

# The Australian Friend

ISSUE 0621 JUNE 2021 ISSN 1326-0936

*The Australian Friend* is a web journal published on line at: [AustralianFriend.org](http://AustralianFriend.org). This printable version does not include the full range of content available at [AustralianFriend.org](http://AustralianFriend.org)

Visit [AustralianFriend.org](http://AustralianFriend.org) to:

- Comment and read comments about articles in this issue
- Browse or search back issues from 2011.

## George Fox to Yearly Meeting 2021



# Editorial

---

In this issue we look back to George Fox, and ahead to our next Yearly Meeting. The faith taught by Fox was that we must each individually be guided by the Inner Light. Yet the Quaker way is not a lonely path. Fox realised early on that people need to be part of a community, and urged Friends to ‘keep to their meetings’.

Our next Yearly Meeting will again be by Zoom. All Friends are urged to take part, even if they regard Zoom meetings as a poor substitute for meetings in person. We have one article regretting the loss of personal contact at Yearly Meeting, and another reminding us of the risks and asking us to consider the right way forward.

George Fox had a passion for social justice, and this passion is still strong. The Know They Friend article is about Jo Vallentine who championed the causes of peace and justice for First Nations People in the Australian parliament. And David Evans draws our attention to the Uluru Statement from the Heart in which Aboriginal Australians ask for a Voice to their Parliament in Canberra, and for truth telling regarding the injustices they have suffered.

David Purnell writes about Conscientious Objection, a concern which dates back to George Fox who spent an extra 6 months in prison rather than take a commission in Oliver Cromwell’s army.

John Michaelis reminds us that in George Fox’s time there were many Quakers, despite persecution. How are we to find the people who need our message today? Adrian Glamorgan writes of the Peace Video project, which both promotes the cause of peace and reminds people that Quakers are still here working for that cause.

We live in troubled times. So did George Fox. Yet he wrote, ‘Sing and rejoice, ye Children of the Day and of the Light; for the Lord is at work in this thick night of Darkness.’

**RAE LITTING**  
**FOR THE AUSTRALIAN FRIEND COMMITTEE**

---

## *Quaker Meeting*

Silence  
No sound.  
Presence permeates space,  
gentles anxiety,  
Lifts all our stumblings  
From the week that’s past  
and offers us new possibilities.  
We hold each other  
in this tender Light,  
and know  
Julian of Norwich  
spoke the truth,  
‘All will be well.’

**Anne B. Udy**

# Contents

---

## FEATURES

- |           |   |           |   |
|-----------|---|-----------|---|
| <b>4</b>  | Revisiting <i>The Journal of George Fox</i>                                   | <b>18</b> | Conscientious objection   |
| <b>6</b>  | Know Thy Friend: Jo Vallentine  | <b>19</b> | Book review<br><i>Thy Kingdom Come –<br/>A Quaker's View of Jesus</i><br>by Ingmar Hollsing   |
| <b>8</b>  | Positive peace and Makaratta  | <b>20</b> | 'Let Your Lives Speak'<br>Quaker Peace Video Project  |
| <b>10</b> | Yearly Meeting 2022   | <b>22</b> | Poetry<br><i>Song for a Quaker Choir</i><br>by Janice Blakeney<br><i>Amazing Place</i><br>by Janice Blakeney<br><i>Unitive</i><br>by Justin Simpson |
| <b>11</b> | Are you ready to join<br>Yearly Meeting 2021?                                 | <b>23</b> | Noted   |
| <b>12</b> | 56th Annual Backhouse Panel   |           |   |
| <b>13</b> | Our ageing society  |           |   |
| <b>14</b> | QSA Notes – Food security:<br>the family farmer and<br>the global food system |           |   |
| <b>16</b> | What is the place for<br>Outreach among Quakers today?                        |           |   |
| <b>17</b> | Poetry<br><i>In Silence Together</i><br>by Justin Simpson                     |           |   |



Cover: George Fox to Yearly Meeting 2021



# Revisiting *The Journal of George Fox*

RAE LITTING | NEW SOUTH WALES REGIONAL MEETING

Although Quakers are the spiritual heirs of George Fox, very few seem to have read his *Journal*. I counted 19 quotes from the *Journal* in *Quaker Faith and Practice*, but many of them are very short. The quotes covered key parts of Fox's teaching, but give little idea of the man. There are also quotes from his Epistles which give good advice, but reveal little about Fox himself.

So this brings us to the *Journal*. I have the edition prepared by Rufus Jones – it is now falling to pieces and held together by sticky tape. There are other editions, and all have abridged the work because frankly no-one does interesting things every day of their life, and often they do the same things many times.

The first part of the *Journal* is an account of Fox's childhood, written after the event. According to his own account he was a model child.

*In my very young years I had a gravity and stayedness of mind and spirit not usual in children; insomuch that when I saw old men behave lightly and wantonly towards each other, I had a dislike thereof raised in my heart, and said within myself, 'If ever I come to be a man, surely I shall not do so, nor be so wanton.'*

This unusually virtuous childhood had one great benefit for the Quaker faith. George Fox was not troubled by an overwhelming sense of sin. When he

had his famous religious experience in his early twenties he did not feel that he had been 'saved'. He was in many ways a conventional Christian, and he had always believed he was saved because Christ had died for his sins. His religious experience did not assure him of a place in heaven, but showed him how to live on this earth.

Although George Fox did not feel a great sense of personal sin, he was very depressed by the state of the world. This was understandable: the Civil War between supporters of the King and Parliament raged from 1642 to 1651. This was a time when all forms of authority were being questioned. The King was executed in 1649, and for the first time people questioned whether a king was even necessary. Religious authorities were being questioned, and dissenting groups such as the Baptists and the Independents flourished. Modern Science dates from this time, and the Royal Society was founded in 1660. Its motto was 'nullius in verba' – 'take no-one's word for it'. It was a time of uncertainty.

Here is George Fox's account of his life-changing experience:

*But as I had forsaken the priests, so I left the separate preachers also, and those esteemed the most experienced people; for I saw there was none among them all that could speak to my condition. When all my hopes in them and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help*

*me, nor could I tell what to do, then, oh, then, I heard a voice which said, 'There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition', and when I heard it my heart did leap for joy.*

From this experience came two important insights, for which modern Quakers can be profoundly thankful. Fox believed that if God could teach him directly, that was the way God worked with everyone:

*Now the Lord God opened to me by His invisible power that every man was enlightened by the divine Light of Christ, and I saw it shine through all; and that they that believed in it came out of condemnation to the Light of life, and became the children of it.*

So people were to listen to their 'inward teacher', and not to accept what the church leaders told them. Having adopted this principle, Fox was not in a position to require his followers to believe anything he told them, and Quakers have never had a creed. Fox also saw that if all were equal in the eyes of God, Christians must accept all people as their equals. He began to put this into practice straight away, refusing to take off his hat to his 'betters', and addressing everyone by the familiar 'thou' instead of the honorific 'you'.

One of Fox's first public appearances was to a meeting in a church where a woman tried to ask a question, and was told that she may not speak. Fox rose

in a passion, declaring that after giving 'liberty for any to speak' the priest should have answered the question. He also argued that the church was 'a spiritual household, which Christ was the head thereof' and not 'an old home made up of lime, stone and wood'.

Another interesting story follows, which tells us a lot about Friend George:

*At a certain time, when I was at Mansfield, there was a sitting of the justices about hiring of servants; and it was upon me from the Lord to go and speak to the justices, that they should not oppress the servants in their wages. So I walked towards the inn where they sat; but finding a company of fiddlers there, I did not go in, but thought to come in the morning, when I might have a more serious opportunity to discourse with them. But when I came in the morning, they were gone, and I was struck blind, that I could not see. I inquired of the innkeeper where the justices were to sit that day; and he told me, at a town eight miles off. My sight began to come to me again; and I went and ran thitherward as fast as I could. When I was come to the house where they were, and many servants with them, I exhorted the justices not to oppress the servants in their wages.*

Shortly afterwards Fox 'was moved to go and speak to one of the most wicked men in the country, one who was a common drunkard a noted whore-master, and a rhyme-maker'.

