

Tasmanian Quaker Newsletter

March/April 2024

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Silent Retreat

POATINA, TASMANIA - OCTOBER 7-13, 2024

Come aside and experience the power of silence.	Sink deeper into the silence to hear the small, quiet voice of the Spirit.	A week of silence open to all seekers.
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Tasmanian Quaker Newsletter

Tasmania Regional Meeting
The Religious Society of Friends
(Quakers) in Australia

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The image adopted as the logo for Quakers in Australia represents the Aurora Australis, a natural phenomenon of the southern hemisphere, associated with Antarctica, a fragile and magnificent part of the planet. The Aurora Australis is considered an appropriate logo because of its association with:

- pure light, the centrality of the Light for Quakers

- beauty, a quality many associate with God or the Spirit within
- nature, a permanent reminder of everyone's responsibility to care for the world
- the colour blue, used by the UN
- the ephemeral and intangible, a reminder that language is inadequate to describe God, the truth or the Spirit within.

The Grays of Grasmere, Killora, Bruny Island

ON A recent trip to Hobart, I visited the Quaker section of the Cornelian Bay Cemetery and found the graves of Frederick Simmons Gray (1853–1933), Bithiah* Gray (1860–1915) and Thomas Edward Gray (1897–1916), and wondered if they were part of the family of Oliver Gray, who had lived on Bruny Island until his death in 1993. Through the *Dictionary of Quaker Biography* and other sources, I discovered that they were all of that family, and following is a little of their lives.

Sometime in the 1870s, Frederick Simmons Gray, an English Quaker sailed to Australia in the barque Grasmere and started farming on Tasmania's east coast. Frederick had been to Ackworth School, as had his friend Robert Pudney, whose family migrated to New Zealand. Frederick married Robert's sister Bithiah* and moved for a while to New Zealand. After a while they returned to Tasmania and eventually had five sons, (Robert) Henry, (Frederick) Oliver, Oberlin Herbert, Arthur Plester and Thomas Edward, all born between 1889 and 1995.



Their birthdates are significant, as it means they were all of an age to serve in the First World War, and indeed, Oberlin, Oliver and Thomas all volunteered for Ambulance service. Oberlin volunteered first, in December 1914, served in Gallipoli in 1915, but became ill and was invalided home. On recovery, Oberlin returned to France with the 3rd Australian Field Ambulance. Oliver, originally joined the Australian Army Medical Corps, and needed his father's written permission as he was only 20 years old at the time. He then transferred to Oberlin's unit. Sadly, Oberlin was hit by a shell in August 1918, and died soon after.

Oberlin wrote extensive diaries during his war experiences and these have been donated to the War

Museum in Canberra and are on-line so available on searching to be read.

Oliver, who had been with his brother when he was killed, went on serving on the Western Front and was awarded the French Legion D'Honneur for his exceptional courage and devotion to attending wounded men.

Thomas enlisted on the same day as Oliver (presumably also with his father's written permission), and was first stationed in the Claremont camp for training, where meningitis had broken out. Thomas volunteered to nurse a case, caught meningitis himself and died in Hobart when only 19 years old.

Arthur travelled to England to serve in the war also, and little was known of his service there. However, other keen searchers found that he worked in Munitions in England, an unexpected find bearing in mind his being a Quaker!

All four brothers mentioned above are named on the Friends School honour board commemorating all old scholars who served in the Great War.

Backtracking a little, we find the eldest son, Robert Henry, known as Harry, also went into farming, and after gaining experience at the May Brothers' farm at Sandford, in 1912 he established a farm at Killora, Bruny Island, naming it Grasmere (homestead photographed by EF in February 2024) after the ship in which his father emigrated. His parents joined him there, and remained at Grasmere until their deaths, Bithiah dying in 1915, and Frederick in 1933. In 1920, Harry married



Irene Burcham of Launceston, and they moved to Lymington and took up an orchard. They lived there until 1967 when the disastrous bushfires of 1967 wiped out the property. Harry practiced organic farming and was widely respected in his community.

