

Quaker

Tasmanian
Newsletter

November 2024

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Tasmanian Quaker Newsletter

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

Tasmanian peony.

Summer is upon us.

Rain is coming.

The land we live on needs it.

Photo: Sally O'Wheel

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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.

Know one another – Simon Allston ‘Practical Earthcare’

THE INTERVIEWER met Friend Simon Allston through our nominations to the Earthcare Witness Action Committee (EWAC) recently formed at Yearly Meeting 2024. I asked Simon to write about himself, what brought him to Quakers and what guiding principles are at work in his life.

“I was born 25 April 1953 in Nottingham, England. I was at boarding school in England from the age of 8 to the age of 15 – Junior Kings School, followed by the Kings School, Canterbury. My parents were travelling the world quite a bit at that stage. We immigrated to Australia in 1969, and I did my Matric year at Geelong Grammar. I then went to Monash University in Melbourne, where I obtained a BA (Hons) and LL.B.



Simon Allston with older sister in England

“I did a lot of odd jobs whilst at University and afterwards – landscape gardening, farm work, handyman, taxi driver etc. I also studied environmental science for a while, having a strong interest in the environment even at that time.

“I was quite a reluctant lawyer. I had a year at the Victorian Bar, and vowed not to continue with the law after that. But then I returned to it after moving to Tasmania in 1981, because I needed to earn an income to pay for the small farm that my then wife, Julia, and I bought at Sandfly, south of Hobart. I then kept at it whilst we raised a family.

“I worked initially in private practice, as a litigation lawyer, but then moved to work for the Australian Government Solicitor, still in litigation, in 1986. I then moved to work for the Tasmanian Government in 1989, taking up the role of Senior Crown Counsel in the Office of the Solicitor-General, essentially pursuing an interest in constitutional, administrative and environmental law. I continued

there for 16 years, eventually as Principal Crown Counsel, until I was appointed as the Tasmanian Ombudsman and Health Complaints Commissioner in 2005. I retired from that position in 2012.

“Aside from my professional life, I have been organic farming and/or gardening since I was about 18. This has been much more of a theme in my life than being a lawyer. I have had an organic vegetable garden nearly every year since the age of 18, and am now 71. I also worked on various farms during my 20s, before Julia and I bought the small farm that I have mentioned, where we raised our children. (I milked a cow for about 20 years!)

“I now live with on 70 acres on the northern tip of Bruny Island, with my second wife, Janeil, whom I married (in the manner of Friends) in 2010. We have a small herd of cattle, plus a large vegetable garden and orchard, and are working to bring our old and historic property back to life, using organic, biodynamic and regenerative methods and principles. The property has been farmed for about 200 years, having been granted to the whaler James Kelly in the 1820s, and was pretty run down when we took it on.

I chair our local community group, Friends of North Bruny (FONB), which exists to protect the lifestyle and environment of North Bruny, and through that have become very involved in efforts to protect the island. This has led to my wife Janeil and me being centrally involved in a major project run by the Bruny Island Environment Network which seeks to provide increased habitat on the island for the 40-spotted pardalote and the Swift parrot, both endangered species. We have grown a lot of trees for the project, from locally collected seed, and have been involved in a lot of tree planting, including on our own farm.”

“My work with FONB frequently draws on my experience in the law and with government, but I am happiest when I am involved in practical activities outdoors, using my hands and the practical farming, gardening and other skills that I have acquired over the years.

I have travelled quite a bit over my lifetime, but there have been big gaps. For instance, I did not go overseas at all between 1978 and 2005.”

“I have concerns about the environmental (and cultural) effects of international travel, particularly air travel, so am quite reluctant to get on planes. I also like being in one place, and pursuing my farming and gardening interests. I do like the change and

stimulation that come from travel, but am always pleased to return home.”

What drew you to the Quakers?

“A friend of Julia’s was an attender in Melbourne, and I was interested in what she told us about Quaker worship. So I took the opportunity to experience a Quaker meeting soon after we moved to Hobart in 1981, and found it resonated with me. I liked the simplicity and the silence, which gave me time for my own thoughts, and Quaker worship didn’t come with the dogma inherent in a normal church service, which I often found intellectually challenging. I was also very much drawn to the extraordinary experience of being in a truly gathered meeting.

Julia and I became members a couple of years after first experiencing Quaker worship.”

“I was very busy in Quaker affairs for many years – in particular in QSA and on the Board of The Friends’ School – but am not an active member these days. We prefer to stay on the island as much as we can. Travel to Hobart takes up a lot of time.”