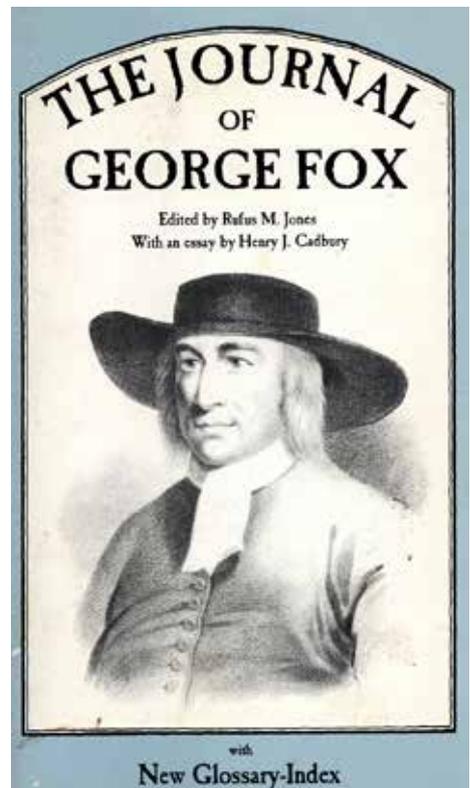
From this we see that Fox had a great passion for justice, but an unfortunate aversion to the arts. We also see, from his running eight miles, that he had

a strong constitution. He was also irrepressible. In this passage he meets with opposition in a 'steeple-house' in the town of Tickhill:

*I began to speak; but they immediately fell upon me; the clerk up with his Bible, as I was speaking, and struck me on the face with it, so that my face gushed out with blood; and I bled exceedingly in the steeple-house. The people cried, 'Let us have him out of the church.' When they had got me out, they beat me exceedingly, threw me down, and turned me over a hedge. They afterwards dragged me through a house into the street, stoning and beating me as they dragged me along; so that I was all over besmirched with blood and dirt. They got my hat from me, which I never had again. Yet when I was got upon my legs, I declared the Word of life, showed them the fruits of their teacher, and how they dishonoured Christianity.*

There is much about hats in the *Journal*. My favourite story concerns Fox and a travelling Friend before the judge in Launceston:

*'Why did you not put off your hats?' said the Judge to us. We said nothing. 'Put off your hats' said the Judge again. Still we said nothing. Then said the Judge, 'The Court commands you to put off your hats.'*  
*Then I spoke, and said, 'Where did ever any magistrate, king or judge, from Moses to Daniel, command any to put off their hats, when they came before his court, either amongst the Jews, the people of God, or amongst the heathen? And if the law of England doth command any such*



*thing, show me that law where it is printed.'*

*Then the Judge grew very angry and said, 'I do not carry my law-books on my back.' 'But,' said I, 'tell me where it is printed in any statute-book, that I may read it.'*

*Then said the Judge, 'Take him away, prevaricator. I'll ferk him.' So they took us away, and put us among the thieves.*

*Presently after he calls to the jailer, 'Bring them up again.' 'Come,' said he, 'where had they hats from Moses to Daniel; come, answer me: I have you fast now.'*

*I replied 'Thou mayest read in the third of Daniel, that the three children were cast into the fiery furnace by Nebuchadnezzar's command with their coats, their hose and their hats on.'*

*This plain instance stopped him.*

In this and in many other passages, it appears that George Fox enjoyed a theological stoush! With his phenomenal knowledge of the Bible and his loud voice he made a formidable opponent!

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



# Know Thy Friend

*Jo Vallentine*

PETER JONES | TASMANIA REGIONAL MEETING

Jo comes from a conservative farming background in the Western Australian wheat belt and attended a Catholic boarding school, but her outlook on life changed when she took up a career as a teacher and did some travelling. Seeking another religious tradition led her to Mount Lawley Friends' Meeting House in Perth in 1972 and here she encountered a group of inspiring elders, particularly Nancy Wilkinson and Cyril Gare. The silence of Meeting for Worship was a contrast to her Catholic upbringing, and she revelled in it.

She also met her partner, Peter Fry, a great-great-grandson of Elizabeth Fry, although the family were no longer connected with Quakers. Together they had two children, Katie and Samantha, and Jo became involved with activist groups like OXFAM, the Aboriginal Treaty Support Group, the Council for Civil Liberties and the Campaign to Save Native Forests as well as the emerging nuclear disarmament movement. With other Quakers, she took part in their monthly vigil for disarmament in the city centre and it was this commitment that led her to stand as a candidate for the Nuclear Disarmament Party in the December 1984 Federal Election.

It was while attending Yearly Meeting in Canberra early next year that the news came through that she had been elected and so took her seat in Canberra the following July, describing herself as 'the accidental Senator.'

An exhausting seven years followed, including three elections, and time in gaol for what she considered to be acts of holy disobedience directed against the nuclear war machine. In the 1990 Backhouse Lecture she described her time in Parliament as a 'Quaker in politics.'

Her time in the Senate saw the establishment of ATSIC (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission) when Gerry Hand was Labor Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and during which time she took advice from Rob Riley, an astute and passionate Noongar advocate who worked for the Minister. Sadly, Rob Riley died not long after the *Bringing Them Home* report was published – a tragedy exemplifying the ongoing struggle of Aboriginal people to be heard and respected in their own country. Whenever the opportunity arose in the Senate, Jo advocated for justice for the oldest living culture on the planet, including welcoming the 1985 McLelland Royal Commission findings into the British nuclear testing in the fifties and sixties around Maralinga, Emu Plains and the Monte Bello Islands.

Her Quaker witness tied in closely with the work of Joanna Macy, a Buddhist theologian and anti-nuclear activist, who had been organising workshops in Deep Ecology, including one that Jo attended in Western Australia. This inspired her to develop the idea of a 55-day pilgrimage around Australia taking Chernobyl survivors

to meet with indigenous communities suffering from the nuclear industry, either as a result of the British nuclear tests or the uranium mining industry. This journey visited Martu country in the Pilbara, the Oobagomma mob in the Kimberleys, the Mirrar in Kakadu, the Doomagee community in Queensland among others, and met with uranium miners, taking the strong message about the risks of messing with radioactive contamination to the cities as well.

The Wakatjorra Walkabout made a significant contribution to community understanding of indigenous issues. Walking on country with indigenous people objecting to proposed uranium mines, mostly in the Eastern goldfields on WA, sharing stories beside the campfires each night for weeks on end, was a great privilege. One amazing day, when the whitefella mob was given instructions about cutting across country to reach the camp, but without a local guide (which was unusual), the group got a tad bushed, but were told after rescue, that they'd been on country probably never walked on by whitefellas before.

And there is not a single operating uranium mine in WA today, but still some tragic hopefuls out there spruiking the 'benefits' of the nuclear industry!

Her interest in indigenous issues in fact went back to a time before she entered the Senate as she had watched Aboriginal shearers at work on her family farm and then, after a

Community Aid Abroad project in 1979, she had joined up with a couple of friends to set up an Aboriginal Treaty Support Group in WA, inviting Nugget Coombs to address a gathering in Perth in the early eighties. (He was a former Reserve Bank governor and longtime advocate for Aboriginal Rights, along with poet Judith Wright, who Jo was honoured to meet a little later.)

As a Quaker she'd also been inspired by earlier Quakers' involvement in this issue, like Charlotte Meacham, Barry Pittock and Susannah Brindle whose 2000 Backhouse Lecture very plainly stated that we need to re-set relationships with First Nation people 'right way.' Jo often observed, that 'without justice for Aboriginal people, we don't deserve, and will never have, real peace in this country.'

Another inspiration in her life was hearing Steven Angell speak about the

Alternatives to Violence Project at the FWCC gathering in Tokyo in 1985 so, having retired from the Senate in early 1992, she worked with other Quakers to bring AVP to Western Australia. In local prisons, they offered workshops which had the potential to transform the lives of inmates and reached out to thousands of prisoners over the years that followed.