Meanwhile, Frederick was joined at Grasmere by his sons Oliver and Arthur (with his wife Lena whom he married in England) when they returned from Europe in 1919. Oliver married Gladys Pybus in 1921 and spent the rest of his life at Grasmere. Arthur died in 1949, and I assume he lived at Grasmere and worked at farming with Oliver until then. They certainly farmed as the Gray Brothers for a time.

As well as farming, Oliver served the Bruny Island community as warden, as coroner, and as Justice of the Peace. He wrote books of recollections of North Bruny, which unfortunately are out of print. He also provided weather observations for North Bruny to the Meteorological Bureau for decades.

Oliver died in 1993 and his Testimony states that 'generations of boarders will remember the homely

welcome Oliver and Gladys gave them during school vacations”.

There are Testimonies or notes about Frederick, Oliver and Robert in the *DAQB* but nothing about Thomas, Oberlin or Bithiah. This article has been put together with information from the *DAQB*, as well as other records, especially wartime records. The boyhood photo is copied with permission from a Tasmanian Government website, Centenary of Anzac; and some of the information comes from there also. The boys do not look particularly pleased to be photographed!

*Bithiah on her grave, and on the marriage notice in *The Mercury* in 1921, but Bethiah in other references in *DAQB*.

Liz Field

Silent Retreat, Poatina, Tasmania, 7–13 October 2024

This retreat offers an extended space to sink deeper into the Silence to hear the small, quiet voice of the Spirit. Drew Lawson will be the spiritual nurturer for the retreat.

- If there are one or two participants, Drew will provide one-to-one spiritual nurture.
- If there are more than two, up to a maximum of six, Drew will provide group spiritual nurture.

If you are new to the notion of being on a silent retreat and have questions or concerns please contact Drew at: drewoniona@me.com

The silent retreat is open to Members, Attenders and others in sympathy with Quaker faith and practices.

Accommodation and Cost

- Cottage style and motel accommodation is available and the retreat is fully catered. Please contact: mfl@quaker-saustralia.info for details of costs.
- You are encouraged to apply for financial assistance through your Regional Meeting. Talk with your Clerk or Ministry Convener if you are considering registering for the course and applying for support. Regional Meetings do have funds available.

Palm Sunday reflection

PALM SUNDAY had traditionally been the day for peace rallies. In the absence of one this year, I was reading *Advices and Queries* 31, written in a handmade book given to me by Chris Cooke and Brenda Hean when they came to Yearly Meeting in Hobart in 2002.

Jenni Bond

We are called to live 'in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars'. Do you faithfully maintain our testimony that war and the preparation for war are inconsistent with the spirit of Christ?

Search out whatever in your own way of life may contain the seeds of war.

Stand firm in our testimony, even when others commit or prepare to commit acts of violence, yet always remember that they too are children of God.



A participant in the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) looks at the drawing of a dove carrying an olive branch while wearing a bullet proof vest and the mark of a sniper's aim, on a wall in Bethlehem, March 2020. Photo by Albin Hillert/World Council of Churches.

News of Friends

ON SUNDAY 31 March six Hobart Friends made the scenic journey south to Dover, stopping in Huonville to collect Ann Mallard.

We were warmly welcomed by Meryl Moscrop to her peaceful, rural home set amongst large trees on an acre of garden where the autumn colours were just starting to show. We shared Meeting for Worship, then a well-balanced, sumptuous lunch accompanied by much warm, lively conversation. Some Friends also took pleasure in walking in the garden. We all enjoyed our time together and agreed it had been a most worthwhile day.

Jenny Seaton



Left to right: Meryl Moscrop, Jo Petrov, Ann Mallard, Felicity Rose, Margaret Bywater, Ali Cummins, Kerstin Reimers, photo by Jenny Seaton

Sue Ennis visit

HOW YOUR money impacts the climate crisis – about 16 Friends attended a presentation by Sue Ennis from Victoria Regional Meeting and the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC) Divestment Group, on 17 March, 11.40am, through a hybrid meeting with face-to-face participants at the Hobart Meeting House and others joining by zoom.