“We sometimes joke that we are ‘backsliders’ – an expression we heard in the Solomon Islands, for people who used to go to church but had stopped doing so. But I still consider myself a Quaker.

“The quality I most appreciate is kindness. Conversely, I hate to see a lack of kindness, in private behaviour or in public life.”

The Prayer Game: Review

ARE YOU looking for an icebreaker for a small gathering or a way to start a deeper discussion of the meaning of prayer? Or perhaps you need a “20-minute fill” for a house meeting while you wait for the speaker to arrive?

Recently, after Meeting For Worship, I was introduced to The Prayer Game; a little deck of cards conceived by Jennifer Kavanagh in 2018 and designed by Brian Homer. What a lovely surprise! 6 of us stepped in lightly to explore what Prayer means to us, and we were all pleasantly surprised by the outcome! What a delightful and thought-provoking journey we travelled on that afternoon.

Let me explain: each player receives 4 cards in the deal. Each card has a single word or short phrase that expresses the author’s broad suggestions about prayer. As turns are taken, you work towards a “hand” where your cards best express prayer’s meaning; picking up, discarding, or passing as you go around. Once all players are satisfied, it’s time to share the meaning

“Given this, it somewhat surprisingly took me a long while to learn to be kind to myself.”

“Care for the Earth is a constant and guiding



Simon and Janeil Allston, Bruny Island

principle for me, and I tend to have it in mind whatever I am doing, or thinking of doing. And very fortunately, Janeil thinks the same way, and can even be more uncompromising! I also put a very high premium on honesty. But really, all the Quaker testimonies sit very well with me.”

Interview by Jan Blakeney



you have attributed to prayer through the cards you were able to select.

Here’s a few examples from the 55 cards in the deck: “salvation”, “open to the Spirit”, “emptying”, “Allelujah” and “yearning”. There are also two blank cards where you can attribute your own meaning, if you are lucky enough to draw these “jokers”.

The Prayer Game cards can be purchased on line or in person at the Quaker Bookshop in London: <https://bookshop.quaker.org.uk/The-Prayer-Game-TPG>. It can also be borrowed from the North West Recognised Meeting

If you are yet to discover this resource, do take a peek through the link above.

Reviewed by Linda Pittard

COVID-19 protocols and Meetings for Worship in Tasmania

THERE ARE no longer any mandatory COVID protocols that we are required to follow in Tasmania.

However the COVID viruses are still around. They are spread through respiratory droplets that are forced into the air when we cough, sneeze, laugh or talk. So these are my suggested guidelines for Meeting. I am thinking of Hobart, but I am sure that they can be applied to all Meetings for Worship in Tasmania.

The best was to assess the risk for contracting COVID-19 is to evaluate the situation at any one time according to the 3 Cs:

Crowded

Close contact

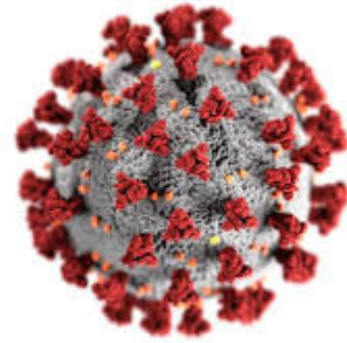
Confined.

The more crowded a space, the more close contact and the more confined a space, then the greater the risk of spreading COVID-19. But consider Meeting for Worship in Hobart: Sunday Meetings for Worship are not usually crowded, and in so far as stillness and silence are a part of our Meeting, the risk of spreading the virus is reduced. Also being conscious to keep the Meeting space well ventilated ensures that respiratory droplets or aerosol particles are diffused.

In the Meeting House we have air purifiers (provided and serviced by the school) and air is drawn in, passing through a filter helping to isolate polluting articles. Opening windows also helps the air flow. So during Meeting for Worship, the risk is minimal. Vulnerable Friends might choose to wear a mask and choose a seat that is reasonably well distanced from other Friends.

However, if we have a Meeting to give Thanks for the Grace of God in the Life of a Friend, it is likely to be more crowded and also more active with more Friends coming into the space and more Friends speaking. So the risk is greater. There are no restrictions so it could be useful for the Friend who is leading the Meeting, to talk with the family about how comfortable they are with a crowd, and whether they want to restrict numbers of people attending.