In the Senate in 1987 she had raised her concern about global warming and the climate crisis so now she had the opportunity to work with other community groups to bring awareness about the possibilities of renewable energy as well as of the risks to intergenerational justice if the world did not take action. This led to her involvement in Extinction Rebellion and creative forms of protests, like Joanna Macy's Elm Dance, that puzzle the authorities trying to arrest them. Jo

also initiated the 'Welcome Both Ways' event at the Mount Lawley Friends' Meeting House in 2017, as part of the AYM Earthcare Committee witness to supporting and engaging with First Nations people and despite many different 'takes' on the Uluru Statement From the Heart, continues to lobby for its implementation.

Her concern for Nuclear Disarmament continued along with other Friends in developing support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons which 'came into force' in January this year so that work still continues.

Now Jo is a grandmother, she continues to draw on the quiet relief and stillness of Meeting for Worship, helping to recharge her spiritual energy, which she described in the ABC *Compass* program on Quakers in 2003.

AF

#### THE JOURNAL OF GEORGE FOX – CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

A darker side to the *Journal* are the descriptions of English jails, where Fox and many other Quakers were incarcerated for crimes such as blasphemy (teaching contrary to the tenets of the established church) and refusing to take oaths to the King. Once it became known that Quakers would not swear oaths under any circumstances, tendering the oath became a quick and easy way to entrap them. Fox was imprisoned eight times, possibly the worst being in Scarborough Castle:

Fox describes his room which was: *an open one, where the rain came in, and which was exceedingly thick with smoke, which was very offensive to me... I was forced to lay out about fifty shillings to stop out the rain, and keep the room from smoking so much.*

*When I had been at that charge, and made it tolerable, they removed me into a worse room, where I had neither chimney or fire-bearth. This being towards the sea-side and lying much open, the wind drove in the rain forcibly so that the water came over my bed, and ran so about the room that I was fain to skim it up with a platter. When my clothes were wet, I had no fire to dry them; so that my body was benumbed with cold, and my fingers swelled so that one was grown as big as two.*

It is no wonder that the first *Advices and Queries* asked how many members had died in prison in the preceding year.

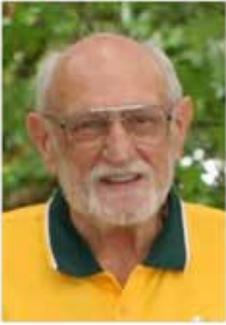
Following his final imprisonment in Worcester, Fox's health declined. However, in the last 14 years of his life he continued to travel where possible.

For example he went to visit a meeting in Hertford and 'had a meeting also with some of those that were gone into strife and contention, to show them wherein they were wrong; and having cleared myself of them, I left them to the Lord.'

Fox speaks of himself as 'cleared' when he has completed some task which God had laid upon him. Some of his last words were 'Now I am clear, I am fully clear'. His task was completed.

So I urge you to dip into the *Journal* of George Fox. He may not have been the most saintly Quaker, he is probably not the most readable Quaker, but he was a man who made a powerful impact. He was a man for his time, and for all time.

AF



# Positive peace and Makaratta

DAVID EVANS | SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND NORTHERN TERRITORY REGIONAL MEETING



War in the Pacific ended in 1945 when I was nine years old, and as a stamp collector I bought blocks of four of the new Peace stamps; the two and ha'penny; three and ha'penny; and the five and ha'penny. We were all happy the war was over.

However, as I reflect back now, dropping atomic bombs and calling it Peace is a unilateral one-sided declaration of Peace, Negative Peace.

For lack of better words Negative Peace includes ceasefires and ending violence.

On 8 May, 2020, the City of Berlin enjoyed a one-day holiday, a Day of Liberation celebrating the 75th anniversary of the ending of the War in Europe and an end to the Third Reich.

Writing for *American Studies Virtual University*, Kai-Arne Zimny in an article entitled 'May 8 – Celebrating the End of World War II as a German' writes.<sup>1</sup>

*75 years ago, the world sighed in relief. After six gruesome years and over 70 million lost lives, World War II was finally over. May 8, 1945, marked both the end of a ruthless regime and the war in Europe ... At 11:01 p.m., the war in Europe was officially over. In the U.S. and the UK, the day is celebrated as 'Victory in Europe Day,' and for decades, May 8 (and in some cases May 9) has been a holiday in various European countries – but not in Germany. However, for its 75th anniversary, the Day of Liberation has been declared a one-time holiday in Berlin.*

Personally, I can remember feeling discomfort talking with German people. One of those I have met recently left her home in Germany aged 9, and says, 'I was twenty-five before I got over the embarrassment of being German'.

Change of attitude and thinking is a long-term process. However changes

do come, and I feel Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany, is one of many inspiring leaders of Positive Peace.

## Makaratta

On the table for our present government is Makaratta. How long will it take for us to move forward together?

*Makaratta is a complex Yolngu word describing a process of conflict resolution, peacemaking and justice. 'Makarrata has so many layers of meaning,' says Merrikiyaꞯuy Ganambarr-Stubbs, a Gumatj woman and principal of Arnhem Land's Yirrkala School.*

*'The first one, and the main one, is peace after a dispute.*

*'It can be a negotiation of peace, or a negotiation and an agreement where both parties agree to one thing so that there is no dispute or no other bad feeling,' says Ms Ganambarr-Stubbs.<sup>2</sup>*



Liberation Day, Berlin



Merrikiyawuy Ganambarr-Stubbs

## The 'Australian Frontier Wars' (as described in Wikipedia)

*... is a term applied by some historians to violent conflicts between Indigenous Australians (including both Aboriginal Australians and Torres Strait Islanders) and non-Indigenous settlers during the British colonisation of Australia. The first fighting took place several months after the landing of the First Fleet in January 1788 and the last clashes occurred in the early 20th century, as late as 1934. A minimum of 40,000 Indigenous Australians and between 2,000 and 2,500 settlers died in the wars.*

If 1934 was the last of these lethal battles, it is now more than 75 years since the killing stopped. A Makarrata Peace Settlement is overdue and a Constitutional Permanent Place for the Indigenous Embassy established, financed by the Australian Government. A Hall of Fame for Notable Indigenous Persons might be included.

It is not a question of whether a referendum is needed for this change to take place but rather how many referendums are needed before the answer is YES.

A necessary step forward for Positive Peace.

1. <http://blog.asjournal.org/may-8-celebrating-the-end-of-world-war-ii-as-a-german/>

2. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-08-10/makarrata-explainer-yolngu-word-more-than-synonym-for-treaty/8790452>

AF



# Yearly Meeting 2022

*How will we do this?*

WIES SCHUIRINGA | NEW SOUTH WALES REGIONAL MEETING

Quakers in Australia need to decide about holding YM2022 later this year. A venue will have to be found and an initial booking made sooner.

The purposes of YM are to discern and make decisions about how we proceed as Quakers in Australia, our spiritual learning, both formally and informally and strengthening our community. We know that a Zoom YM is good but can not replace the depths of seeking unity in decision making, the spiritual nourishment and the strength of our community.

Friends have different tolerance levels for risks, depending on our age, our physical and emotional robustness, our finances, our personality. Our deep desire for an in-person YM can override or minimise the risks and our personality may also be comfortable to take some risks.

AYM, as an organisation also has some responsibilities to minimise risks to Friends and to themselves in the way YM is organised.

The arrival of the Covid variants has the epidemiologists, health administrators and ICU staff very worried. As I am writing this, Victoria

is in its 4th lockdown with travel impacts around the country.

## Do we require that all Friends who attend an in-person YM2022 to be vaccinated, also the children?

Organising a hybrid YM with Friends attending in person and others on Zoom would require paying for equipment and staff to manage this process well. The venue would need to have this equipment or be able to accommodate the technology, and large screens would need to be brought in. The program would accommodate this technology.

Seeking unity in decision making at Standing Committee with 20 Friends on Zoom has been difficult. Could we experiment doing this with e.g. 100 Friends in a hall and 75 Friends Zoom?

## What are the risks in organising an in-person Yearly Meeting in July 2022?

- Sudden lockdowns: Friends may not be able arrive on time, not arrive at all or leave early to avoid not being able to get home and back to work, having to quarantine etc. This may affect office holders or Friends

presenting reports. The YM program would be interrupted but we could continue with those Friends who are at the venue and manage any outstanding matters afterwards.