In the session Sue outlined the information needed for individuals to make informed choices about money and how it can be a ‘force for good’. It was a hands-on session and we spent sometime exploring the website www.marketforces.org.au, an extremely useful resource which has detailed information comparing the fossil fuel investment positions of over 106 banks, credit unions and building societies, as well as an extensive list of superannuation funds.

Sue also presented strategies to hold financial institutions to account ranging from ringing up, or writing letters, to ask their position on funding oil, coal and gas projects, to becoming a share holder in order to have voting rights at company meetings.

Information about divestment has been before Friends for a number of years. Some had already attended other presentations given by Sue. However they found this session useful to revisit information, good for refreshing knowledge and offering encouragement:

Long wanted to change banking, but lacked real knowledge. What I really lack is confidence ...

And:

Information doesn't change behaviour, support does.

A number of Friends strongly identified with this statement. One Friend has addressed the need for support:

I organised myself a 'buddy' for mutual encouragement about our banking and super with climate

in mind. We 'meet' regularly over the phone and try to hold ourselves/each other accountable, a help in achieving the goals we set ourselves. Nice to feel understood by a kindred soul!

Friends were inspired and motivated to act following Sue's presentation and have already undertaken a range of actions – making phone calls, writing letters, speaking to financial advisers.

One Friend was very pleased to find that her present fund 'is about as good as I could hope for, professing to be as "ethical" as possible'. She also appreciates having an excellent and easily accessible planner.

Others had less success. In two different phone calls, staff said they could not provide the information when asked if their organisation invested in fossil fuels.

Another Friend said:

It was on my list to investigate and evaluate banking options, but it was going to be a 'project'. This presentation gave me a headstart up the learning curve and the resources by which to make my investigations efficient.

I thoroughly plan to change my banking location.

With the information provided in the presentation, I will revisit and reevaluate decisions I made when I selected my super last year.

Friends have passed on the websites to friends and colleagues outside the Meeting.

The session concluded with lively conversations over a shared lunch. There is a lot of interest in making changes and Friends feel energised and better equipped with some tools and strategies to undertake the tasks.

We thank Sue for generously donating her time to share her expertise, enthusiasm and support, and Evan Vince for his skilled technical assistance.

Jenny Seaton

The truest form of patriotism: Pacifist feminism in Britain, 1870–1902

The Truest Form of Patriotism : Pacifist Feminism in Britain, 1870–1902, by Heloise Brown.

I READ this book some weeks ago now and it was a pretty heavy read, a mighty topic! As the author says in the introduction there have been quite a lot written about Feminist Pacifists around the time of the First World War, the start of WILPF and so on but this earlier period is neglected. I was fascinated by the Quaker connection to this story.

It was enormously complex. There were a multitude of different peace organisations and feminist organisations, all with their own acronyms and I was glad for a List of Abbreviations at the front of the book. Sadly, like so many progressive movements, they were all at loggerheads with one another and so the struggle was divided and weakened.

One of the most important organisations was the Peace Society which was founded by a Quaker, William Allen, after Waterloo. (What a fascinating man he was! But not the subject of this article!) This Society was a Quaker front: it was led by Quakers but it invited everyone to join. They had a strong position, coming from their Quaker teachings, that all war was wrong and could never be justified. This weakened them because they wouldn't work with other peace organisations which took a more open position – that Wars of Liberation or defence, could sometimes be justified which was the position of many of the European Peace organisations where people were involved in Liberation struggles.

The Peace Society as well distanced itself from feminism which wasn't quite respectable. Feminists called for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act, VD being a threat to the army & the navy. Prostitution thrived around the bases and the law was that any woman near by could be arrested and checked out for VD. Fascinatingly this was an issue that sparked the first calls for women's suffrage, to change this act. It was argued that women shouldn't get the vote because they didn't fight in wars. So was Peace a women's issue?