The other place where can get a bit busy is in the Boa Vista Room after Meeting for Worship. And of course people are moving around, talking, sometimes standing and talking close to one another. We have a school air purifier in the Boa Vista room and we



usually have at least one of the doors into the foyer open. Ideally the windows at the far end of the Boa Vista Room should be open. Perhaps it might be an idea to open the second of the double doors from the foyer to the Boa Vista Room. Also, please consider moving away from the trolleys and the kitchen counter rather than congregating and chatting in these spaces – it is a bit of a tempting trap – I know. If you are anxious, take your drink into the foyer. We also share plates of food in the Boa Vista room. Share plates are here to stay for the moment so if you are anxious, you might like to consider washing or sanitising your hands before and after eating, or perhaps not eating.

As for the Meeting House kitchen, this is a confined space with no external windows. And it can get a bit crowded, making contact quite close. Too many extra Friends in the kitchen not only increases the risk of COVID but it is a safety risk too – given hot water and the crockery, and it also makes it difficult for other Friends to leave the kitchen! I am not saying the no one else can go in the kitchen, if you are not actually doing morning tea duty, just be conscious as to how many people are already in the kitchen. If it looks a bit crowded, then it is crowded, so either leave your cup on the bench, pass on a message or just wait until it is less crowded.

What about shaking hands? There is no mandatory protocol against shaking hands these days. I have shied away from initiating shaking hands because of the number of Friends who are still wearing masks but it has been lovely to see some Friends return to shaking hands. Besides, I see lots of Friends hugging in the foyer! So I have a suggestion. If you are on door duty and you are comfortable shaking hands, offer your hand. If you are offered a hand and you are not comfortable taking it, perhaps instead of extending your right hand, you could put your right hand on your heart, thereby acknowledging the Friend's offer of a hand but not compromis-

ing your concerns. Perhaps we could do the same after Meeting for Worship. Offer your hand to your neighbour if you are comfortable, and if you are not ready to shake hands, perhaps you could place your right hand on your heart to show acknowledgement and appreciation of the other's gesture. There may be some days when you are willing to shake hands and some days when you are not. We need to understand that.

If Friends would like to know more, this might be a useful link:

Addressing Parliamentarians and others with titles

RECENTLY THE Quaker Peace and Legislation Committee (Canberra) considered establishing some guidelines for addressing people and writing to them. This was done with a view to supporting the non-Quaker (but long-standing attender) QPLC Peace Worker Jessica Morrison in her lobbying work. However, I think many Friends will find the suggestions helpful.

There is an established parliamentary convention on how to address parliamentarians, but this does not sit so well with our testimony to the equality of all people, although QPLC correspondence records show that QPLC has often followed Parliamentary conventions. The fact is that whilst the *Handbook of Quaker Practice and Procedure in Australia* (7th ed.) states: "people are encouraged to be mentioned only by given name and family name, without titles. (1.2)", it does not give specific guidelines for addressing titled people in correspondence or when meeting them.

So QPLC has now decided to refrain from using titles as much as possible. It suggests:

- not using titles of people when addressing them either verbally and Mr/Ms/Dr/Bishop/Professor, and if want to be formal to use their full name, e.g. verbally greeting someone as "Hello Phillip Huggins" (not hello Bishop Huggins);
 - using the person's full name as a salutation, but not a title – e.g. Dear Penny Wong (not Dear Foreign Minister);
 - in addressing letters, including references to people's roles, but not honorifics. e.g. Anthony Albanese MP, Prime Minister of Australia. NOT The Hon Mr Albanese MP, Prime Minister of Australia); and
 - using a title only when it refers to someone's role – e.g. "We wrote to the Education Minister."
- QPLC also recommends using the sign off "In

<https://www.health.tas.gov.au/health-topics/infectious-diseases/acute-respiratory-infection-activity/update-acute-respiratory-infection-activity-tasmania>

Friends, these are just suggestions that I offer into the post-COVID void. I am open to discussion and hope others are too.

Sally McGushin

TRM Emergency Response Coordinator

peace" to close the correspondence prior to the signature.

It has also proposed including the following byline in its Mailchimp emails to all parliamentarians:

Quakers' conviction in the equality of all people has meant that it is Quaker practice not to use honourifics or titles. This is the reason we have not used parliamentary or personal titles to address this email.

And from Jessica Morrison's peacemaker email: *Quakers Australia recognise that we work, worship and live on Aboriginal land. As part of our testimony to the equality of all people, Quakers do not use formal titles.*

In presenting you with the QPLC suggestions, I am not suggesting that you have to follow them. Address people and write to them in a manner in which you are comfortable. However, I have often struggled with this, and I have not been consistent, especially if writing Amnesty letters as Amnesty often provides the parliamentary convention. For Jessica's part, she needed guidelines as she represents QPLC.

