

The Australian Friend

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Marriage and the family



Editorial

During the Same Sex Marriage debate I searched Quaker Faith & Practice for some insights. Section 22.33 tells us that ‘Marriage is a context for a relationship, not a guarantee of its quality.’ While acknowledging that many good relationships exist outside the institution of marriage, the statement reminds us that ‘In marriage a private relationship becomes public, and thereby receives legitimacy, practical support and blessing from social institutions and the worshipping group.’

Although unions between same-sex attracted couples already had acceptance from Quaker worshipping groups, social acceptance is vital to true equality. Evan Gallagher’s article looks over this importance change in Australian society, the strains that the process placed upon the LGBTIQ community and the part that Quakers played in it.

We have also looked for articles by those from ‘non-standard’ families, and are grateful to those who have shared their experiences. We rejoice in the resilience of our families, and in the love which these families foster.

We are also reminded in the notes of Quaker Service Australia of the importance of extended family members, especially grandparents, and of the value of questioning cultural assumptions about the relationship between different family members.

Some of the articles received this time are about our Quaker forbears, members as it were of the Quaker family. Like the members of our Quaker family today they were not perfect, but they have something to teach us and we have much to be grateful for.

Keep sending us your contributions! We love to hear how the Spirit is moving in our meetings, and how the Spirit is moving us out of our meetings and into the world. We would also like to know if there are areas of importance to Quakers which the journal is not covering,

In our next issue we are looking outward to the world. How are we engaging with Quakers or other Christians in other countries? What can we contribute to the world? What have we learnt by travelling to other countries?

THE AUSTRALIAN FRIEND EDITORIAL TEAM

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Cover photo: Achieving marriage equality

Achieving marriage equality

a personal reflection

EVAN GALLAGHER | CANBERRA REGIONAL MEETING

On 15 November 2017, we had a historic moment that should never have occurred; a majority of Australians supported marriage equality in a national postal survey by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

As a gay man, who has waited with my husband David since 2007 to have our Quaker marriage recognised, I didn't feel like celebrating. I felt relief that the survey was over. It had been an unpleasant experience, as the value of one of the most intimate aspects of our lives, our relationship, had been unnecessarily subjected to public debate and some pretty horrible rhetoric. I also felt a bit of disappointment that the survey only returned a 62% Yes vote. I wondered what hurdle the 'No' campaign would throw in our path next. For the postal survey itself had been nothing more than a hurdle—constitutionally unnecessary, and a violation of human rights and basic morality as the equality of a minority was subjected to a majority poll.

When the legislation passed through Parliament on 7 December, again, I felt relief. The majority poll had not been enough to stave off last minute efforts to water down the legislation to the point that it would have made LGBTIQ people less equal than before, but such efforts had failed. A lot of horrible things had, however, been said along the way in Parliament, together

with many affirming things. But we had got there.

On one point I must, with regret, speak plainly. Most of the judgmental, unloving and prejudiced commentary on the personal lives of LGBTIQ people came from Christian churches and those lobbyists and parliamentarians calling themselves Christian. Of course, ordinary Christians and even individual Christian churches also spoke in support of marriage equality, but theirs was not the dominant voice in the media. It is little wonder, therefore, that many LGBTIQ people have a strained relationship with religion. The preachers of love mostly practise fear and exclusion in our case. They will forgive many sins, but not the love of LGBTIQ couples.

As a Friend, I was lucky. My religious community spoke with a clear voice of support for LGBTIQ people, and had done so for decades. This meant a lot. It was one of the reasons I was a Friend. And it meant that I was confident of a positive response when, back in August 2017, I approached Canberra Regional Meeting about the importance of Quakers speaking up during the postal survey and parliamentary debates. We needed to provide a counter-narrative of love. We needed to show that 'religious freedom' was not about the right to exclude people from our communities, but the right to *include* them.

The response was immediately

supportive. I am grateful to Kay de Vogel as Clerk of Canberra RM for raising the issue to Jo Jordan as Australia YM Presiding Clerk. There was support for a group to work on the issue, but for right ordering it would need to be a subcommittee of the Quaker Peace and Legislation Committee (QPLC).

The Marriage Equality Subcommittee was established quickly with QPLC's assistance. We needed to move fast. As each day passed in August and early September the unfortunate prospect of a postal survey firmed up. By this stage, legal challenges were before the High Court, brought by some of the equality campaign to prevent the survey going ahead, but we needed to be ready if they were unsuccessful.

The Subcommittee comprised Vidyá, Peter Williams, Dorothy Broom, Peta Cox and me. We had terms of reference approved by QPLC. We were to speak in support of marriage equality, but also be sensitive to a diversity of views among some Friends.

Our first steps were to prepare an Open Letter from the AYM Presiding Clerk to the Prime Minister reaffirming, clearly, Australian Quakers' support for marriage equality. The Subcommittee also circulated an internal message for Meetings alerting them to the challenging times ahead and pastoral care needs of LGBTIQ Friends and those who may feel isolated due to their different views on the issue.



Supporting equality at the Sydney Mardi Gras fair day

The Open Letter almost drafted itself. After decades of discussion and consideration by AYM and Regional Meetings, a discussion I joined in 2005, the principles of equality and love resounded clearly through everything Friends had said. The Open Letter sought simply to distil the outcomes of this discernment.

The Open Letter was widely circulated on social media, particularly Facebook. I was struck by two things as I followed the comments being made. Firstly, many in the broader community were surprised by Quakers' position, and overwhelmingly positive about it. While not the purpose, it raised awareness of Quakers among many people who may never have heard of us. Many thanked us for supporting the rights of LGBTIQ people, and one drag performer even expressed solidarity with our position of recognising the 'divine' in all people! Quakers' support for marriage equality was even cited in a myth busting

post relating to arguments of the 'No' campaign—refuting the argument that religion necessarily opposed marriage equality—which was reposted widely on Facebook.

Secondly, many Friends also expressed appreciation that we, as a Yearly Meeting, had spoken up on the issue. This meant that individual Friends could engage with the issue *as Friends*.

Social media proved to be our most successful means of communication. We shared a series of personal stories of f/Friends whose lives were affected by the issue of marriage equality, whether as LGBTIQ couples, heterosexual couples who had deferred legal recognition of their own relationships, or as registering officers. This attracted a lot of interest and reinforced the message that the issue was about real people, not simply an abstract argument about definitions. I am grateful to all f/Friends who shared their stories.