There are heaps of very interesting Quakers in this book but one in particular sparked my interest because of her astounding organising skill. She was Priscilla Peckover. A Friend from a wealthy family in Wisbech, she responded to the Query 'Are you Faithful in bearing your Christian testimony against

all war?' At first she thought, no, war doesn't concern women, so I don't need to do anything about that. But then, soon after, she was disgusted to learn that the women's auxiliary of the Peace Society only had 200 members. She had a leading.

She founded the Wisbech Local Peace Association. She wrote a *Christian Declaration Against War* and asked people to sign it and subscribe one penny to the organisation. Before long she had 144 members. After ten years she had 6,000 members – one third of the population of Wisbech, this, in a town smaller than Devonport. The declaration called for the establishment of an international court and the reduction, eventually the abolition, of armed services. She went door-knocking, house to house, explaining the issue. She believed in local action. She wrote tracts and distributed them in women's publications as well as publishing her own journal, *Peace and Goodwill*, which she edited for 50 years. One of her tracts was 'How to form a local Peace Association in your own neighbourhood.' Peace Associations were formed in other parts of England and as far away as Japan and New Zealand.

Priscilla never championed the Feminist cause. She remained silent on issues like women's suffrage. In fact she was exactly the kind of woman the Peace Society approved of. Retiring, timid, perfectly fulfilling her feminine role. For all that she was remarkably effective and it is a pity she is not more well known amongst modern Friends.

It is a quote from Priscilla Peckover which gives Heloise Brown the title for the book; 'It is the truest form of Patriotism to do our utmost to save our country from the crime and shame of an unjust war.'

Sally O'Wheel



The Chocolate Factory

The Chocolate Factory by Mary-Lou Stephens, an historical fiction romance novel set in Hobart, published 1 February 2024.

THE BOOK begins in 1921 on board a ship sailing for Australia. After years of working for Cadbury's at Bournville, Birmingham. Dorothy Adwell is on her way to Tasmania to help establish the Firm's (Cadburys) new Australian factory in Claremont, Hobart. This fresh start is just what Dorothy needs after the horrors of the Great War and the loss of her beloved husband.

During the long sea voyage, Dorothy meets Thomas also on his way to take up at teaching job in Tasmania. Immediately drawn to Thomas, Dorothy recognises a man the war has left damaged, mentally and emotionally. Dorothy vows to get to know him and help him – if only he will let her.

Thomas is a Quaker, and, during the story, glimpses of 1920s Hobart Meeting House life are reflected in Mary-Lou Stephens' story.

In 1912, Mary Lou's Quaker grandfather, had been Acting Principal of The Friends' School and an attender at the Hobart Meeting House in Murray Street. The Thorpe family settled in Tasmania and Mary-Lou remains part of this family.

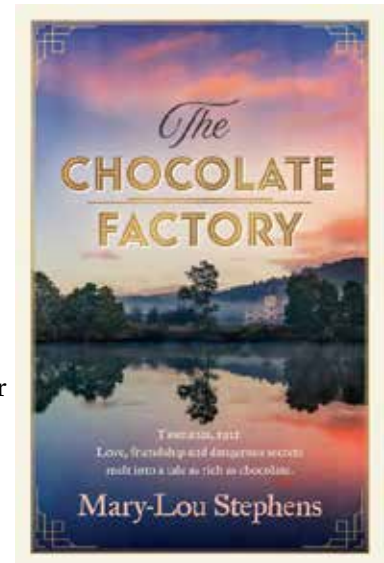
Maisie Greenwood, another character in the book, is the daughter of a war widow, living on

a pittance in the Hobart suburb of Glebe. She is pleased to be offered a position at the brand-new Cadbury's factory. She prospers with Dorothy's mentorship and her budding romance with fellow worker – Frank (also a Quaker).