Sally McGushin

Co-convenor Quaker Peace and Justice, Tas.



Travelling in the spirit: Pat Mavromatis

An introduction to two travel documents for Pat Mavromatis (nee Hewitt)

PLANNING FROM an early age that I would travel one day, the following two documents show the beginning of my first three years overseas adventure. I was 22 years old.

I obtained my General Nursing training in Hobart from 1958 to 1962. At this time I was ready to sail, so I asked the Clerk of Hobart Monthly Meeting (Richard Meredith) for a travelling minute, which I showed to several Meetings where warm greetings were shared. Unfortunately I did not always remember I had the minute to share!

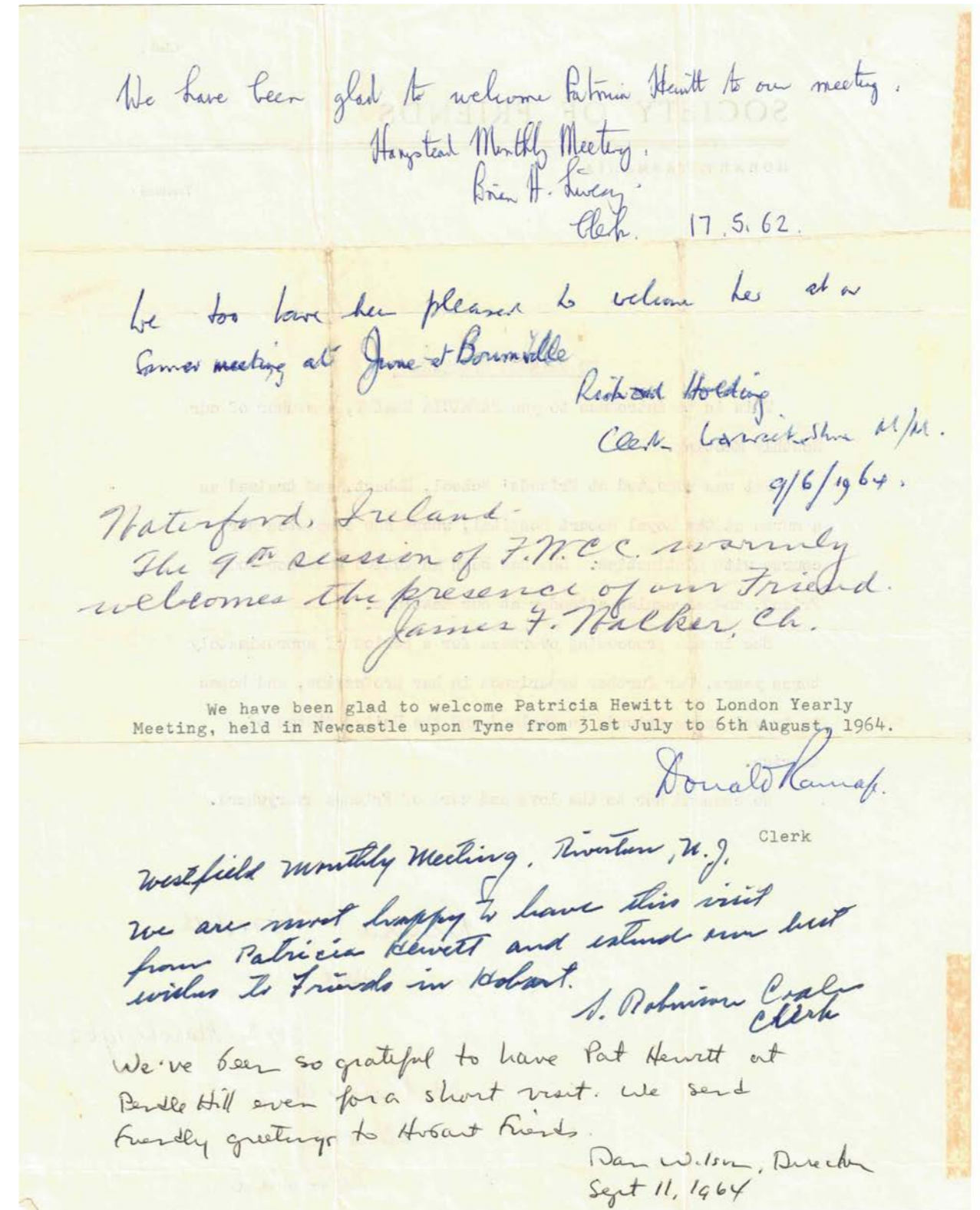
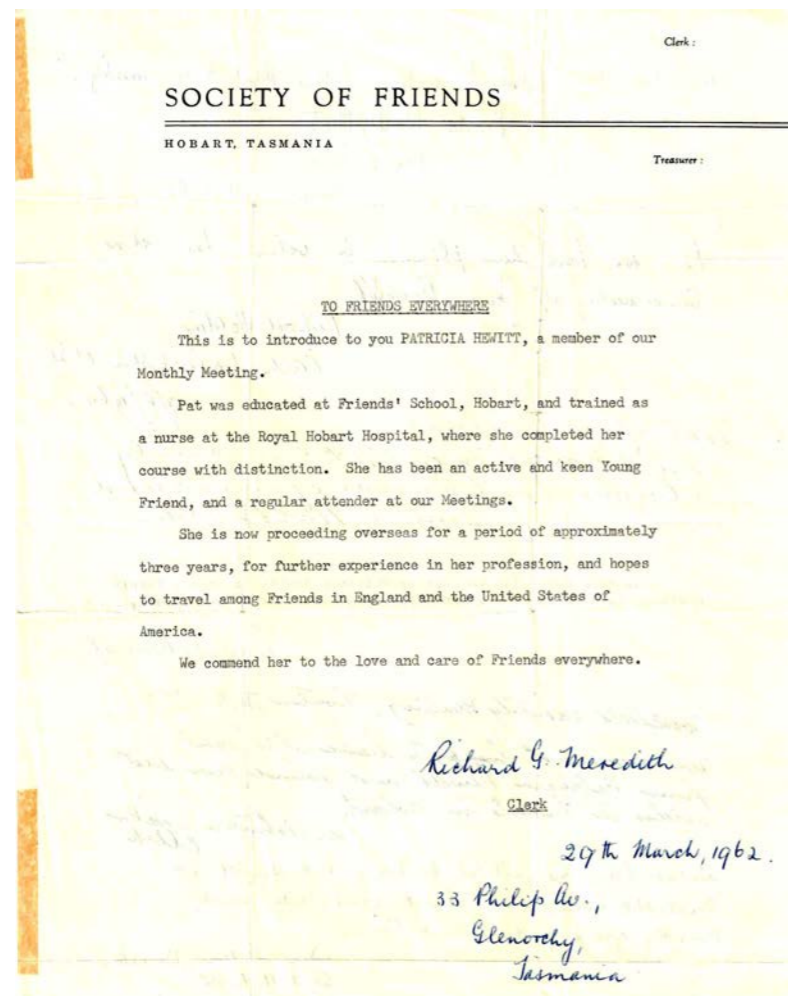
The second report tells how I met up with three other Young Friends, one each from England (David), from the USA (Fran), and from Germany (Roswitha). Our plan was to contact and visit isolated Friends and small Meetings on the continent. An English Friend lent us a car, which we packed with tents, sleeping bags, cooking utensils and other essentials. We had wonderful support from English Friends. During the travels each of us had individual duties. David maintained the car and took