We were less successful in engaging with the traditional media. A letter to Crikey was published early on, but a number of things held us back from publication in the major newspapers. The papers were being deluged with letters on the issue. Publication required being immediately responsive to the 24 hour media cycle as well as reaching out to multiple publications. Quaker process is not designed for this, and it was extremely challenging without a full-time media officer, who had the skills, time and established relationships to coordinate with newspaper editors. All of us had other calls on our time, such as work.

We sought to get around these challenges by sending Op Eds through the Equality Campaign media team, which was very helpful. But this meant a lot of negotiation about language and tone. Removing 'Quaker speak' was understandable (despite best

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23



Know thy Friend

Sabine Erika



Sabine (right) and her partner Myra.

I was born in Frankfurt A/M (am Main) in Germany on 24 February 1938. In March the following year my parents, my two sisters and I left Germany as refugees for Australia. My parents, Max and Erika Wohlwill almost immediately fell in love with Australia. My mother always said that as their ship sailed into Sydney harbour it felt as though two arms were held out to welcome them.

My parents soon took it in turns to attend evenings at Devonshire street where the Quakers gave illustrated lectures to refugees on Australian life. Before long they became members, my father declaring that he had always been a Friend in his heart.

We moved to Beecroft, then a bush suburb in north western Sydney when I was three years old. Dad would take us to Devonshire St Meeting on Sundays

where we attended Sunday School with the Swann sisters who told us Bible stories. We crept into Meeting for Worship for the last 15 minutes and I remember counting hats and listening to the shouts from the nearby terraces to pass the time away. My father said that if I was really open to the spirit I would not hear those shouts!

I was quite devout as a young girl and attended various local churches especially the Catholic church. I told my mother I would like to be a nun. But eventually my love of theatre prevailed and while I worked for three years at the *Daily Telegraph* I spent every spare moment at the Studio Theatre in the city.

Our growing up years in the bush were very happy ones with considerable freedom to play in the bush, build bush houses and boats to sail in the local

creek. My two older sisters were great companions. We acted plays for our parents birthdays and at Christmas time. One year Mum organised a Nativity Play at Devonshire Street much to the alarm of some of the more conservative Friends.

After three years in the city I worked as a governess on a sheep property in Wilbriggie in south west NSW. During this time I formally applied for membership of Friends and was visited on the property by Lloyd Williams. After my return to Sydney I married David Willis and moved back to Beecroft where we had two sons, Simon and Anthony. I eventually enrolled at the University and became a lecturer in Politics and Women's Studies, the latter controversially introduced by a few of us amidst much scepticism.

Both David and I were heavily



Sabine's parents, Erika and Max Wohlwill

involved in the establishment of Wahroonga Meeting together with my parents, Enid and Eric Pollard and Rudi and Hannah Lemberg. It was an exciting time seeing Wahroonga become a big Meeting with many children with whom we put on numerous plays. I taught Sunday Children's meeting somewhat differently from the Swanns, and with considerable enjoyment. My two boys were encouraged to act, both at home and at the Meeting. Every year our family would put on a Nativity play for our parents, a tradition started by my father when we were young.

My marriage ended in 1975 and eventually I came to live in the Blue Mountains with my partner Myra Hutton. I have been involved with Blue Mountains Meeting for many years serving as Clerk, and on various

committees. One of my great delights was to be involved with the Schools Peace Prize funded by the generous bequest of Nancy Shelley, a Friend from Canberra who was a member of our Meeting.

Two years ago Myra and I launched the Blackheath Theatre Company, a long time dream of mine. We have held several workshops, and performed four plays so far, one written by Myra for the theatre.

My life has been very full. I have written and travelled and been involved in the local community. Together Myra and I travelled the Camino and the Silk Road and visited many other places. Last year we travelled 14,000 km in Australia exploring some of the wonders of this huge land.

I now have eight grandchildren and

one great grandchild, five of them in London and four in Canberra. My sons have given me much joy as I followed their life journeys.

I regard my parents along with several wonderful women as the major influences in my life. Two women Friends provided much inspiration to me, Margaret Watts an intrepid peace worker and traveller and Dorothy Gregory whose stories of China sparked a love of that country which I have since visited four times. My academic colleague, the late Professor Jill Roe was a mentor, friend and an important challenge to me. Most of all my adventurous mother and my loving and accepting father provided unique challenges and guidance in my life.

AF



Modern families

and how to have 'normal' children

WIES SCHUIRINGA | NEW SOUTH WALES REGIONAL MEETING

Although many families in Australia today are not 'normal', (that's a heterosexual married couple with two or three children), the personal characteristics of children from 'not-normal' families are often interpreted as being the result of growing up in 'not-normal' family circumstances. 'Not-normal' families are one-parent families where the one parent may not have married, partnered or has separated, same-sex parent families, families with step fathers or step-mothers, families with one child only, foster families, families with adopted children, grandparent families and variations of all of these families. Adults in parenting roles in such 'not-normal' families often have a sense of having to show evidence that their children are 'normal'. However, children behave in all sorts of different ways. Is a shy and quiet child who has no siblings and is growing up in a single parent household, shy and quiet because of its family constellation? Is the child supposedly used to having little opportunity for conversation thus being lonely? This question would not be raised when a shy and quiet child is with its biological hetero-sexual parents and has siblings. The most likely answer is that another blood-related family member is or was also shy and quiet and the child has inherited this shy and quiet gene. But then, is it 'normal' to be a shy and quiet child? The same could be said for a highly sociable child who likes to have other children around. Obviously, the single child in a single parent household is missing

siblings. What about the child in a 'normal' family: it has siblings around and two parents but they are obviously not enough company and fun. So the list can go on for children who are studious and the first to hand in a school assignment and also for children who regularly forget their school assignments. Is it because they want to avoid their same-sex parents and they hide in their school work or because they are distracted by living with same-sex parents and can't concentrate? Such behaviours by children in 'normal' families are not explained by pointing out that the child is living with its biological hetero-sexual parents. Must be a genetic throw-back.

Now, what if the child turns out homosexual? Decades of research and of weird and scary treatment interventions have not provided any answers to what causes homosexuality. If the child grew up in a 'not-normal' family the answer is obvious why the now-adult is homosexual. But what when the child grew up in a 'normal' family? Must be a genetic throw-back, bad peer pressure or maybe homosexuality is OK.

