

NELSON RECOGNISED MEETING NEWSLETTER

Quakers - the Religious Society of Friends – Aotearoa New Zealand Te Hahi Tuahurangi

April 2025

Spiritual Thought

We think of power as electricity or political power, but the power of love is above all powers in its ability to bring change

QF&P 2024 Raewyn Scott 2022

News of and for Friends

Lawrence and **Marie** have family visiting for Easter: daughter Jane and partner Kim. It's wet, but even so they have enjoyed the market and other Nelson delights.

Rex writes, "I recommend seeing the movie White Bird. It is an affirmation of the light in all of us. Spending Easter at home with whanau, as the weather was partially responsible for delaying my tramp round Rakiura with my son and granddaughter.

Jan: Jan has had both her children, their partners and all five grandchildren in Nelson for Easter. She was challenged by the idea of cooking for 10 but it all went well. A treat to have everyone together.

Gwen has so far this season sent approximately 125 kg of cox apples and 8 kg of feijoas to Kai Rescue thanks to Bill Lewis who volunteers there. The Granny Smiths will be harvested soon too. Gwen knows Bill partly through the Nelson Training Centre's Back Alley Cafe on Crisps Lane. The Cafe operates during the school term training 16–19-year-olds in the hospitality sector. Their mains are \$6, and their desserts and entire barista menu are \$3. It operates on Thursday during most of the school term, includes literacy and numeracy training and NCEA credits.

Phillida is in the Uk visiting family and friends and feeling rather overwhelmed with travel!

Clive and Margaret are in the thick of harvesting their organic apples. They are about to start harvesting Pink Ladies.

Peter has been enjoying a mostly solo retreat surrounded by the white and gold sands, bush clad hills, and fascinating wildlife of Frenchman's Bay estuary in the Abel Tasman National Park. He highly recommends spending extended time in an environment undisturbed by the human enterprise. He will be in Auckland from late

April through to early June and will watch out for any zoomed meetings that may be organised.

Christine is running a workshop next Saturday on writing and illustrating public text for the new website – she has a week to learn how to do that (run the Zoom-based workshop that is.) She is also processing feijoas and apples from her garden, and when it stops raining will pick the grapes.

John D is having his own retreat at home while Peter is on his boat retreat. They refer to their home as 'the Monastery' – with Peter away for the month of May John is planning on living internet-free.

Linda is creating a library display for the Motueka Anzac Day Peace Vigil, including the White Poppy Wreath. She will spend time in the library on Tuesday and Thursday this week to talk to any inquirers.



DIARY OF EVENTS:

Friday 25th April, 12noon – 1pm Church Steps, Trafalgar Street, Whakatu Nelson: ANZAC Day Peace Vigil. Honour the war dead by ending war. All welcome

Friday 25th April 12 noon – 1pm Museum Bldg., Main Street Motueka: ANZAC Day Peace Vigil. Honour the war dead by ending war. All welcome

Tuesday 29th April 6.30pm – 8pm Putangitangi Centre, Greenmeadows, Stoke: Conservation, A Whakatu Nelson Story, with Dr Gwen Struik. More information below.

Sunday 4th May 12.15pm Christchurch Monthly Meeting, get the Zoom link here: meeting@christchurch.quakers.nz

Sunday 10th May 10am Family Service Centre, Talbot Street, Motueka: Meeting for Worship. All welcome



Our Newsletter is a way to share our lives – to help build our Quaker community. Thanks to everyone who has sent contributions. Please consider

sending in your news, a book review, a quote that speaks to you. Send newsletter items for the March letter to Jan at janmarsh37@gmail.com. **The cut-off date for items for the next newsletter is Friday, May 9th.**

Check out the *new* Quakers NZ Website which went live on April 1st: quakers.nz. It is our national outreach tool for inquirers and the database for Quakers in Aotearoa. The Nelson embroideries are included – go to the NZ Quaker History page. If you have not got an account yet (which allows you to see content just for Friends, such as the Climate Emergency Correspondent’s newsletters) and you would like one let Christine know.



