quaker today? Living into a faithful life in a changing world.

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YEARLY MEETING AND QSA.** A zoom meeting on this subject is to be held on Thursday October 8<sup>th</sup> 6.30-8pm (South Australian time)

**QUAKER BASICS ONLINE COURSE,** from Silver Wattle, offered in cooperation with Quaker Learning Australia. The course runs for 9 weeks (by Zoom), **Saturday afternoons 3:00-4:00pm AEST, starting 10 October.**

The course will cover a range of topics: Individual Experience, Spiritual Journey, Meeting for Worship, Vocal Ministry, Business Meetings; Testimonies, Leadings, Quaker Organisation, and Membership. Each week will have a presentation for the first half hour, with guest presenters such as David Johnson, Felicity Rose, Jenny Spinks and others. Then groups will have an opportunity to explore the topic together. Some readings are suggested in preparation for each session, mostly taken from the QLA Quaker Basics manual which is available free online.

The course is suitable for experienced Friends seeking a re-grounding in Quakerism, as well as newer attenders and inquirers. For more information, contact [Sheila.Keane@silverwattle.org.au](mailto:Sheila.Keane@silverwattle.org.au)

Cost is \$90 for the 9-week course.

**To register go to <https://forms.gle/vxfovnT1QkxiEz56>**

For more info go to <https://www.silverwattle.org.au/upcoming-courses/2020/10/10/quaker-basics-online>

### **QUAKER PEACE AND LEGISLATION COMMITTEE (QPLC)**

#### **Small actions, big outcomes.**

Even though COVID-19 is making it more difficult to meet with politicians, Friends have many reasons to raise their voices, and this Flutter aims to share useful tools for just such work.

With quarantine regulations in place, and many state borders remaining closed, you may find your federal politicians in their local offices. As well, state and local government

politicians may also have alternative contact arrangements – some may be available via zoom or telephone.

Here is a link to Electorate Office and Parliament House contact details for Senators and Members

[https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators\\_and\\_Members/Guidelines\\_for\\_Contacting\\_Senators\\_and\\_Members](https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Guidelines_for_Contacting_Senators_and_Members)

Is it worthwhile to send letters or emails? Yes! It's a critical part of a healthy democracy. The response you receive is not as important as the action you took in writing.

Tips for Effective Emails or Letters:

Use your own words – QPLC Action Alerts and Watching Briefs provide useful material and we will be providing sample messages in the future

Ask for one action at a time. Convey your position in the first two sentences, making it clear what you want the recipient to do.

Say something about yourself. Tell why this is important to you – eg as a small business owner, a grandparent with young children in public school, or a person who lost their job due to COVID-19.

Say why you care about the issue. Sharing the impact of a policy or other decision on a community/individual is important. If you have a personal experience, share it (eg 'My asthma was far worse as a result of last summer's bushfires, I was admitted to hospital twice'.)

### FRIENDS IN ADELAIDE 100 YEARS AGO

There were 68 children attached to the Two-Months Meeting of Friends in South Australia. The Young Friends' League was established by Annie Wilton. Amongst the young Friends were Edith and Keith Ashby. Mary Harris and Lorna Green. Their study book was *By an Unknown Disciple*.



This was the year that Friends established a European Relief Committee. It had widespread support. It was taken up by the *Advertiser* with many long articles about the work of the Friends European Emergency Committee. Many Lutherans (having been practically banned during the first world war) were also pleased to work through Friends.

## A VISIT TO IRAN

Wendy Hartley

I was fortunate to visit Iran in November last year, along the popular tourist route from Tehran in the north, south to Shiraz and Persepolis. Here are a couple of highlights.

People ask where I come from. Australia gets the thumbs up. The streets are clean, the traffic maniacal, roads smooth, food is healthy, and it's safe and reliable. Petrol 20c per litre.

Extended family is the glue binding the society together. Single adult children are required to live at home with their parents, while if married, they live on a different floor of the family



compound. The focus of a room is the thick carpet, these days factory made. No chairs, table, or pictures on the walls. A thin decorated plastic sheet is torn off and spread on the floor, then healthy home prepared food appears, nicely arranged. No alcohol. Few smokers. Scarves off inside. (thank goodness). Tea is popular- black and weak, and served in a thermos.