How to determine what is 'normal' child behaviour? Children who have major problems with being a child or teenager need special assistance and such problems may or may not be related to living in a 'normal' or 'not-normal' family. Everyday behavioural characteristics in children and teenagers mean that they are children with personal characteristics and quirks of their own: always needing to kick, hit or throw a ball, avid readers,

obsessed with video games, the colour pink, ribbons and hair clips or dinosaur names, practising being a pop star, an IT entrepreneur or celebrity cook and doing this quietly or noisily. Which child fits into a box of being 'normal'? Some of these personalities and quirks could be related to (or not related to) anything in their family: having a bossy older sister or sickly younger brother, having a parent or grandparent as carer who has a strong temper or who is away for work a lot and rather invisible to the child, being an only child or having a step-parent, living in poverty, having a 'tiger' mother or having been at many different schools because of a parent who is in the defence force.

The Quaker testimony of equality sees every person in their own right, created equally and valued as a unique individual. Of course, none of us are an isolated island and the family and social history and context are part of forming a child and who they may become. However, the family's social status, ethnic, religious or racial background do not add or detract from the child's worth. Growing up with violence, abuse or in a war zone are more extreme influences that will affect the child's personality traits. Problems arise when the emphasis is on being part of a 'not-normal' family and when this becomes dominant in appreciating the personal characteristics and quirks in each child or teenager.

Wies Schuiringa was a single parent and her adult child is homosexual.

AF

Give It a Name

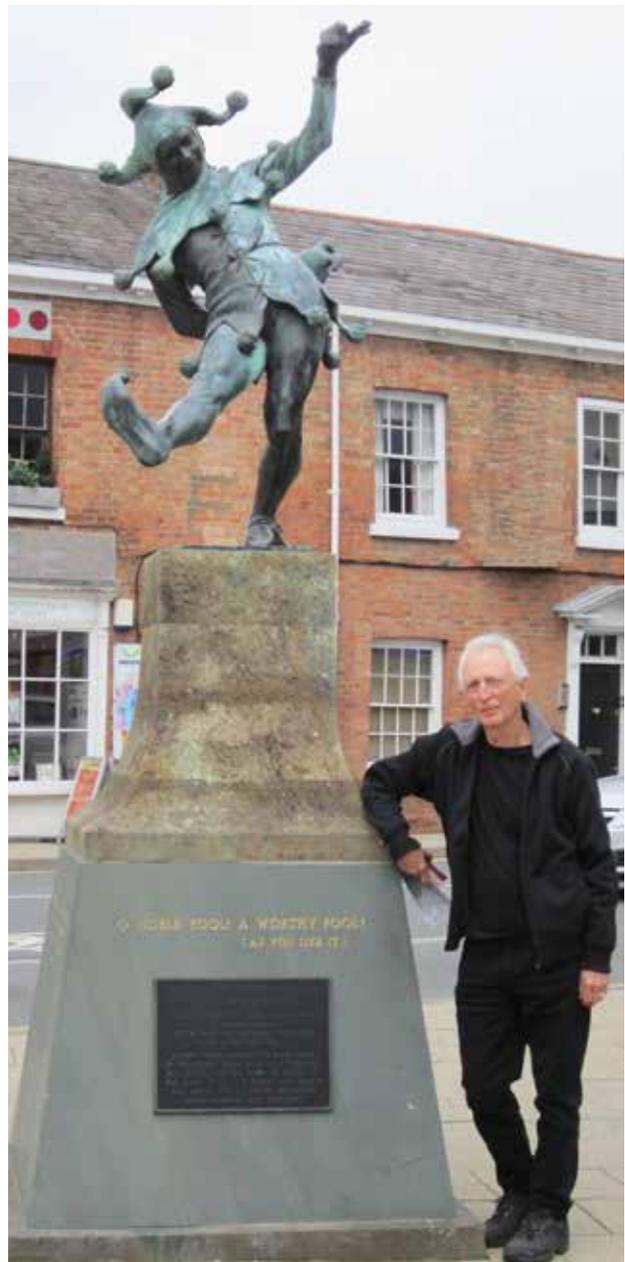
It silently seeps like Love Canal sludge
 It goosesteps in blood like Ebro jackboots
 It denatures the mob like deodorant sprays
 It tars the philosopher like lowly lynch mobs
 Give it a name; spray it on walls like a folksinger's axe

It swamps reason like backwater slogans
 It debases debate like a Nuremberg rally
 It fascinates foot soldiers on pharisaic crusade
 It empowers the mob in a stitchup of sanbenitos
 Give it a name; shout to mosh pits like a folksinger's tirade

It rewrites timetables in the smash of failure
 It disappears history like names to dementia
 It discards the eye-witness like Zyklon-B
 It sidelines the poet like the sport of apathy
 It chatters through Sandy Hook like a Second
 Amendment
 It sinks in the Dead Sea like a Sixth Commandment

HELL'S BELLS GIVE IT A NAME
 or can Your life power let it be?

peter burton



We asked Peter whether he would like to add some comments to his poem. His reply:

I have intentionally omitted 'its' name because 'it' is whatever the reader thinks it is, and there is no one answer. There are many 'its'.

Yes, there are many possible horrible inhumanities that have happened to the environment, the powerless, the ignorant, the oppressed, the heroic, the principled, the peaceful, the different, the persecuted, the saintly, the foolish, the meek, the enlightened, the gullible, the apathetic, the enslaved ... that could/should be named.

Sometimes they are, and sometimes people forget or are

unaware that they have happened before or are happening now, but does naming them change what has happened or what is happening?

Is naming them enough? Are they beyond our intervention? Can we do something to better our world, our local community, our organisation, ourselves?

– or do I recognise 'it' for what it is, but believe it's beyond anything I can do about 'it', and recognise that I have to 'let it be', for now or forever?

What do Friends believe? What do they do?

AF

Yearly Meeting 7-14 July 2018

Avondale College, Cooranbong

NSW Regional Meeting warmly invites Friends to attend YM2018 at Avondale College, a Seventh Day Adventist tertiary college at Cooranbong, near Morisset in the lower Hunter Valley. Avondale College was also the venue for YM2004. It is located in a semi-rural setting, close to Lake Macquarie and the Watagans National Park. There is a small shopping centre, with two cafes, in Cooranbong, 1.5 km from the College, and more extensive shopping facilities at Morisset, 8 km away.

Travelling to YM

Morisset, the closest railway station, is on the Central Coast and Newcastle Line, a comfortable and scenic 2-hour journey from Central Station (Sydney). A shuttle bus will operate between Morisset and Avondale College on Saturdays 7 and 14 July. Friends are asked to organise their travel so that they arrive at Avondale between 1.00 pm and 5.30 pm on 7 July. Friends may like to consider the environmental and energy impacts of travel to YM and make appropriate arrangements for carbon offsets. Details about travelling to Avondale College are available from RM clerks and YM18planning@quakers.org.au

Facilities

Avondale College has a range of venues and spaces for meetings, displays and other aspects of the YM programme. Most of these venues and spaces are wheelchair accessible. There is a wealth of recreational facilities, as well as 7 km of walking tracks, on the campus.