- A Covid variant is brought into YM, unwittingly by a Friend or a staff member or is in the local area. The health authorities can close down YM for several days for testing. The YM program would be stopped.

- The technology is complicating participation between in-person attendance and online attendance too much.

- Financial impacts for individual Friends when their travel plans are interrupted. Financial impacts for AYM when YM has too few registrations or Friends cancel at the last minute.

Should we not worry about these risks and ask a group of Friends to organise the in-person YM in July 2022? Have I forgotten risks or interpreted them wrongly?

Please respond through your RM so we can decide together what we'll do for YM 2022.

AF

# Are you ready to join Yearly Meeting 2021?

**We're looking forward to welcoming you to YM21 on Saturday, July 3, by Zoom.**

**The details are on the Quakers Australia website:**

<https://www.quakersaustralia.info/yearly-meeting-2021>

## **It's now possible to:**

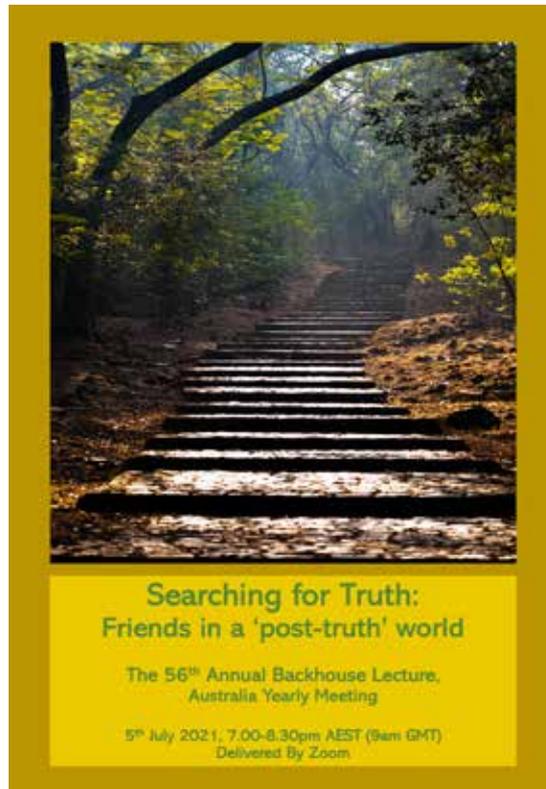
- register to attend
- offer to do a Share & Tell session to share your concerns and ideas with other Friends (facilitated by Peter Williams and David Tehr)

## **During YM21 you can:**

- join in Meetings for Worship every day
- get a picture of Friends around the world and their concerns and work through the *Summary of Epistles* by Ali Freeman
  - reflect on our own YM through the *State of the Society* address by Alan Clayton
  - assist in conducting the business of AYM through the formal sessions led by our Presiding Clerk, Ann Zubrick
    - consider, in Friendly School with Aletia Dundas and Adrian Glamorgan, *how we see our place in the world and how the world sees us* and discuss this with other Friends in break-out groups
      - consider, with the Backhouse panellists (Dorothy Broom, Gerry Fahey, Duncan Frewin and Pamela Leach): *Searching for Truth: Friends in a 'post-truth' world*
        - meet, over coffee, with Friends around Australia, facilitated by Queensland Friends
        - meet with particular interest groups (membership secretaries, newsletter editors, RM treasurers, registering officers)
          - meet with Friends interested in ecumenism, interfaith, etc.
          - share on *Australian Quakers in Action*, facilitated by Chris Purnell
          - hear from QSA, Silver Wattle, FWCC Asia West Pacific
          - join in a convivial time, every evening after epilogue, facilitated by Harold Wilkinson
          - appear on the YM21 photograph
          - join in the formulation of our own Epistle, which will be sent around the world
          - There will be a children's program and an opportunity for JYFs to join in activities. The children and JYFs will organise two all-ages Meetings for Worship during the week.
            - You can join in all these activities or attend only one or two.
            - YM21 will be supported by Elders and Pastoral Carers from all Regional Meetings. A help desk will be available to assist if you have any questions.

**See you there!**





**You are warmly invited to the 56th Annual Backhouse Panel, presented by Australia Yearly Meeting**

7.00-8.30pm (AEST), 5th July 2021 (9am GMT)

What does Truth mean to Friends today? How do we maintain our Integrity in a world where ‘alternative facts’ and ‘fake news’ appear to be driving the decision-making of those in power? How can we face up to the consequences of human injustice and environmental destruction without losing hope? How can the practices of Early Friends, and the processes they have handed down to us, help us to stay connected to our Divine purpose?

In response to the extraordinary circumstances of 2020, the format of the Backhouse Lecture for 2021 will be given by a panel rather than a single Lecturer. The panel-presentation will be delivered by Zoom and recorded for those unable to attend the presentation on the day.

**Panelists are:**

- Dorothy Broom
- Gerry Fahey
- Duncan Frewin
- Pamela Leach

The James Backhouse Lecture, commonly known as the Backhouse Lecture, is a public lecture on contemporary issues delivered annually at the national gathering of Quakers in Australia. The lecture series was initiated by

the Australia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) on its establishment in 1964. The lecture is given in memory of James Backhouse, who walked around a great deal of eastern and southern Australia to inquire into the condition of the penal settlements in Australia and the welfare of the Aborigines and the free settlers. He had as his travelling companion George Washington Walker, and there is no doubt that the visit of these two Friends marked the beginning of the history of Friends in Australia.

To join this presentation by Zoom, go to the Yearly Meeting website ([quakersaustralia.info](http://quakersaustralia.info)), click on the Backhouse Presentation title, then click on the link at the bottom of the page. Include the following information when prompted:

Meeting ID: 844 1502 1880  
 Passcode: 159956

Alternatively you may choose to access the presentation using the following:

- One tap mobile
- +61280156011,,84415021880# Australia
- +61370182005,,84415021880# Australia
- Dial by your location
- +61 2 8015 6011 Australia
- +61 3 7018 2005 Australia
- +61 7 3185 3730 Australia
- +61 8 6119 3900 Australia
- +61 8 7150 1149 Australia



# Our ageing society

TESSA SPRATT AND GINNIE ALLWOOD | VICTORIA REGIONAL MEETING<sup>1</sup>

**A**s a birthright Member of the Society of 82 years standing, over the last few years, I have felt like a lone voice in the wilderness. Our Society is ageing – fast – and very obviously. What are we doing about it?

Many years ago, we stopped accepting children as Members of the Society – they became Children of the Meeting. I wasn't in favour of that – and it left half my grandchildren Members and half not! Then, we moved Yearly Meetings to mid-winter which cut out Young Friends because most of them are right in the middle of their University Year. Yes, they may have some time off, but in my experience, this tends to be used to catch up on those continuous assignments, rarely used as 'holidays.'

I know we had exhaustive discussions about this move and some of those present at Regional Meeting own houses in bush fire areas and can't leave their homes at that time of year. I wonder if anyone has actually done a survey to see just how many Friends DO have homes in a bush fire prone area who feel unable to leave their homes in January. I suspect they will be very few in number.

Now I hear that not only Yearly Meeting THIS year will be Zoom (I think quite reasonably in view of the prevalence of Covid worldwide) but the plan is to also have 2022 on Zoom. When I queried this, I was told 'many Friends are happier on Zoom, no travel, no costs, can dip in and out better and they don't like being in such a large group of people for a week.'

When I relayed this to two of my grandchildren who have just graduated from Junior Young Friends to Young Friends, they held up their hands in horror with a remark along the lines of 'Ah well, I suppose they'll go on Meeting on Zoom until ...'

The Young people NEED to meet face to face and if they do that in the bosom of Yearly Meeting, they are absorbing by osmosis all the business of the Yearly Meeting and what it means to be a Quaker at the same time. They are interacting with all age groups and making and strengthening the friendships that older Members of the Society have already made.

And their parents: Who will forget that skit the roughly 50-year-olds put on at the last YM in Tasmania?

I actually suspect that some of those parents came to YM to bring their children. I was also painfully aware that no YFs or JYFs met during YM last year.