The living rooms and bedrooms are spacious. Sleeping is done on the carpeted floor or a firm mattress, no sheets, and a fluffy acrylic blanket and hard pillow added.

Bathrooms have a squat or western toilet, and the showering area can be quite big.

Women do everything domestically. They are encouraged to stay at home with the children, ie no outside activities at all. The children have few/no toys. Your husband takes you shopping. Some women drive.

Church and State are supposed to be one. This is the only official Shia Muslim country. Ancient towns, thousands of years old, remind me of my childhood illustrated Bible: ochre flat-roofed buildings, desert, voluminous gowns, barrenness, timelessness

We have so much to learn about water management in Oz. Iranians have had an ingenious system of underground small deep hand-dug channels, many kms long, originating from mountains nearby, again, more than one thousand years ago, with ventilation and maintenance holes from the surface, to supply towns and fields lower down. It meant life and productivity in this interminable desert. Why can't we at least put our open water channels from dams for



irrigation in pipes? And think of some ways to get our tropical rain into our south-flowing rivers!

There was some real opulence: Shah Abbas I mosque, main dome, Isfahan main square: the small flèche streams sunlight around the dome over the day. 1640's. Enormous and spellbinding. Amazing engineering and decoration. And some real bling: Golestan Palace, Tehran, specialising in mirror-worked rooms, with candles imported from Russia for the chandeliers.

1800's.

Wendy can answer any questions about > Zoroastrianism, and Frahvahar, it's main tenet, etc.-  
wjh2810@gmail.com

## **THE HAPPIEST MAN ON EARTH by Eddie Jaku**

**Reviewed by Christine James**

Inga Tolley lent me this inspiring book which I think I'll buy to lend to others. (I've now done this and would be pleased to lend it).

This holocaust story told in the first person by Eddie is almost unbelievable in its twists and turns of chance, the escapes, the captures, the meeting with friends and with his sister and his actual survival of severe and extreme discomforts. Eddie gives much credit to the kindness of others which contributed in various ways to his survival on a number of occasions.

He tells of his feelings as a teenager living away from his beloved German Jewish family in order to gain skills and qualifications in precision engineering, his father having had the foresight to ensure he had the means of earning a living. Eddie's skills so gained were to allow him different chances when he reached Auschwitz so his gratefulness to his father and mother (whose fate in the camp was quite different) is often mentioned. There was suffering of all kinds but Eddie had a strong will and didn't dwell on negative thoughts but strove to survive by conserving his physical and mental strength as much as possible.

There always seems to be hope (and the reader fortunately has the foreknowledge that Eddie *has* survived) because Eddie's story continues to stress the good aspects of the people with whom he interacts some of whom were Nazis. The cruel actions of Nazis however are also described. His explanation for their cruelty and lack of humanity is that they were weak and easily manipulated and that fear had overtaken their morals.

As the war ends and he is at last rescued there are still hardships not only in recovering his physical health but in the general functioning of European countries immediately post-war. His marriage and the arrival of his son helped him change his attitude and to understand happiness. His migration to Australia in 1950 with his wife and eldest son was life-changing. Their second son arrived and the couple worked hard together, at first running a service station, using Eddie's mechanical skills and then later they became real estate agents, again working as a team. Eddie later volunteered at the Jewish Museum and began to tell his story and was eventually persuaded to write it down. It has been published in 2020, the year he turns 100.

The book is well-written in a warm friendly way and is relatively short. A number of photographs of Eddie and his family are included. Here are the chapter headings which give an idea of Eddie's general outlook:-

1. *There are many things more precious than money*
2. *Weakness can be turned into hatred*
3. *Tomorrow will come if you survive today. One step at a time*
4. *You can find kindness everywhere, even from strangers*
5. *Hug your mother*
6. *One good friend is my whole world*
7. *Education is a lifesaver*
8. *If you lose your morals you lose yourself*
9. *The human body is the best machine ever made*
10. *Where there is life, there is hope*
11. *There are always miracles in the world, even when it seems dark*
12. *Love is the best medicine*

*13. We are all part of a larger society, and our work is our contribution to a free and safe life for all*

*14. Shared sorrow is half sorrow; shared pleasure is double pleasure*

*15. What I have to share is not my pain. What I share is my hope.*

Hope and kindness are the keys which make this book inspiring. Despite the shocking details of his ordeals as a Jewish prisoner in Germany during WW2, the reader feels a warmth for this man who, in recognizing and celebrating the kindness in others, shows himself as a truly kind-hearted person.