Catering

The meals will be vegetarian, and some special diets can be catered for. Meals for 0-5 year olds will be free, with children 6-11 years half-price. The

cost of three meals a day for adults will be \$50.

Accommodation and self-catering opportunities

Separate halls of residence provide single or twin accommodation (and possibly triple accommodation). One self-catering cottage, with five bunk-style rooms and a max. capacity of 26, located 800m from the main YM venue, is available. Some limited, small-scale, self-catering may be available in one or two halls of residence. Accommodation for 0-5 year olds will be free, and there will be reduced charges for children 6-11 years, JYFs, and unwaged YFs. The charges per night for adults will range from \$33 in the shared bunk rooms, to \$42 in twin rooms to \$53 in single rooms.

Alternative accommodation options in the Cooranbong area can be found at: <http://www.avondale.edu.au/community/local-accommodation-options/> – but please note that ‘Avondale Holiday Cottages’ refers to the self-catering cottage which we have already reserved for YM.

Yearly Meeting costs

These are still to be finalised, but it is expected that the overall cost for ‘all of YM’ (full-fee registration, 7 nights’



accommodation and 3 meals a day) for adults in a single room will be less than the \$968 'all of YM' cost at YM2017 (for full-fee registration, a bed in a shared room, and 2 meals a day).

Children and JYFs

Planning for the care of children under 12: We are asking families with children under 12 years to register as early as possible, to allow us sufficient time to make suitable arrangements for their care. We have not yet received any offers from a Friend or Friends to plan and manage the Children's programme. Any offers to assist with planning and managing the children's programme, and to participate in the care of the children, would be much appreciated. Please contact Jenny Madeline (see below) in the first instance if you can help.

Planning the JYFs' (12-17 year olds) programme: The planning group for the JYFs' programme has drafted

a provisional programme which includes a 3 day, 2 night camp. Offers from Friends to participate as FRAPs (Friendly Responsible Adult Presences) on the JYFs' programme would be much appreciated. If you can help, please contact Lisa Wriley: lisaw0508@gmail.com

Winter School

The theme for Winter School is 'Turning Points'. This theme was chosen as it encompasses many situations in our lives and is open to be explored in different ways ranging from discussions on various aspects of our lives, to dancing, painting, etc. Convenors are needed. Please contact Elizabeth Mitchell: elizabethmitchell2@bigpond.com

Share & Tell

It is important that Friends who would like to present a Share & Tell session contact Ann Britton prior to

the commencement of YM, so that timetabling and room bookings can be arranged: ann.britton11@gmail.com

IT facilities

Friends will have access to WiFi in meeting rooms and accommodation areas of the campus, and also access to computers and printing facilities.

YM2018 Registration

On-line registration for YM2018 will be available from early/mid April, via a link from the AYM website: www.quakersaustralia.info. It is important that Friends complete their registration by 4 June, so that we can advise Avondale College of our accommodation and meal requirements.

General enquiries should be directed to Jenny Madeline: jmadeline@optusnet.com.au

AF



The Journal of Sydney Parkinson

RAE LITTING | NEW SOUTH WALES REGIONAL MEETING



A Man, Woman & Child, Natives of Terra del Fuego in the Dress of that Country.

Many Quakers will know of Sydney Parkinson as the first Quaker to set foot in Australia. He was the botanical illustrator for Joseph Banks, and you can see many of his illustrations on-line. He was the subject of one of the first panels of the Australian Quaker tapestry.

I came across a copy of his journal on a visit to the library of the Herbarium in the Sydney Botanical Gardens. The book was open at the page describing his arrival in Botany Bay on the Endeavour. The paragraph begins 'On the 28th, we got into a fine bay, and some of our people went on shore on the side of it, where we saw some houses.' Houses? Not humpies or shacks? I was intrigued. On shore the men from the Endeavour encountered two men, who are described as 'hostile', and Parkinson drew a particularly striking picture of them (see below). The encounter did not end well – the

men on the Endeavour 'made signs to them to be peaceable, and threw them some trinkets', then attempted to frighten them with gun shot, and eventually wounded one of the men.

Fascinated by this one page I went home and found that I could purchase a facsimile copy of this journal for a rather large sum. In a fit of extravagance I ordered the book.

The journal of Sydney Parkinson does not contain any of his botanical sketches which were the property of Joseph Banks who employed him. Instead it contains a diary of the voyage, and depictions of the people he saw and their tools. These pictures display the attention to detail which is required of a botanical illustrator. They are true to life. So that even when he describes the inhabitants of Terra del Fuego as of 'a very uncouth and savage appearance', the picture of them proves him wrong. They have sad, sensitive faces, and do

not look savage at all.

Perhaps Parkinson got used to people who looked different, because he says of the Tahitians that 'I never beheld statelier men, having a pleasant countenance, large black eyes, black hair and white teeth. They behaved very courteously...'

Much of the journal is a description of trade between the ship's crew and the Tahitians and Maori. Although both sides wanted to obtain goods from the other, contacts often ended in tragedy. Parkinson records that in Tahiti 'A centinel being off his guard, one of the natives snatched a musket out of his hand, which occasioned the fray. A boy, a midshipman, was the commanding officer, and giving orders to fire, they obeyed with the greatest glee imaginable, as if they had been shooting at wild ducks, killed one stout man, and wounded many others. What a pity, that such brutality should



Parkinson del.

J. Chambers

Two of the Natives of New Holland, Advancing to Combat.

be exercised by civilised people upon unarmed ignorant Indians!

More than once we hear of the Europeans offering 'trinkets' in exchange for food or cloth, and one suspects that the South Sea Islanders were often short-changed. Moreover, neither side really understood the value of the trade objects to the other side. At one time some Tahitians seized the astronomical quadrant which was to be used to make observations of the transit of Venus – this led to a lot of conflict. In New Zealand the Europeans could not understand why the Maori would not trade their greenstone axes.

Everywhere he went Parkinson tried to make notes of the local language. In New Zealand, where the crew of the Endeavour gave the places they visited English names, Parkinson tried to also record the name given by the local people. As an illustrator, he was in a good position to learn new words. One

imagines him sitting with his paper and pencils drawing people, animals and tools. He would have attracted onlookers interested in this new style of art. As he drew, he could ask for words to match the drawings. In this way Parkinson made the first record of the word 'kangooroo', described as 'the leaping quadruped'. He recorded this word in the area now called Cook Town, where the crew were repairing the ship. Not knowing that there were many languages in Australia, Parkinson calls his list 'A Vocabulary of the Language of the People of New Holland'.