care of the finances, Roswitha was our interpreter, Fran was our letter and report writer, and I was the cook !!

We were all rather earnest Young Friends and were all involved with our home Meetings. However this did not curtail lots of fun and laughter. (Later Fran and David married.)

At the conclusion of the trip I began my Midwifery training in Oxford (Part 1) and Winchester (Part 2). Seeing the recent TV programme "Meet the Midwife", reminded me of very similar experiences that I had had during training. At the conclusion of this training I was given a two-term bursary to go to Woodbrook. A special experience there was having Lucy Burtt as my tutor, a Friend who encouraged me to later apply to work with Friends Service Council, which I did, and subsequently worked in India for nearly five years between 1967 and 1972. For more on this work see the book by Heather Saville *Friends in Deed*.

Pat Mavromatis



Sandy Spring,
Maryland, U.S.A.

September 13, 1964

To the Society of Friends, Hobart, Tasmania:

Greetings from the Sandy Spring Monthly Meeting of Friends and the Baltimore Quarterly Meeting of Friends. We have been glad to have Patricia Hewitt meet with us this day and through her we feel a strengthened bond of fellowship with you.

C. Thomson Brown Jr., Clerk.

Friends Boarding School
Barnesville, Ohio, USA

Society of Friends, Hobart, Tasmania:
Dear Friends:

We are grateful for the visit of Patricia Hobart among us out of which has come a new sense of overarching bond among Quakers everywhere. She has also given us some awareness of the beauty of your island. Our greetings to you and especially to your school in which, naturally, we found ourselves particularly interested. Patricia is a wonderful ambassadress.

*Thomas S. Brown
Principal*

9-20-64

The American Section of the Friends World Committee for Consultation held its Semi-Annual meeting in Plainfield, Indiana, on September 25 and 26. Patricia Hewitt was acceptably in attendance. Her word of greeting from Friends in Hobart was warmly received. We appreciate her presence.

*A. Ward Applegate
Chm. American Section, F.W.C.C.*

We are happy to add Patricia Hewitt to our personally known Friends in Australia, and through her to be brought into a feeling of closer fellowship with the members of the Australian Yearly Meeting. Her visit has given us much pleasure, and we send our greetings through her to each of you.

*Leanne Goodenow, Scattergood School
West Branch, Iowa*

Coal Creek Monthly Meeting Friends
What Cheer, Iowa

To Friends in Hobart -

We are so grateful to have had Patricia Hewitt with us. It means so much to have Friends visit us. Being a small group away from other Friends it pleases us to be remembered by visiting Friends. It is a spiritual as well as social benefit. Patricia has been very special to us and will serve as an important "link" in the chain of friendship between our little group here and yours there in Australia. We are thankful way has been made for her to be here, and hope others of you may follow.

Barbara Wolman, Clerk

We have been pleased to have Patricia Hewitt join with us, during the latter part of tenth month, in the fellowship of the Boulder Friends Meeting in Boulder, Colorado, U.S.A.

Walter Leber, Clerk (10-19-1964)

We are very happy to have Patricia Hewitt with us at our first New Mexico Quarterly meeting.

Frank Russell, Clerk (10-25-1964)

It was most pleasant to have Patricia Hewitt visit with Friends in Flagstaff. We feel especially thankful for this contact and chance to learn of Tasmania.

*Charles Olin, Mary G. Minor, David Christmas, Mary Campbell,
Ann R. Chestnut, Joan Spencer, Stan Spencer
10/28/64 - Flagstaff, Arizona*

San Francisco Monthly Meeting is grateful for having had Patricia Hewitt with us this morning, but sorry she is sailing from us so soon. We send our love to all of you.

Van Ernst, Clerk 11/8/64

YOUNG FRIENDS' INTERVISITATION TRIP
in Europe

July - August, 1962

Group Members: Pat Hewitt, Hobart, Tasmania; Australia General Meeting
Roswitha Schwersensky, West Berlin; Germany Yearly Meeting
Fran Warren, Wilmington, Ohio; Wilmington Yearly Meeting
David Woolgrove, Northampton; London Yearly Meeting

Itinerary: England - London, Pendle Hill, Yealand Conyers, Canterbury
Belgium - Brussels
France - Foyer Amitie, Blois; La Coume, Rosset
Switzerland - Geneva, Lausanne
Germany - Freiburg, Frankfurt, Koblenz (Udenhausen), Bad Pyrmont, Hanover
Netherlands - Utrecht, Amsterdam, The Hague
England - Yealand Conyers

For some while, various members of the group had been actively interested in intervisitation, and had already come to realise the value of such undertakings. The concern to visit Friends on the Continent arose because we wanted to share with them their problems and interests, and to learn more about Continental Quakerism. We looked forward to deep spiritual unity, both with the Friends visited and within the group. Realising our own very varied backgrounds as individuals, we looked forward to getting to know each other on a deep level of sharing. Naturally, as young people, we also looked forward to visiting new countries and finding out a little more about them in the hopes that we could return again one day for a longer stay.

In order to be able to work together as a group, we spent our first week in worshipful preparation at Yealand. The peace and serenity of this part of England and the rich historical Quaker environment helped to give us an ideal place for our time of reorientation and preparation. The fellowship shared with Yealand Meeting during this period and the knowledge that Friends in England and at home were with us in their thoughts, proved to be a continual source of strength upon which we could draw.

The value of having an international group soon made itself evident within the group as well as being of particular interest to Friends who were so very isolated, in that it helped all of us to realise that we were all members of the same Christian community. We were deeply impressed by all the careful planning and by the warmth in which we were received everywhere. As one member of the group put it on one occasion, "...it's just like coming home."