During Covid, many things have changed in our society and much research has accompanied this – to discover the pluses and minuses.

One of the things that happens when people meet on Zoom is that they do not form community. This is a problem that many organisations are realising they have to address. Are we aware of the implications of that in the Society of Friends?

Can we revisit these decisions, thinking, not only of our ageing selves, but also of our Young Friends, who are, after all, our future?

1. Tessa Spratt is a Birthright Member. Her daughter, Ginnie Allwood works in Change Management at Deakin University.

AF



# QSA Notes

## Food security: the family farmer and the global food system

AI LEEN QUAH | QSA PROJECT MANAGER



The farmers' market in Kampong Thom, Cambodia

According to the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation's (FAO) State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020 report, the number of people affected by hunger globally has been on the rise since 2014. Nearly 750 million – or nearly one in ten people in the world – are exposed to severe levels of food insecurity, and what's more, approximately 2 billion people do not have regular access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food. We are already off track for meeting Sustainable Development Goal 2.1 to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition by 2030, and it is estimated that the COVID-19 pandemic may add up to another 130 million to these figures<sup>1</sup>.

Even with food available, health and nutrition are not givens: much of the population in question live in lower income countries and rely on starchy staple foods with limited access to nutritious fruits, vegetables and animal source foods. The FAO estimates that some 3 billion people cannot afford a healthy diet, which on average costs five

times more and is unattainable for those living on or below the international poverty line. Unsurprisingly, the prevalence of undernourishment is higher amongst women than men, and geographically speaking, is highest in the African continent, at 19%, which is more than double the global average. The UN Food Systems Summit, to be held this September, is aimed at guiding the transformation of global food systems to reduce hunger and address malnutrition. It was also welcomed for finally recognising the significant role of farming in climate and biodiversity concerns. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals means that the path towards SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) must fundamentally integrate SDGs 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing) and 13 (Climate Action).

However, the summit's framework fully assumes that productivity is the key problem of food systems to be able to feed a growing world (WEF 2020), and that market-based and high-tech industrial solutions such as value chain integration and genetic engineering are essential factors necessary for addressing global food security. Meanwhile, no mention was made of ecological farming, civil society or the concept of food sovereignty, despite the supposed focus on sustainable food systems.

This comes despite clear and growing evidence that the industrial food system contributes significantly to environmental degradation and climate change. Its 'high-external input, resource-intensive agricultural systems have caused massive deforestation, water scarcities, biodiversity loss, soil depletion and high levels of greenhouse gas emissions,' (FAO 2018) the last of which is estimated at 21-37% globally.<sup>1</sup>

The fact also remains that it is primarily small-scale producers who feed their communities.<sup>2</sup>

It is no wonder then that controversy has surrounded the summit, demonstrating an unfortunate but typical example of the political and economic powers at play in international decision-making. 'The summit appears extremely biased in favour of the same actors who have been responsible for the food crisis,' observes one rights group (*The Guardian* 2021). But the UN Special Envoy leading the Food Systems Summit denies her connections to big agribusiness and the Gates Foundation have influenced the summit's orientation. And while the inclusion of human rights in a revised agenda has been much welcomed, hundreds of small-holder farmer, civil society, indigenous and human rights groups are maintaining their stance in boycotting the summit, as they remain concerned that the structure and framework of the summit will still effectively leave them, and their view and concerns side-lined.

As with many of QSA's project partners, many of these farmers whose livelihoods and income depend on agriculture, are increasingly employing various kinds of organic and regenerative agriculture that are proving viable and socially, economically and ecologically sustainable for managing – and balancing – their food and livelihoods security together with the health of their people, land and animals. Organic farming, agroecology, agroforestry and permaculture (to name a few) are continually evolving. These days, St Jude Family Projects in Uganda runs a small research and innovation lab – one of several exciting indications of the cumulative impact that QSA and DFAT funding has

contributed to in terms of organisational strengthening over the years. The lab is geared towards improving access and methods to resources and increased productivity in sustainable, organic and regenerative agriculture. Keeping their interests grounded in the practical circumstances, applicability and results for the common farmer (including those involved in the QSA project), Daniel and Godfrey, who are both researchers and agricultural trainers, continue their experiments with a lot of energy, employing 'recipes' tested from Daniel's soil studies in the US, and combining them with local indigenous and practical knowledge derived from working with local farmers. Daniel is very informed about the wider political context relating to agriculture, and is aware that the growing successes of regenerative agriculture is worrying the big agri-companies.

Effective methods for seed coating and preservation have been taught and applied with farmers for seed saving and are already proving very effective at keeping pests and rodents away. One method they are using in the project is mixing (blackstrap) molasses with ash as a coating for seeds prior to storage; another uses lantana and chili. This also helps the farmers not to eat the edible seeds! At planting time, the coat of molasses and ash provides additional nutrients and minerals as well as encouraging microbes in the soil so that the seeds can prosper.

During my last visit to St Jude in early 2020, Godfrey demonstrated his learned method of banana reproduction and node sterilisation: many more suckers can be produced from a single node, and this has been used to help revive banana

cultivation en masse in the current project. In terms of technology, an innovative seed planter (see picture) was also introduced in the current project. It is a relatively cheap and simple, yet immensely labour-saving and time-efficient mechanism for the otherwise highly intensive work involved in the planting season for smallholder farmers. The idea comes from Daniel's Masters research and an old tool that has been modified and appropriated for a new purpose. QSA and DFAT funding has helped to replicate the tool for the project's farmers groups. The seeds are loaded into the tube, which is then used upright, eliminating the need for farmers to bend to reach the soil. Instead of requiring either two people or two rounds of the field to plant and then cover the seed, the seed planter does both in one movement, releasing the right amount of seed as the planter strikes the ground. Altogether, the seed planter more than halves the time and effort required for manual planting, saving farmers many hours of almost literally back-breaking work.

Friends, if you wish to support QSA and its project partners' work in food security through COVID-19 and recovery, please consider donating to enable this work to prosper. Projects are multifaceted and help to improve nutrition, agricultural skills, water harvesting, marketing and sustainable livelihoods. Visit our website for details – [www.qsa.org.au](http://www.qsa.org.au) All photos credit: QSA.



Banana sucker multiplication



Daniel holding a seed planter

1. FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2020. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020. Transforming food systems for affordable healthy diets*, Rome.
2. Canfield M, Anderson MD and McMichael P. 2021. *UN Food Systems Summit 2021: Dismantling Democracy and Resetting Corporate Control of Food Systems*, Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems, 5:661552

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.

Find us on Facebook for more photos and stories: [facebook.com/quakerserviceaustralia](https://facebook.com/quakerserviceaustralia).

Unit 14, 43-53 Bridge Road, Stanmore, NSW 2048 Australia • [administration@qsa.org.au](mailto:administration@qsa.org.au)

PHONE+61 2 8054 0400 • FAX: +61 2 9225 9241 • ABN 35 989 797 918



ACFID  
MEMBER



# What is the place for Outreach among Quakers today?

JOHN MICHAELIS | UNIVERSITY MONTHLY MEETING, SEATTLE, USA

We all know that our membership and the number of attenders and associates are shrinking. The rate at which we are shrinking is exponential and a primary cause is ageing and death.

The total number of Australian members and attenders is about 2000. This means that for every Quaker there are about 10,000 Australians who are not Quaker. We are a fringe organisation. Most people in Australia will never have a meaningful conversation with a Quaker in their lifetime.

I find it useful to make a few comparisons with other parts of the world. In the United States the ratio of Quakers to non-Quakers is about 1 in 3,600 – that includes programmed Quakers. In England, the ratio is about 1 in 3,000. In Bolivia and Kenya, the ratio is about 1 in 260 – nearly all of them in programmed Yearly Meetings. In New Zealand, its 1 in 5,000. At the height of Quakerism in England, the ratio was 1 in 37.

The New Zealand YM has taken an unusual step in forming an Outreach Committee. I have been part of the several US based YM's. To my knowledge none of them has or has even considered having an Outreach Committee. I have shared what New Zealand is doing with Quakers in the US and members of at least three US YM's are monitoring the initiative with interest.