The language of the journal is mostly understated – truly plain speech. Describing a group of Maori who practised cannibalism, Parkinson merely says, 'They neither sow nor plant any thing, but live chiefly on fish, and on their neighbours when they can catch them.'

Parkinson did not survive the trip,

dying of disease contracted in Batavia (Jakarta) on the return journey. He was 26 years old. His journal was published by his brother, Stanfield Parkinson.

His journal is a fascinating record of a young Quaker man trying to understand different environments and cultures.

Parkinson, Sydney. *A journal of a voyage to the South Seas in His Majesty's ship Endeavour*. London, Printed for Stanfield Parkinson, the editor, and sold by Messrs Richardson and Urquhart at the Royal Exchange 1773.

Australiana Facsimile Editions No. A34. Adelaide. Libraries Board of South Australia. 1972.

AF



Questions about Francis Cotton

SALLY O'WHEEL | TASMANIA REGIONAL MEETING

This is the hardest thing I have had to deal with since I accepted the position as co-convenor of the Friends in Stitches, Australian Quaker Narrative Embroidery. I have had the job of creating the Friends in Stitches web page for the new Australian Quaker website. One day I was proudly showing my work in progress to my friend, Maureen Davey, who some Tasmanian Friends will know as she is a long time Hobart resident and doctor associated with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre Health Services. She looked askance at the Francis Cotton panel and referred me to an article by a Tasmanian historian, Nick Brodie.^[1]

The article is about the record of our East Coast Quakers, Francis Cotton and George Story and relates to the book *Land of Sleeping Gods*, by Jane Cooper, a Cotton descendant^[2]. Although our panel about Francis Cotton was designed before this book was published, it has raised questions about the whole Cotton story.

I was very troubled by Nick Brodie's article and had to re-write the blurb that goes with the panel on the web site. This is a work-in-progress and keeps changing as I learn more about it.

Here is the current draft

Myths of Tasmanian Legends as recorded by Francis Cotton

When this panel was designed and stitched the designers believed a story which had apparently been passed down through generations of the Cotton family. We now have doubts about this.

Francis Cotton, Anna Maria Cotton and their family of five children arrived in Van Diemen's Land in 1828. They arrived right in the middle of the Black War.

Since Van Diemen's Land had been invaded by the British in 1803, the Aborigines, (palawa^[3]), had been under attack: their land, the material foundation of their life, altered permanently. The British lived on the palawa land, cleared the bush, made fences, tilled the land and introduced sheep and cattle. Murders and rapes were perpetrated. Women and children were kidnapped. The

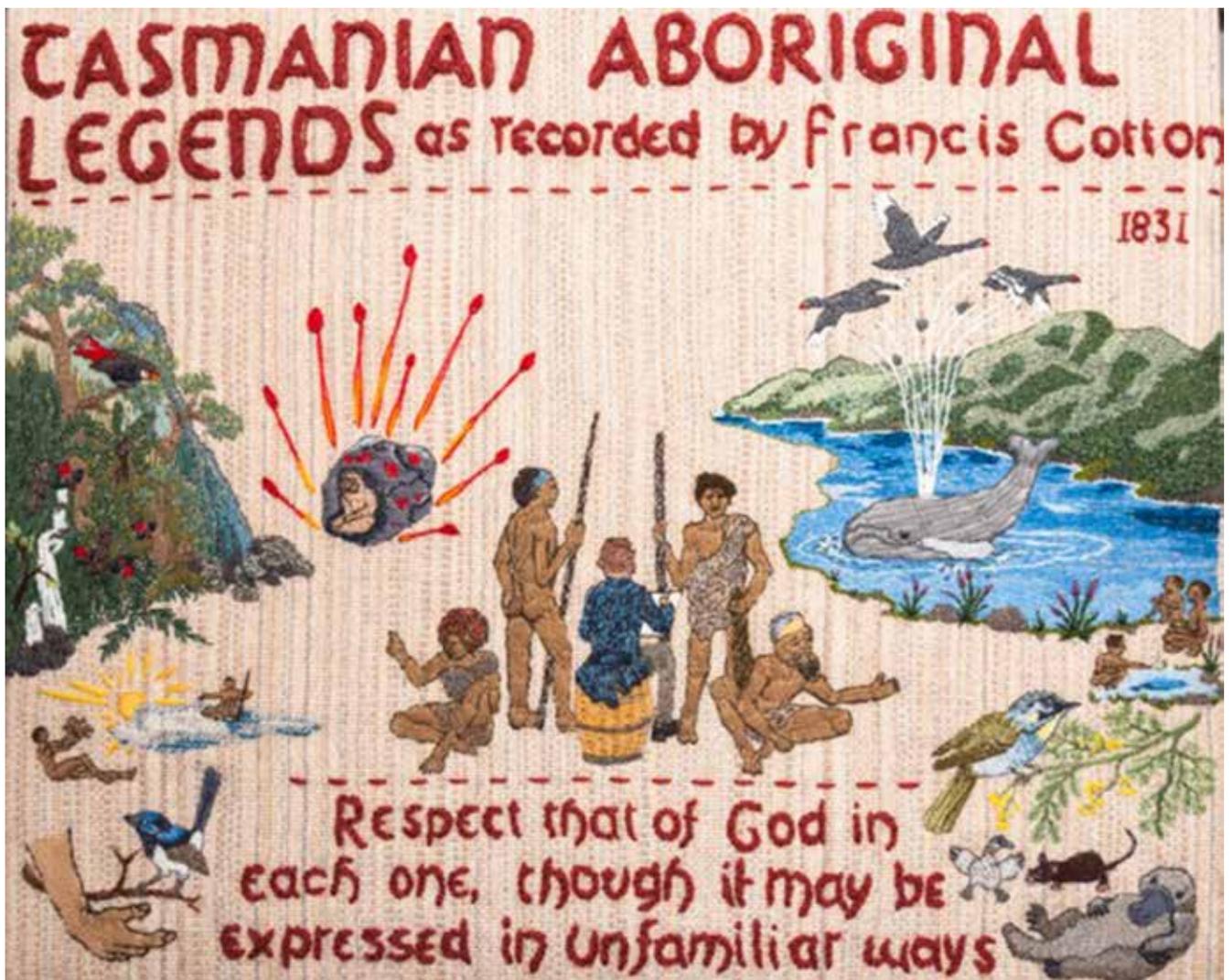
very foundations of their lives were disrupted by the British invasion.