We found it most valuable to meet with these groups of Friends and to become better acquainted with them and their concerns and problems. One of these was to learn more about the position of conscientious objectors, particularly in France and Switzerland. Do those of us who find it easy to make this stand in our own country do all we can towards living "A life that takes away the occasion of all wars"?

The enthusiasm and perseverance of some individual Friends and groups has inspired us. The parable of the talents took on new meaning for us when we looked at the work being carried on at La Coume and Le Foyer d'Amitie in France, by Friends in Switzerland and Germany, and then again in Holland. For example, LaCoume began in 1938 for orphan refugee children, and until 1948 it received financial help from AFSC and FSC. Since that time, it has been self supporting.

During its short history many catastrophes have befallen it, but despite these it is still an impressive home and centre for learning. The most recent experiment has been for La Coume to take in some Tibetan children who will live here for 4-6 years, receiving educational instruction, as well as learning crafts. Pitt Kruger is the director of this school and home, and he and his colleagues give their services voluntarily.

Throughout our travelling together, we were confronted with some familiar problems, but looked at from a new angle, which led to some very deep and meaningful discussions. As we discussed together we came to appreciate more and more that a very sound knowledge (including personal experience) was necessary if we were to begin to comprehend complicated situations such as those in Berlin. People who rush into situations such as this with all sorts of wonderful solutions and a one sided picture can do more harm than good. One thing that we asked ourselves was, could we as pacifists support troops in Berlin, and if not, what was the alternative?

The last war was perhaps different to others in that mass media brought military propaganda to normal everyday people. So cutting was some of this that the scars are deep and some of that feeling of bitterness or resentment is still left. It is no use our trying to ignore these feelings - we must accept that they are there and learn the true meaning of forgiveness. We are capable of doing this through growing nearer to God by following the life and example given by Christ. We must begin by trying to get to know the people involved. It is then that we feel that we are gaining understanding. It is through this conscious effort of trying to "let our lives speak" that belief is transformed into action. If we find it difficult to practice these qualities of love in the Society of Friends (in our own families and small groups), how can we expect to find them or preach them in society at large? How can we practice them in the world?

We learnt much about our own national characteristics. (At one point, Roswitha exclaimed, "I didn't know how German I was until now!") How important it is to realise that these differences exist if we are ever to gain international understanding! Ovena Huffner greatly helped us to appreciate some of the difficulties that underlie the German-Polish border problem. German Friends are trying hard to help in the reconciliation between these two nations.

We appreciated our times of worship together as a group and with other Friends and found them a great source of strength. Do we as Friends fully understand what is meant by worship? Do we place too much importance on our method of worship, thereby neglecting its real purpose? Do we make time in our over-busy lives for enough worship upon which to base our lives?

These are some of the experiences and questions that we have shared together whilst travelling amongst Friends. We would all like to thank everyone who helped to make this trip possible and hope that through this report we have conveyed something of what it has meant to us.

What do our Americans say?

SUE AND I thought it would be interesting to talk to Tasmanian Friends with US connections about the election of Donald Trump. I spoke to Robin McLean, a US citizen who came to Australia with her parents; Jan Blakeney, born and raised in California, now an Australian citizen who has lived in Australia since the 1970s; Delton Hedges, (from Oregon, who has lived in Australia for over 50 years and is in the process of becoming an Australian citizen; Jenny Seaton, married to Delton, has spent some time in the Oregon; Rosemary Epps, an Australian who lived in Maryland and was converted to both Quakerism and the US simultaneously at that time in her life. Robin had heard from Lisa File in Hawaii and also provided an email from her cousin.

They used words like “depressed,” “truly grieving,” “astounded”, “alarmed”, “heartbroken”, “very sad”.

They had a number of concerns. Robin was afraid the Trump presidency would have “a negative and backward effect on climate change”. Robin’s cousin mentioned the loss of democracy. Rosemary shared that fear. “Is there a future for multi-cultural societies when faced with disinformation and populism?” She saw US international leadership being “challenged and discarded”. Steve and Jan were very afraid of Trump implementing the Project 2025 agenda, “a far right conservative agenda which has been threatening US democracy since the Reagan Presidency”. They were afraid the public service would be purged of people who did not support the Trump agenda and would be replaced by sycophants, an action reminiscent of Nazi Germany.