In addition to ageing, there are other factors that contribute to our reduction in numbers.

1. Fewer of our young people continue as active members than have done in the past.

2. If you look round Quaker meetings in Australia it is obvious that most of us are no longer fertile! That means there will be very few Young Quakers as time progresses.

3. Young people flock to where other young people are. As we have fewer Young Friends and JYFs, so our ability to attract young people is waning, as is our ability to hold the attention of the few young friends that we have – they are attracted to opportunities to be with young people outside Quakers.

4. Even though Quakers punch above our weight in our country and our communities – to use an inappropriate metaphor – there are not many out there that know about our values, our lack of creed and our openness to different belief systems.

I became aware of how ignorant the public is about Quakers when we were walking under a Quaker banner in a peace march in Sydney. A group passed us and one of them said 'Oh Quakers; they're the UFO (*unidentified flying object*) people'.

5. We must not let our stand against proselytizing become phobic! I believe there are many ways we can and should share who we are without crossing the proselytizing line.

Advertising and talking about what is important to you can be done in ways that are not proselytizing – A standing joke among AVP (the Alternatives to Violence Project) is that nobody knows

about AVP is because we learned how to advertise from Quakers. New Zealand has been brainstorming catchy phrases to attract outsiders. One of my favourites is 'Why be weird at home alone? Come join our Quaker meeting. You'll fit right in.'

6. The name 'Quakers' isn't a name that attracts. The name 'The Religious Society of Friends' is no better! I have spoken to many outsiders who believe we are odd simply because our name is odd. Also, we indulge in various forms of Quaker-speak – some that is not that clear even to insiders.

Australian society continues to become more secular. The word 'religious' today is a turn off. It begs the question 'Would 'The Society of Friends' be more enticing to outsiders?'

Regardless of the name, as Australians move away from religious tradition, Quakers become quite attractive, or would if people knew of our values and non-theist approach.

If we want to overcome the barriers to entry for new members, then as a society we need to **place outreach on our local meeting agenda on a regular basis** and consider whether to follow the lead of New Zealand's Yearly Meeting and form a YM Outreach Committee. Members of their committee are travelling to, and meeting with every local meeting in NZ listen to and share outreach ideas and strategies. Some local meetings in NZ have already formed local Outreach Committees. Quaker facilitated public meetings focused on

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

## *In Silence Together*

Quietly we listen  
to the whispering wind  
gaze softly  
at the wind-swept ocean  
concentrate deeply  
on the vast horizon

(silent pause)  
we're sitting  
in silence together

## *Reintegration*

Slowly, slowly, we awaken  
gradually perceiving our deep connection

with the living world  
a loving God  
alongside each human being  
every living thing

bit by bit, our life becomes reintegrated  
and quietly our world's regenerated

**Justin Simpson, New South Wales Regional Meeting**

### WHAT IS THE PLACE FOR OUTREACH- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

matters affecting local communities are attracting response from outsiders.

We may need to look hard at some old habits and even some processes that are near and dear to us if we want to attract new blood.

The degree to which we are willing to be involved in outreach is an open question for each of us individually, our local and regional meetings and our yearly meeting. I believe we must act at all four levels if we wish to grow. The alternative is to submit to the ongoing and rapid decline.

I know of no formal study, but I believe there is a large body of people who would become Quaker if they only knew about and trusted us because they

resonate with our beliefs, values, and openness to non-theism.

My own story is that I was a Quaker for many years; my values were Quaker but had I no clue that here was a society that believed as I did. I was aware about Quakers, but thought they were a little odd!

Had I known what Quakers were like and what they stood for, I would have joined much sooner.

I believe there are many out there like me and I hope and pray that we will find ways to reach them.

*John Michaelis is a member of University Monthly Meeting, Seattle, USA, was a long-time sojourner at New South Wales*

*Regional Meeting and has recently moved to Aotearoa/New Zealand.*

Editors' note: This, we believe, is a vitally important topic, and the very existence of the Society in Australia may depend on our response to the challenge. Please make your views known by adding a comment to the on-line version, or sending a letter to us at [caustfriend@quakersaustralia.info](mailto:caustfriend@quakersaustralia.info) for publication in a later printed issue of *The Australian Friend*.

Please see *Noted* in this issue of the *Australian Friend* about the outreach work that is currently being done by Australia Yearly Meeting.

AF



# Conscientious objection

DAVID PURNELL | CANBERRA REGIONAL MEETING  
AND QUAKER PEACE AND LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

*The Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) has recently released a publication on International Standards on Conscientious Objection, by Laurel Townhead. Here is a summary and some notes about the Australian situation.*

## Background

Quakers have a peace testimony (presented to King Charles II in 1661) which states that ‘the Spirit of Christ which leads us into all Truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man (*sic*) with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ nor for kingdoms of this world’. Our founder, George Fox, said he ‘lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of war’. As a result, Quakers over the years have opposed war and sought to create the conditions in which it is prevented. Conscientious objection to military service is one example of the expression of the peace testimony.

## United Nations Standards

The Quaker United Nations Office publication on Conscientious Objection was issued in April 2021 (see link below). It surveys the development of international thinking and decisions, and includes the following points;

1. Both the Human Rights Committee and the UN Human Rights Council have recognised the right of conscientious objection to military service as part of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion enshrined in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

2. This right has been reaffirmed on numerous occasions as a ‘protected right’ under the Convention – it cannot be restricted by States. It has also been

clearly defined as applying to anyone with a religious-based or conscience-based belief.

3. A person may become a Conscientious Objector (CO) even after joining the military forces as a conscript or volunteer. Processes must be available for such an application to be considered. This includes objection to a particular conflict or weapon.

4. Member states have been urged to adopt legislation that recognises conscientious objection and ensures that objectors can exercise this right effectively.

5. Assessment of applications for exemption from military service as a CO are expected to be made by mainly civilian rather than military panels, to ensure impartiality and independence. An assessment checklist has been prepared by the UN Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, and includes such provisions as – free application, full access to information needed by applicants, non-discrimination, good faith determination, right to appeal, and compatibility of alternative service to the reasons for applying.

6. Any arrangement for alternative service must be non-punitive and be a civilian option that contributes to the community.

QUNO’s work over 60 years has helped increase recognition of CO status in human rights instruments by (a) supporting the development of standards and implementation, (b) linking COs to relevant UN processes, (c) collaborating with other agencies,

and (d) researching the application of refugee status determination in CO cases.

See QUNO report at: Conscientious Objection to Military Service | QUNO

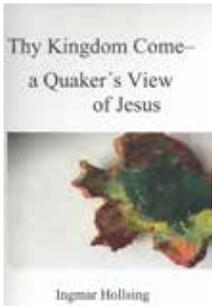
## Australia’s Position

As a result of the Vietnam War and the issue of conscription, there was an intense debate over some years about whether there should be a wider definition of CO status. Senator Michael Tate (ALP) and later Senator Jo Vallentine (Greens and Quaker) led efforts for changes to allow conscientious objection to particular warfare. As a result, Australia adopted new legislation (*Defence Legislation Amendment Act 1992*) which provided for exemption to be given to

- (a) Those with mental or physical disability;
- (b) members and officers of Parliament;
- (c) judges, magistrates and police;
- (d) ministers of religion;
- (e) members of religious orders and theological students;
- (f) An official of another government or an international organisation.

In addition, exemption may be sought by ‘persons whose conscientious beliefs do not allow them to participate in war or warlike operations...persons whose conscientious beliefs do not allow them to participate in a particular war or particular warlike operations.... and persons whose conscientious beliefs

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



## Thy Kingdom Come - A Quaker's View of Jesus

BY INGMAR HOLLISING

Published by The Society of Friends, Quakers. 2020. 260 pp. ISBN 978-91-519-5106-5

Ingmar Hollsing is a Swedish Friend, a teacher, and holds a Bachelor of Divinity from Uppsala University which specialises in the historical Jesus. He reads English and German, so is able to access sources in those languages, as well as his native Swedish. This book is a labour of love.