The palawa fought back. By the time the Cottons took up their selection on the east coast, at trayapana, traditional land of the Oyster Bay Tribe, and started to build their homestead and create their farm, war was waging between the palawa and the British.

In 1829 the British military were following a group of Aborigines and wanted to rendezvous at Cotton's hut. Palawa attacked the hut. The guns, which had been left at the butt of a tree, were seized by the palawa, several British workers were speared. Cotton met one who was running away and reported the attack to the Military command and soldiers set out to 'the spot', but of course the palawa had long gone.

In 1831 prominent men of the District of Great Swanport, including Cotton, met to write a letter of thanks to Governor Arthur for his actions in clearing the land of the palawa. They seem to have drafted the letter several times, careful of the wording. On the one hand they wanted to stress the extreme danger they had been under: the 'atrocities', 'outrages and murders', 'continual Fear and Alarm for our lives and property' whenever 'these people are at large'.

But on the other hand, they wanted to call on the Government to 'continue to work towards ameliorating the condition of



these benighted people.' This latter addition was unusual in letters of this kind which were commonly sent to the Governor by settlers in these years.

Indeed Cotton believed that the solution lay in negotiation and non-violence and thus they were in full support of George Augustus Robinson's 'Friendly Mission', to gather together the remaining palawa from across Van Diemen's Land, and remove them to Flinders Island. We now know that their removal to Flinders Island was catastrophic for the palawa. However, without the benefit of hindsight, it is easy to understand that Quakers would support the Friendly Mission and, indeed, the party of Aborigines accompanying

Robinson stayed overnight at Kelvedon. At the most they probably stayed for fifteen hours and during that time the Cotton family story has it that they played ball games and demonstrated their climbing skill. It is also claimed that most other farms would not have hosted the Aborigines.

The designers of this panel believed that it was during this visit that Cotton recorded the legends.

After Francis died in 1884 a grandson, Edward, became very involved in collecting Aboriginal skulls which were dug up on their land and he had a large collection which were eventually donated to the University of Melbourne.

In 1979 another grandson of

Francis and Anna Maria Cotton, William Jackson Cotton (1909-1981), published a small book, *Touch the Morning*, stories which he said he had found in his father's desk and he believed them to be the stories his grandfather had collected when G A Robinson and the Aborigines stayed overnight on his land.

In fact this was the only occasion where there is any documentary evidence that Francis Cotton had any direct contact with the palawa.

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre says this about the legends:

The authenticity of Jackson Cotton material has yet to be proved. Most

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QSA Notes

QSA and the family

JACKIE PERKINS | QSA ADMINISTRATOR



Above Left: Cambodia couples discuss their jobs in the family. Photo: Khmer Community Development

Above Right: Gender workshop, Cambodia. Photo: Khmer Community Development

In all of QSA's projects, there is a strong connection with the family of the project participant, which begins early in the establishment of the project. The process begins with the project partner talking with the leaders of the community to find whether the topics for training which can be offered are of interest and likely to support the community in its plans for improving everyone's health and wellbeing. It may be that what is offered, such as permaculture or how to set up a cow bank or grow mushrooms, is not what the community wants to learn. If it is, a survey is conducted about the community itself. This can include everyone helping to draw a map of the area, where the houses are, where the school and the wells are. If, as is usually the case, there are more people wanting to learn than there is a budget to train, some sort of selection

criteria needs to be discussed. Here again everyone helps to do this; it's not something the project partner decides. In this way, the families with disabled members can be included, as can widows and widowers, and families with large numbers of children. With the list of those selected, the project partner staff can then conduct a baseline survey to learn more about each household. This survey notes the details of their home and land, the crops they grow and animals they have, but also how many people live in the home and what is their relationship. What is being noted now, especially in Cambodia where I have been making a monitoring visit, is that grandparents are caring for their grandchildren while the parents have moved somewhere else to seek employment. This is the case for Pha Lem in Kampong Thom province who is looking after her twin

grandsons, and Kim Sum who lives with her husband (though he is away a lot working in another province) their young daughter and Kim's grandparents who help her tend their extensive and productive food garden. Ngorn Chan lives with her husband, married daughter and her husband and their two granddaughters and therefore also has some help in her food garden. A number of the training courses provided by the project partners also help raise awareness of conflict resolution techniques, gender issues and health matters. In Uganda the women's groups learning about health needs especially during pregnancy, care of young children and birth spacing asked if they could invite their partners along to learn this information also, as a means of reducing tension in the household. Many project partners hold discussions and information



Above Left: Kim Sum's garden



Above Right: Kim Sum with her daughter and village chief Him Hun. **Photo:** Khmer Community Development

sharing sessions on gender issues, and how this information is shared and demonstrated to their children. In Cambodia a presenter likened parenting skills and ideas to that of a teapot – information is ‘poured’ into the children like tea is poured from a pot. If this is done in a negative way, the parents will send a negative message to their children, who will accept it, and their actions and behaviors will often also be negative. If however the parents say or transfer positive signs, the children will accept

this and act in a positive way. As part of the gender workshop, participants understood the basic concept of gender and families living in harmony with each other (such as good communication, motivation and showing appreciation) and about the gender differences in the family. An exercise to consider gender roles acknowledged the impact of cultural traditions of each country, and how it can cause inequalities and expectations of men and women. This was demonstrated by couples assessing

the work they each do in the home, and discussing how they feel about each other, which resulted in many of the participants being in tears as they heard these comments for the first time.

QSA is aware that these courses in gender, child protection and conflict resolution are not the primary workshops that communities sign up to. However with a broad concept of well-being as the focus, it is considered of importance to include these additional topics.

QSA is a member of the Australian Council for International Development and is a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct. The purpose of QSA is to express in a practical way the concern of Australian Quakers for the building of a more peaceful, equitable, just and compassionate world. To this end QSA works with communities in need to improve their quality of life with projects which are culturally sensitive, as well as being economically and environmentally appropriate and sustainable.

Unit 14, 43-53 Bridge Road, Stanmore, NSW 2048 Australia • administration@qsa.org.au
 PHONE+61 2 8054 0400 • FAX: +61 2 9225 9241 • ABN 35 989 797 918



of the stories themselves are just like the type of European fairy tales popular in the nineteenth century, featuring little folk, bush elves, medicine men, dreaming clouds, rain children and talking birds and animals. Stories of the births of Moinee, Dromerdene, the first animals and man, and the stars (all these feature in the Cotton tales) were publically available from 1966 in the publication of George Augustus Robinson's journals.