Our Friends grieved that a man like Trump could win the support of the American citizens to such a degree. Robin’s cousin exclaimed:

We live in a country where a convicted felon cannot vote but can be elected president. I have not figured out how to wrap my mind around this horrible, pathological liar who has caused so much division in our country becoming president at all, much less for a second time. How can people not see him for what he is?

Lisa likewise was saddened that so many chose him, knowingly this time. Jenny thought “the education system has failed the citizens, vast numbers of whom seem to be brainwashed, gullible, living through television and social media”.

Delton was not so surprised that Trump found so much support and spoke to Trump’s background as television personality, pointing to the history of movie stars being elected as presidents.

Jenny raised the issue of integrity in public life. Do voters believe that Trump will really do the things he says he will? And if they don’t, what of the value of truth? And if he doesn’t do what he has said he will do?

Friends spoke of the division in their country. Robin connects with family regularly across the US on both sides and it is increasingly difficult to talk about politics. Jan also mentioned difficulties communicating with family. Rosemary was very sad to see the polarisation in society. She was very concerned about how dispirited her Maryland Meeting would be feeling. Her children in the US are at “rock bottom”. Jenny also spoke about her dual-citizen son being deeply affected.

Friends spoke of their fears that Australia could follow the US example. Robin said, “Australia may follow the example of the US, particularly with the input of big mining money backing Peter Dutton and the right wing conservatives.” Jenny shared that fear: how much of these phenomena are we going to see in Australia?

In the darkness, what gave them consolation and hope? Jan was encouraged having attended a recent Zoom webinar *10 Reasons Why US President Elect Trump Can’t Derail Global Climate Action* sponsored by Australia’s Climate Council where they affirmed their resolve to continue the work to combat the climate catastrophe. “I take heart in the collective wisdom that on balance, the free world will embrace that global climate cooperation is bigger than Trump and the rules-based global order will remain,” Jan said. But Delton wondered “if Trump is able to end the war in Ukraine in a day, a week, or even a month, that would be a good result. I choose to be hopeful that it won’t be as bad as many people are expecting”. Lisa said “We can only say, oh well, and keep living our best lives.” Robin’s cousin asked: “Please pray for us and hold us in the light. We need it”.

Sally O’Wheel

Gathering in old Meeting House in Hobart in 1957

ONE OF the delights of staying at Silver Wattle is the opportunity to trawl through old copies of the *Australian Friend*, dating back to 1957 when we were a General Meeting of London Yearly Meeting (now Britain YM of course).

The December 1957 edition carried news from Hobart Meeting which said:

On 23 November last Friends from all over Tasmania were invited to join Hobart members in a Meeting for Worship in the old Meeting House. The occasion was wonderful and the Meeting House was filled to capacity.

There were a few more Meetings in this Meeting House (in Murray Street where the RACT now stands), which had been sold so that a new larger Meeting House could be built; and then Friends met in the Frank Wells Hall in the Preparatory School until the present Meeting House could be built.

The large photo is in the Meeting House Archives, and was taken on the day, along with another with everyone standing outside the Meeting House. The smaller photo is a close-up. Mary Sowerbutts is second from left in front, with Anne Sowerbutts next to her.



Behind them from the right are Stephanie Farrall, Helen Walpole and possibly Lexie Roberts. The men behind include George Cooper, John Eley, Ken Roberts, Ken Brown. (Hobart had lots of Kens then, Wilkinson, Brooks and Eley as well as the two in the picture. Joan Roberts is on the left. Back then many women still kept the tradition of wearing a hat to church on Sunday, especially those coming to Quakers from Anglicans, Methodists etc. Though perhaps they were just keeping their heads warm and their hair under control!

Liz Field, NSW RM

Zainab Shah's Mattar Paneer (Peas and Paneer in Spiced Tomato Gravy)

Courtesy New York Times

Do you cook with paneer?

If not, you need to! (Maybe not, if you're vegan!) It's delicious and versatile. So many recipes to choose from. One of my favourites is Saag (or Palak) paneer (silver beet or spinach with paneer). Here is another Indian recipe that looks delicious. I haven't made it, but I love paneer and peas so what's not to love?

<https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1023017-mattar-paneer-peas-and-paneer-in-spiced-tomato-gravy>



Photo: Linda Pugliese for The New York Times. Food Stylist: Monica Pierini.

Paneer, also known as ponir, is a fresh acid-set cheese common in cuisine of South Asia made from cow milk or buffalo milk. It is a non-aged, non-melting soft cheese made by curdling milk with a fruit- or vegetable-derived acid, such as lemon juice. [Wikipedia](#)