These characters are just part of the scaffolding for *The Chocolate Factory* story. Cadbury's competitors have a goal: to steal the recipe for Dairy Milk, the most popular chocolate in the world. These competitors indulge in all sorts of espionage. But the recipe, kept in a vault, and the few who know it are legally bound to never divulge its secret are targeted by chocolate spies, Dorothy and Maisie and others at the new factory become caught up in their plot. It is breath-taking stuff.

A promo for the book says it all: 'A tangled web of ambition and intrigue melts into a tale as delicious and rich as chocolate.'

Kathy Rundle



The Nan Chauncy connection

THANKS TO an astute Friend, I have discovered a factual error in the review of *The dressmakers of Yarrandarrah prison* published in the December TQN. Yes Meredith Jaffe is the daughter of Merridy Eastman and granddaughter of Berenice but they aren't from the Masterman family. Berenice was Nan Chauncy's biographer. There was just a slipup in the information I was given! And I'm now enjoying reading around Nan Chauncy and around the Eastman family of authors – three generations.

I've just reread Nan Chauncy's book *Tangara*. According to this book, in Tasmanian Aboriginal language Tangara means something like 'go to another place'. A more recent source (Clarence Council) says 'lets get away together'.

NSW suburban trains introduced in the late 1980s are Tangaras. There's a suggestion that 'tangara'

was used because it is aboriginal for 'go'. Was this an appropriation of the Tasmanian word? Or was there an overlap in the language? Did a Sydney rail staffer name the train because they had been to Tas and walked/ridden the Tangara Trail? Or did they read Nan's book? How can we investigate??

In circle dancing we do a number of dances from Brazil. One is Tangara Mirim, which means 'little Tangara'. Tangara is a genus of birds in Brazil, and the little tangara is very colourful and about the size of a finch. Tangara is also a 'municipality' in Brazil. Somewhere in Brazil there's an established "Tangara Peace Centre" where, so we are told, functions all begin with the Tangara Mirim song and greeting circle dance.

Julie Walpole

No pain like my pain

This is a Lenten prayer poem I have been using during my forty day sojourn with Jesus, Yeshua Ben Yossef, in the wilderness. I do admire Quakers in their understanding that it's not ALL about the silence and the prayers and the contemplation ... the 'great work' requires feet (to misquote Teresa of Avila).

NO PAIN LIKE MY PAIN

Rabbi Tamara Cohen (2021)

יבואכמכ בואכמ שי מא וארו וטיבה

"Look carefully and see if there could possibly be pain like my pain, like the one bestowed by You upon me." – Lamentations ch1 vs 12

No pain like my pain,
no exile like my exile,
No land my land,
No desolate city like my desolate city.
No heart like my own aching heart.
No fear like the fear of my people.
No genocide like our genocide.
No humanity like our humanity.
No right like our right.
No wrong like their wrong.
No rage like my rage.

No pain like my pain,
immediate and raw and righteous,
ancient and true and etched in our genes by history's injustices.

Dear God, help us look,
look closer so that we may see
our children in their children,
their children in our own.
Help us look so that we may see You –
in the bleary eyes of each orphan, each grieving childless mother,
each masked and camouflaged fighter for his people's dignity.

Dear God, Divine Exiled and Crying One,
Loosen our claim to our own uniqueness.
Soften this hold on our exclusive right – to pain, to compassion, to justice.

May your children, all of us unique and in Your image,
come to know the quiet truths of shared pain,
shared hope,
shared land,
shared humanity,
shared risk,
shared courage,
shared peace.

In Sh'Allah. Ken yehi Ratzon.*
May it be Your will.
And may it be ours

*-in Sh'Allah = Muslim/Arabic : 'may it be so'. Ken yehi Ratzon: Jewish according to Your Will

Just two examples – a Friend I know in Canberra faithfully organises and collects funds for a relief effort in Ukraine and another Friend in our worshipping group in Launceston has just returned from an 'Integrity in Public Office' demonstration at Parliament House – she reports greater support from the public than in previous times.

Steve Louis Smith