History is written by the victors and stories may be made up to assuage feelings of guilt and loss, especially in the context of the widely held belief that Tasmanian Aborigines were extinct and the consequent void needing to be filled. The Cottons were the beneficiaries of stolen land and murder, but can we judge them when we don't know how we would have behaved in similar historical circumstances? All of us today who are non-Aboriginal have benefited from the theft of Aboriginal land and the destruction of their society. We live uncomfortably with that truth. How do we do justice?

As regards this panel, it depicts the stories the Cotton family may have passed down, believing them to be authentic Aboriginal legends. The truth remains elusive.

The blurb then goes on to describe the images on the panel and how they relate to the stories,

In the 1980s and 1990s the William Jackson Cotton *Touch the Morning* stories were widely accepted as authentic. The Tasmanian Education Department wrote them into the curricular and apparently Tasmanian Aboriginal groups accepted them. However this is no longer the case. The publication of the *Land of Sleeping Gods* has placed great doubt about the authenticity of the legends and of Francis Cotton's role. The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, the longest standing recognised body of Tasmanian Aborigines, does not accept the legends as authentic.

The story that pretty much confirms for me that these are European stories is the one about the platypus: created by a melding of the duck and the water rat. This whole concept seems to rely on a European understanding of ideas of biological classification, distinguishing birds from mammals. I don't think the palawa would have imagined that.

The panel was certainly designed and stitched in good faith, believing and trusting William Jackson Cotton, who they believed to be a Quaker. But was he? He is not listed in the *Australian Quaker Dictionary of Biography*. What is the truth about the Legends? Who collected them? Are they Aboriginal legends or made up by Europeans? What was the role of Cotton and his

Friend, George Story, in the Black War? What do we do with this knowledge? If we find out that these legends were not collected by Francis Cotton and are not authentic Aboriginal legends, what implications does that hold for our panel? Should it be exhibited if it perpetuates 'fake news'? Can it be amended to better reflect the truth?

This issue needs to be considered by a larger Quaker group than Friends in Stitches. It is relevant to all Friends. The tapestry panels represent our public face and will continue to do so for a hundred years or more, long after we have gone.

[1] Brodie, Nicholas: Quaker Dreaming: The 'Lost' Cotton Archive and the Aborigines of Van Diemen's Land. *Journal of Religious History*. Vol 40. no 3. Sept 2016

[2] Cooper, Jane: *Land of Sleeping Gods, the Writings and drawings of William Jackson Cotton*. Wellington Bridge Press, 2013

[3] Palawa kani is a reconstructed Tasmanian Aboriginal language. They do not use capital letters.

The winds brought the sands

Where Quaker visionaries defied desertification and local denialists



ROWE MORROW | NEW SOUTH WALES REGIONAL MEETING



Broken Hill dust storm, 1907. Photo: AABR

Broken Hill was a young town seeing itself on the brink of a great future as a mining town and weighty regional centre. Silver, lead and zinc had been discovered and Broken Hill Proprietary was well established and building its now notable hill of mullock.

People came from many countries. The town was active and optimistic.

Farmers had taken up land. They brought their horses and tethered them around the town on the land set aside as a Common. So did the Afghan camel men. They tied their camels when they brought goods or bought them to deliver to outback areas. Some farmers grazed their sheep on the Common. It was the Age of the Rabbit. Rabbits invaded, made burrows and ate every emerging piece of green as they thrived and multiplied.

The mining companies and individual miners all cut the mulga trees and other locally adapted species

for mine props. The residents walked out and chopped the vegetation for fire for warmth in winter and cooking.

It did not take long. Within a few years the entire Common was dust. It extended kilometres from the town. And the loosened sand and dust started to move. It was blown in with the harsh desert winds. It carried a huge load.

And growing up in that town was a small boy who would prove to be its saviour.

Bertie Morris and his dad shovelled the sand that came with the cutting winds from the path to their front door. Then he helped his dad build a fence to hold back the sand. The sand continued to mount up. All residents in their streets were drawn into the battle against the desertification.

One older resident told me that when the winds came carrying dust and sand his mother would wet sheets, cover her children and sit them on stools in the coolest most protected part of their

backyard so they could breathe and stay cool until the wind subsided.

Quaker botanists, observation and conviction

Bertie Morris loved growing plants as a child and he also loved to wander in the dry lands around Broken Hill with its unique and lovely vegetation.



Bertie Morris Photo: Barrier Field Naturalists Club



The Broken Hill Common denuded by rabbits, grazing and over-cutting. Photo: AABR

He grew up and became an engineer. In South Australia he met and married Margaret Sayce, a Quaker, who lived on a farm and nursery. They returned to Broken Hill where Bertie was employed by BHP. Bertie became a Quaker. They maintained contact with the Sayce family and the famous Quaker botanical family, the Ashby's.

Bertie and Margaret became convinced that the original vegetation would come back if protected from the animals and from further cutting. Bertie started in his backyard, grew plants and watched what happened when regeneration was protected.

His conviction was fixed and immovable. The desertification was reversible. He started talking to the people of Broken Hill. He said the animals must go and that the cutting must stop and that the whole area must be fenced with a rabbit proof fence.

Opposition and lack of support

Many people, and some with vested interests, opposed him. He was ridiculed. People protested that their needs for fuel were met by the Common which they couldn't see fenced off. No one believed that something as simple

as fencing and leaving to 'nature' could hold back the winds and sands and dust. Other said it was 'natural'. Bertie and Margaret remained fixed in their conviction. They requested that the project be given a chance, starting in a small section to the north-west where the winds came from. This was fenced off. Some people cut the fence, but were soon outnumbered by supporters.

In a dry climate of less than 300 mm rainfall per year it takes time to prove and establish the original vegetation will return. Bertie and Margaret needed to convince the city fathers that the investment of money for what would be more than 80 miles of fencing, would be worthwhile.

Finally support and work begins

However it was the Zinc Mining Company that believed them and paid for the project. Later the NSW government was asked for funds to extend the work. It was successful. It was in 1936 that Albert Morris established the Regeneration Area. It was successful.

Once the rains came, regeneration of local native plants came up in each

fenced area that ultimately stretched for miles around the town.

Today this is known as 'The Regen' by the local people, many of whom do not know its history – simply that the town cannot expand because The Regen keeps it safe from desertification.

Bertie and Margaret also obtained seed from similar climatic areas in South Australia and Western Australia and planted a forest of these trees which exists to this day. However many of these trees don't propagate themselves.

The garden-forest of Broken Hill today has its gates named as the Bertie Morris gates and there is a plaque. A memorial fountain is in the main street.