Whatever one's interest in Jesus, one will find something about it in this book. One might be interested in what Jesus says about divorce, or about wealth... it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than it is for a rich man to enter heaven ... a point amplified in the story of the rich young man who was advised to sell all that he had and give it to the poor, which motivated poverty as a Christian ideal. [Mark. 10:21]

Besides topics such as these, there are views in the book which shed light on

the question of whether or not one is a Christocentric Quaker, which is a live question for many Friends. The book shows that the answer to the question depends on which view one holds of Christ. For example, there is the view which comes from the creeds, especially the Nicene Creed, which is routinely recited at Sunday services. This creed was written to mediate on competing views of who Jesus was which were current around the time of the Council of Nicea [325 AD].

The Nicene Creed affirms of Jesus that he was 'born of the Father before all ages. God of God. Light of Light: true God of true God...' That raises important questions about Jesus. Was he always God, when he was a child of, say, eleven years old? And if he had always been God, would he ever have had to learn anything? Hollsing develops the point:

*If Jesus is God ... it denies that he really became man. I ... believe instead that if he was God, he grew into it ... who like us grew by learning from his mistakes - but who was so ready to learn that at last he acquired unity with God. [p.238]*

In other words, by learning from his mistakes, over time, Jesus acquired a larger share of God's life.

Hollsing believes that it was wrong of the church to demand that people believe the account of Jesus given in the Nicene Creed, it being so speculative. The Jesus who appeals to Hollsing is

the itinerant preacher who prayed to his heavenly father and befriended publicans and sinners, and responded sympathetically to the woman taken in adultery. He was master of small meetings, and must have been able to meet and help people who were total strangers.

Evidently, one could decline to be Christocentric on the showing of the Nicene Creed, but be Christocentric on Hollsing's showing.

Further, Hollsing does not believe that religion is about being justified before God, as Luther held, or that our deepest concern must be for ourselves and our own salvation. He believes that Christianity is about establishing the kingdom of God, and that non-violence is the way to it. Hollsing does not neglect important themes like the atonement, and his treatment of them is humane and reasonable.

Finally, like many Friends, Hollsing did not find it easy to believe, but he responded in an unusual way:

*I made the experiment of praying to the God I could not believe in, and the result surprised me. A couple of years later I wrote a poem*

*...you let  
yourself be found  
...in the stillness*

*In the small afterthoughts and coincidences. [p.235]*

REG NAULTY

*Canberra and Region Meeting*

### CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

do not allow them to engage in duties of a combatant nature'.

The legislation prescribes a process for determining exemption using a civil tribunal (usually three people) appointed by the relevant minister. The tribunal sets its own processes within general guidelines that they must be informal, quick, fair, and economical.

They can call witnesses and seek further information as needed. There is a provision to allow an appeal against the decision. Alternative civilian service is not included in the legislation.

This broader approach is not common around the world, yet it has been maintained in a legislative form ever since. Let us hope this position will

continue, including for people seeking asylum because they are COs from a country where the right is not available.

Note: QPLC issued a Watching Brief on Conscientious Objection - WB 16-1 [www.quakersaustralia.info/QPLC/quaker-peace-and-legislation-committee-archive-page](http://www.quakersaustralia.info/QPLC/quaker-peace-and-legislation-committee-archive-page)

AF



# ‘Let your lives speak’

## *Quaker Peace Video Project*

ADRIAN GLAMORGAN | WEST AUSTRALIA REGIONAL MEETING

Many Friends know that our first peace testimony was declared to Charles II and Parliament in 1660. But how has peace prospered in Australia since that first day in 1770, when Scottish Quaker Sydney Parkinson, aboard the barque *Endeavour*, directly observed and later artistically depicted, two Aboriginal people opposing Captain Cook’s attempt to land?

Parkinson died at sea early the next year, on 26 January, but amongst the botanical artist’s many works published in England was an engraving of this Botany Bay encounter, entitled ‘Two Natives of NEW HOLLAND advancing to Combat.’ Two Gweagal men weigh up with serious intent, equipped to battle. Yet might it not be equally a ritual warning? In any case, Cook took no chances, and when warning shots failed, ordered rifles to be aimed directly at the men on shore. One of the two was wounded, and his wooden shield dropped.

Friends’ presence on this continent, however well-intentioned, must always deal with Parkinson’s first contesting image – Aboriginal people prepared to defend their land from outsiders. Members of the Religious Society of Friends may have come to the Antipodes with love in their hearts, but they have also been beneficiaries of an aggressive dispossession occurring often just years or a few miles ahead of them.

So how has the peace testimony fared in Australia? In Charles Stevenson’s ‘brief history of Quakers in Australia,’ *With Unhurried Pace* (1973), we witness the earnest attempts by travelling ministers James Backhouse and George Washington Walker in the 1830s to establish Meetings in various parts of the British archipelago while they also challenge the treatment of Aboriginal people, sought humane conditions for convicts, counselled temperance, and called the wider population to align with Quaker testimonies. Later visits by Friends added to reports back to London. But the chief efforts throughout the 19th century amongst those who had made Australia their lasting home were centred, understandably, towards establishing fellowship amongst less than five hundred Friends, scattered across the land.

If we look, we might see the end to decades of 19th century dormancy, and a rising in concern amongst Friends about directly declaring the value of peace and its place in Australian society. By the beginning of the twentieth century, there was active opposition to military cadets in schools, then campaigns against the First World War and conscription, support for women’s rights and international forums for peace like the League of Nations and later the United Nations, concern about war and fascism, practical efforts to build relationships between peoples

across the world, assistance supportive of better relationships with Aboriginal people, and polite but firm defiance of Australia’s involvement in ‘wars of choice’. As the century progressed, Friends’ communities shared learnings on the art of conflict management and alternatives to violence, and community living, and even learned to lobby for the end of nuclear weapons on the international scene.

Can we bring new life to these stories in a way that finds contemporary audiences? Now is the time of Youtube, not the age of the pamphlet. For that reason, the three of us – Wies Schuiringa, Elizabeth PO’ and Adrian Glamorgan – have started to work on producing two videos (one on our history of the peace testimony in Australia, another on nonviolent ways and means) which bring to life some of the stories of the work done by individual Friends, and by Quaker Meetings past and present. This means we are also asking regional meetings to recollect and share with us (and thus each other) their own history of action for peace.

Our process is emergent, and of course time-consuming, but we have also found it energising and illuminating. We hope Friends across Australia will join this discovery by inviting regional meetings to meet, recall, and to catalogue these stories for future benefit, and sharing this with us. They may not always provide answers, but spark new questions – like Sydney

Parkinson's. Together we will keep alive the connection with, and the movement of, the Spirit amongst Friends.

If our sample two videos are successful, they could be of use for inreach, outreach, our website and to show at suitable events or occasions. These videos may strengthen our ideas and our work for peace as well as inspire other people to find ways to work for peace. The peace testimony was written in a different era and circumstances than we live in now. However, it has not lost any of its validity or originality to denounce fighting with any weapons.

*We utterly deny all outward wars and strife, and fighting with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence whatever; this is our testimony to the whole world... The Spirit of Christ by which we are guided, is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil, and again as to move us unto it; and we certainly know, and do testify to the world, that the Spirit of Christ, which leads us unto all truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the Kingdom of Christ, nor for the Kingdoms of this world... Therefore we cannot learn war any more.*

The concept of 'recognising that of God in everyone' came from that same era. It also still has great validity as the de-humanising of people who 'are not like us' continues today and legitimises



'Two of the natives of New Holland, advancing to combat.' From Sydney Parkinson's *A journal of a voyage to the South Seas*.

physical and emotional violence.

The video project hopes to capture Quakers and peace in Australia and draw on these faith foundations.

Sydney Parkinson's botany engravings are precious to many Australians, for the value of their artwork alone, as well as the first European artist's renderings of botany and even the kangaroo: but to Quakers, his depictions of that moment of confrontation on Botany Bay is an invitation for us to think about the country we have made our home, and answer that challenge to make peace here and abroad when war has always been such an obvious option.