Strongly recommended.

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## THE WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION

Jo Jordan

Recently a black and white photograph, mounted by an Adelaide framer, was donated to the Quaker Shop. It was clearly an historic photo of a large group of women dressed much like my grandmother, wearing dark hats, gloves, circular spectacles and grim expressions. They had gathered to demonstrate against any change to six o'clock closing, from the placards and banners they were holding. I recognised these women as members of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and offered to show the photo to them.

The WCTU, now at Sir Donald Bradman Drive, is in a converted house with Teetotal Tearooms at the front. The President, who happened to be there when I arrived, was delighted to see the photo. She said that they had flyers and posters of that demonstration in 1939, but no photograph. She offered me Devonshire tea in the tearooms, which I was happy to accept. I learnt about local pioneers of women's rights activists and I was able to add that there had been strong involvement and support by Quakers of the WCTU. The rights of women are widely accepted today thanks to their which upheld women's suffrage and the safety and wellbeing of women and children as well as abstinence from alcohol.



## BOOK REVIEW

**The Underground Girls of Kabul-- Jenny Nordberg (Broadway Books, 2014)**

**Olga Farnill**

This is presented as a 'subjective account' by the journalist-author, based on interviews she conducted in Afghanistan in 2010-11. It gives graphic descriptions of the lives of women and girls there, particularly of girls who are passed off as boys by their families. She begins with Azita, the first of the female representatives of her Province in the modern Afghani parliament-- a sign of hope, in spite of the parliament being "heavily populated with drug kingpins and warlords", and fraught with corruption.

In Azita's family, she first meets 'the brother who is really a girl', and finds this is a fairly common practice, for a family with too many girls to bring up the latest baby as a boy. Because of the lowly, subjugated state of women, it is an advantage for the family to have a boy, which brings prestige, and practical help, since a boy can run errands, and act as an escort to the women, who are not allowed outside the house without a male. It is also good for the girl-- she can go to school, be free to go outdoors, play games with the boys and develop more skills, confidence and assertiveness. Even if she is known to be a girl and gets teased, it is somehow usually accepted. But if the girl gets harassed, her father is blamed, rather than the boys.

These girls are revealed as who they are around puberty, however, and soon after, are usually married off. Still, some object to losing their freedom, and insist on continuing to act as men. Freedom is equated with being male, and a female is subject to total control, since "her virginity is capital belonging to the father, and it is his to be traded". The author reports that 9/10 women are beaten by their husbands or in-laws. The educated Azita herself was married off to an uneducated farmer, and was often beaten, until she made an agreement with them. Divorce and its consequences, far too difficult for a woman. The war years increased the oppression of women for their 'protection', for instance, this was when Azita was forced into her marriage by her otherwise progressive father. Nordberg interviewed many of these girls and women in secret. They hope for better lives, to be allowed proper education, work, freedom to go outside the house.

Sadly, the author concludes that the multiple foreign aid agencies have not produced much change for women, or for improving democracy or development. Even many of the reported improvements in girls' education turned out to be unreal: half the 'schools' had no actual buildings, many lacked teachers, 1/5 of registered students were permanently absent, and very little higher education is available. 40% of girls are married and bear children before the age of 18. Azita's opinion was that a 'long-term investment in a strengthened justice system and a functioning parliament would have benefited women and girls more' than the unco-ordinated aid agencies.

I hope this book suggests a way forward.

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Just one small feather  
sticks to the bottom of  
the empty bird bath.

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: 2<sup>nd</sup> Wed and 4<sup>th</sup> 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 0419023775 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:** 10.30 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

**WALKING CHEERFULLY,** South Australian – Northern Territory Regional Meeting Quaker Newsletter. October 2020

Editor: Charles Stevenson. cestev@adam.com.au

Walking Cheerfully is published bi-monthly.