Fifty year celebration of first known bush regeneration

So in 2017, as part of its celebration of the 80th anniversary of the completion of the first regeneration area, The Australian Association of Bush Regenerators (AABR) invited all bush regenerators to come to Broken Hill and celebrate with the locals. Jasmine Payget and I, as Quakers and bush regenerators, joined the contingent from the Blue Mountains. Other regenerators came from South



Looking at the Morris's regenerated area – healthy and beautiful regrowth August 2017. Photo: AABR

Australia, mid north Queensland and Victoria. In all, including locals, we were about 80 people. We volunteered to work on four sites – two creeks to remove invasive weed species, and other projects including a plant survey and soil crust transplanting.

The local Broken Hill newspaper, *The Daily Barrier Trust*, wrote up our visit and their history. Every day there was a feature story. One headline was Albert Morris, Saviour of a city. The town welcomed us with a cocktail party on the first evening. There was also a celebratory dinner. It was at this dinner that Albert Morris was heralded for his vision and determination and the inaugural Albert Morris Ecology Award was presented.

Why assisted regeneration was so innovative and important

So, why is this story important? The Morrises believed and declared that left alone the natural vegetation would restore itself. Until then people had grown and planted trees with consequent huge losses.

During the depression years in the USA dustbowl, created from tree removal, similar work was going on. It

seems likely that this was convergent evolution with visionaries in both nations arriving at the same solution. Perhaps some people corresponded with others over the sea but there is no evidence of this. The Australian work was earlier.

The importance of the work of Albert and Margaret Morris cannot be underestimated. Among the ideas they generated were:

- Cities need 'green belts'
- Local vegetation is most suited in regeneration
- Nature will regenerate areas if given some assistance from humans. This regeneration, called Assisted Regeneration, is now in bush regeneration textbooks and taught in TAFE's and Universities.

Their experiments were later implicit in the work of the Bradley Sisters who began what we know as 'Bush Regeneration', an approach that is now used widely.

Assisted regeneration in Broken Hill called for:

- Removal of animals, which were the problem
- Carefully placed fences

• Allowing natural regeneration of local plants well adapted to the hot, dry conditions

- Growing local species
- Maintaining the sanctity of the area

This may have been the first larger scale restoration project in the world. Bertie and Margaret Morris started before the 1937 work at Curtis Prairie in the USA. Bertie was a visionary who saw the problem and the solution. He also worked very successfully with the Zinc Corporation.

As he died in 1939, Bertie Morris did not live to see the greening of Broken Hill in the regeneration areas. Margaret survived him and worked on, dedicated to the restoration until she moved to Sydney to live with her sister where she attended the Devonshire St Meeting House until her death.

The week in Broken Hill was a celebration of a 'concern' carried on often against popular opinion and deniers. However Bertie and Margaret Morris remained clear in their purposes and conviction although lacking solid evidence that it would work.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



How the 'bush' looks when its in good health. August 2017. Photo: AABR



Bush regenerators planning removal of invasive weeds. August 2017. Photo: AABR

As a bush regenerator and permaculturist working in arid and degraded and degrading areas in Ethiopia, northern Iraq and Afghanistan I am convinced that, if tried, the Morris's methods of assisted regeneration would be enormously

successful in all these countries. It is immensely superior to planting trees and the work input and failure that goes with this.

If the Morris' work continues to be taken up with the restoration that it promises, especially under the threats

of global warming, then it may be that Bertie and Margaret Morris are Australia's greatest visionary Quakers in a long line of botanists starting with Backhouse and Walker's arrival and study of Australian plants.

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efforts, we have a quaint turn of phrase sometimes), but ensuring such changes did not lose the integrity of the Quaker message took almost as much time as engaging with newspaper editors would have. Ultimately, while our draft Op Eds attracted interest, we were not successful in being published.

As part of the campaign, the Subcommittee also worked to formalise Australia Yearly Meeting's endorsement of the Equality Campaign, as well as the newly established Australian Christians for Marriage Equality. The latter organisation brought together a significant number of churches that supported marriage equality, but I understand that only Quakers and the LGBTIQ-focused Metropolitan Community Church supported marriage equality as 'denominations'.

My personal impression was that Australian Christians for Marriage Equality welcomed Quakers' support, but seemed a little uncertain about how to engage with us or include us. Their campaigning focused on getting people in clerical garb photographed supporting the cause and refuting biblical arguments against same-sex attraction.

Without priests, gothic church buildings or a biblical focus, Quakers did not look or sound the part. But Australian Christians for Marriage Equality did commendable work in countering the argument that

traditional Christianity necessarily opposed equality for LGBTIQ people, and included Quakers in a number of ecumenical events.

After the postal survey, when the matter came before Parliament, it moved quickly. Too quickly for Quakers to establish relationships with MPs and get time to speak with them. Our discussions with Britain Yearly Meeting during the postal survey highlighted how effective Quakers had been in influencing the UK parliamentary debate on marriage equality in the years leading up to 2014. But the pace of parliamentary debate had been more measured in that case, and Britain Yearly Meeting had a parliamentary liaison officer who was a familiar face in Westminster and had the requisite understanding of parliamentary processes.

Ultimately the result in Australia was as good as could reasonably be hoped. Marriage equality became law on 9 December 2017, with only some minor compromises allowing 'bodies established for religious purposes' to discriminate against LGBTIQ couples.

These provisions were far preferable to what had been proposed by the 'No' campaign, which would have seen LGBTIQ people relegated from second to third-class citizens, just as their right to marry was recognised. For this, I am grateful that the majority of MPs and Senators stood up for what was right.

And Quakers can say that we, too, stood up and were counted when it mattered. Sadly, I believe we were almost alone among the 'recognised denominations' under the Marriage Act to do so, though many congregations of other churches stood with us and LGBTIQ people. Let us hope that more and more religious communities follow both Quakers', and their own congregations', examples in years to come.

But the issue is not entirely over. We currently await the findings of the Philip Ruddock Review of Religious Freedom, established during parliamentary consideration of the marriage equality amendments last year and due to report at the end of March.

This could very well recommend expanding the scope for churches and religious organisations to discriminate against LGBTIQ people and others by providing expanded exemptions from anti-discrimination protections.

QPLC has put in a submission highlighting that the introduction of marriage equality expanded religious freedom in Australia, by allowing Quakers and others to celebrate LGBTIQ marriages under the Marriage Act where we had previously been prevented. Let us hope that love continues to carry the day.

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Coordinating editor: David Swain

Editorial panel: Garry Duncan, Rae Litting, Wies Schuiringa

Production

Mailing list Michael Searle

CAustFriend@Quakersaustralia.info

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