We all have a challenge to make our home as we would wish it. As Quakers we take Sydney Parkinson's engravings to be precious for more than their descriptive storytelling: his depictions of our vast land's flora and fauna remind

us of the creative adventurousness that continues to inform our storytelling, and our collaborative wisdom around the work of peace has never been out of relevance.

## Reference

Stevenson, Charles. & Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia. Yearly Meeting. 1973, *With unburied pace: a brief history of Quakers in Australia* / Published by Charles Stevenson Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia Toorak, Vic  
'The World War I Exhibition,' <https://www.quakersaustralia.info/resources/exhibitions>

Adrian Glamorgan commences as Secretary of the Friends World Committee on Consultation for Asia-West Pacific Section on 1 July 2021.

AF

## *Song for a Quaker Choir*

### *The Sound of Silence - Revisited*

Come to Meeting with the Friends,  
All are welcome to attend,  
Share a vision of peace and wisdom  
Seek in silence stillness keeping  
Finding solace that in quiet each one claims  
Within the Sound of Silence.

If in life I seem alone,  
Here are Friends to walk along,  
Within the circle of the Meeting,  
No one lacks a cheerful greeting,  
Together silent worship leads the way,  
Day by day,  
Amidst the Sound of Silence.

In each encounter we can find,  
That of God in everyone,  
People of every nomination,  
Are all are equal in affection,  
Singing songs that every voice can share,  
Loud and clear,  
No more the Sound of Silence.

Friends, say I, each one knows,  
That in silence worship grows,  
Hear the spirit softly teaching,  
Take the time to go on listening,  
Inspiration comes like a whisper to the soul  
A light within,  
In the glow of Silence.

Quakers do not bow to pray,  
Neither have they priests to pay,  
Silent worship fills our seeking,  
Ministry a gift worth keeping,  
No words of a prophet are etched upon our walls,  
Unity calls,  
Dwelling in the Sound of Silence.

**Janice Blakeney – with apologies to  
Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel**

## *Amazing Place*

### *New Earth Care Theme Lyrics to Amazing Grace*

Amazing place, this earth our home  
Its care our destiny.  
Neglect destroys living things  
Is death our legacy?  
Its not too late to make amends  
Find courage and reprieve.  
Restoring each diminished space  
Where life must sacred be.  
Hold in the Light this earthly task  
Rewards anew we'll see.  
Steadfast our faith in stewardship  
Find a place eternally

*Traditional Hymn originally by John Newton*

**New words by Janice Blakeney,  
Tasmania Regional Meeting**

## *Unitive*

I've been discovering  
that God is unitive  
he's bringing all things together  
and no  
God isn't punitive  
he's not angry or untethered

And I'm uncovering  
how God is so creative  
she keeps making her creation  
and also  
God's regenerative  
she's getting us into her restoration  
God's bringing all things together

**Justin Simpson  
New South Wales Regional Meeting**

# Noted

**This is our occasional feature in which we briefly record interesting publications and websites that have come to our attention. Inclusion of an item in this format does not preclude a possible longer review in a later issue. We welcome suggestions for inclusion.**

## Who should decide whether the country goes to war?

Should this issue be debated in parliament before a decision is taken?

This is the issue raised in a webinar run by the Australia Institute titled 'How is the Government Responsible for what happens in Armed Conflict including Australian Forces'. The speakers are Scott Ludlam, former Greens Senator for WA, and Alison Broinowski, Vice President of Australians for War Powers Reform.

The webinar can be viewed on the Australia Institute website – <https://australiainstitute.org.au>. Look under Events, then press the Webinar button. Scroll down to Previous Webinars. The date of this broadcast was 24 March 2021. You might find other topics of interest on the way!

## Friends in Myanmar (Burma)

Not all Friends would be aware that there is a Quaker worship group in Yangon in Myanmar. These Friends are naturally distressed at being back under authoritarian rule, and call on Friends throughout the world to help Myanmar back toward peaceful paths on which community members determine their own futures.

John Henderson coordinates the Yangon group and asks us to urge our governments to avoid recognising the junta, and to enforce an arms embargo. He would like to see the generals referred to the International Criminal Court. He also asks the UN to establish a humanitarian corridor and to provide assistance to refugees.

He gives the names of independent journalists who provide reliable information:

Irrawaddy – <https://www.irrawaddy.com/>

Frontier Myanmar – <https://www.frontiermyanmar.net/en/>

Myanmar Now – <https://www.myanmar-now.org/en/news>

Asked what assistance they would like, Friends pointed to the growing number of internally displaced refugees around the edges of the country. They also recommend support be directed to:

Partners Asia (<https://partnersasia.org/>) effectively supports local leaders to do civil disobedience work.

The Mutual Aid Myanmar (<https://www.mutualaidmyanmar.org/who-we-are>).

## Quakers on the Web

Australia Yearly Meeting has focussed on Outreach by developing a new website several years ago with the name QuakersAustralia, <https://www.quakersaustralia.org.au/> as this might be the most likely wording a person might enter in their search engine to find out if we sell breakfast oats.

These days people go online to find out information and our website will be their most likely first source. Of course, the next step is, what happens when they contact Quakers in person?

The website is continually updated by the AYM secretary as well as by Emily Chapman Searle who was appointed last year to assist keeping the website user friendly as well as to increase our social media. Emily has added many beautiful environmental photos to the website which will hopefully encourage spiritual seekers to stay longer on the website. Please have a look at the website and provide feedback to the AYM secretary:

[secretary@quakersaustralia.info](mailto:secretary@quakersaustralia.info).

For those Friends who use facebook, Emily posts weekly one of the Advices and Queries on facebook as well as any news such as letters sent on behalf of AYM, the Quaker presence at the Sacred People Sacred Earth rallies in Australia in March and any other news that Friends contact the AYM secretary with. By frequent posting, people are more likely to follow us. <https://www.facebook.com/quakersaustralia.info/>

AYM has also established a Quakers Australia UTube channel. This is another way of people finding information about Quakers. Videos of recent Backhouse lectures are on this channel as well as other videos. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCid4LJ99gKk9SGhgRioYc7A>

Friends in Victoria RM have made two videos recently, one about what it has been like for several Friends to be in lockdown during the pandemic and one of the co-clerk, Bruce Henry being interviewed at the Sacred People Sacred Earth rally in Melbourne. As is mentioned in the article by Adrian Glamorgan in this issue of the Australian Friend, the Quaker Peace video project is in progress, exploring the peace testimony and Quakers in Australia.

Several other videos are being made that feature younger Quakers explaining why they belong to Quakers. If you have ideas for more videos about Quakers in Australia, start conversations at your local Meeting or Worshipping Groups.

AF

---

# The Australian Friend

*The Australian Friend* is published online at AustralianFriend.org four times a year, in March, June, September and December.

## Contributions

Contributions (articles, poems and other items) are welcome as an email attachment to CAustFriend@Quakersaustralia.info. Please ensure that images are sent as separate attachments, and not embedded in word files. We prefer images in jpg format, and a resolution of at least 300 dpi.

## Contribution deadlines

Contributions should arrive no later than one month before the publication date:

- 1 February for the March edition
- 1 May for the June edition
- 1 August for the September edition
- 1 November for the December edition.

## Subscriptions

*The Australian Friend* is available free of charge online at AustralianFriend.org. *The Australian Friend* is also available by post at no charge to members of Australian Yearly Meeting.

Libraries, other organisations and individuals not associated with Quakers can subscribe to receive *The Australian Friend* by post by contacting: CAustFriend@Quakersaustralia.info. The cost is \$40.00 per year for addresses in Australia and \$50 per year for addresses overseas.

**Coordinating editor:** David Swain

**Editorial panel:** Garry Duncan, Rae Litting, Wies Schuiringa

## Production

**Mailing list** CAustFriend@Quakersaustralia.info

**Layout** Sheelagh Wegman, Hobart TAS

**Printing and distribution** National Mailing and Marketing, Canberra

## Copyright

Articles printed in *The Australian Friend* are copyright to their individual authors. Permission to re-publish material in other Quaker publications is hereby granted, provided full attribution of author and source is made. All other requests for republication should be directed to the editors.

## Disclaimer

The views expressed in *The Australian Friend* are not necessarily those of the editors or of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).