If you want to be included in the next booklet listing Member and Attenders, you need to be listed on the data base. Nelson Meeting newsletters are posted on the national website on the Christchurch Monthly Meeting page or click on Find a Quaker Meeting.

Spiritual Belief System Selector What is your true spiritual path?

Do you want to see what religious group is best for you? Then try this Quiz:

<https://selectsmart.com/religion/> Just for fun. I’m a secular humanist; Quakers is my #3 after Universalist Unitarian!

How Easter Changed Me

By Anne Lamott

When I was 38,
my best friend, Pammy,
died, and we went shopping
about two weeks before she died,

and she was in a wig
and a wheelchair.
I was buying a dress
for this boyfriend I was trying to impress,
and I bought a tighter,
shorter dress than I was used to.
And I said to her,
"Do you think this makes my hips look big?"
and she said to me, so calmly,
"Anne, you don't have that kind of time."
And I think Easter has been about
the resonance of that simple statement;
and that when I stop,
when I go into contemplation and meditation,
when I breathe again and do the sacred action
of plopping and hanging my head
and being done with my own agenda,
I hear that, 'You don't have that kind of time,'
you have time only to cultivate presence
and authenticity and service,
praying against all odds
to get your sense of humor back.
That's how it has changed for me.
That was the day my life changed,
when she said that to me.



Tuku Whakatu (share Nelson): Running until 4th May, has tours, workshops, and historical exhibitions. **Gwen will be giving a talk**, along with Craig Potton, John Moore and Bruce Thomas on the theme of Conservation. She plans to give a 15-minute summary, with Margot Syms, of the 52-year history of Friends of Nelson Haven & Tasman Bay. Craig will talk on whales and dolphins, Bruce on Breaksea Island pest control and John will talk about saving Lake Manapouri from flooding for Rio Tinto. Its free but you need to book, phone 03 2656519 or email gca@clmnz.co.nz

For those interested in creative workshops: Creative Flora Toi participants will be guided through the creation of Toi Māori floral bouquets and tributes on Wednesday 23 April. Check out the programme at tukuwhakatu.nz.



April 22 is Earth Day, first observed in 1970 — which makes this year the 55th anniversary. Inspired in part by Rachel Carson's work, among many others, the original Earth Day was a widespread, bipartisan response to the negative impacts of industrial development — and President Nixon, along with Congress, responded quickly to the popular pressure, establishing the Environmental Protection Agency that same year, and

landmark environmental legislation followed close behind. With something like one billion people now participating annually, Earth Day is considered the largest civic-focused day of action in the world.

This year's Earth Day theme — "[Our Power, Our Planet](#)" — is both timely and pressing. If the original Earth Day spurred unprecedented environmental action and coordination, the 55th must do the same!

Another poem, called "Possible Answers to Prayers" by Scott Cairns:

Your petitions — though they continue to bear
just the one signature — have been duly recorded.

Your anxieties — despite their constant,
relatively narrow scope and inadvertent
entertainment value — nonetheless serve
to bring your person vividly to mind.

Your repentance — all but obscured beneath
a burgeoning, yellow fog of frankly more
conspicuous resentment — is sufficient.

Your intermittent concern for the sick,
the suffering, the needy poor is sometimes
recognizable to me, if not to them.

Your angers, your zeal, your lipsmackingly
righteous indignation toward the many
whose habits and sympathies offend you —

these must burn away before you'll apprehend
how near I am, with what fervor I adore
precisely these, the several who rouse your passions.

A contribution from Elizabeth regarding Quaker woman, Kathleen Lonsdale:

The thrill of childlike wonder never left **Kathleen Lonsdale** (January 28, 1903–April 1, 1971), who often ran the last few yards to her laboratory and took her mathematical calculations into the maternity ward where her children were born.

The tenth child in a Quaker household without electricity, she was born in Ireland the year the Wright brothers built and flew the world's first successful flying machine heavier than air. Her

home was still lit by gas when she first began studying science — in a school for boys, because no such subjects figured into the curriculum of the local girls' school. By the time she was a teenager, living outside London, she watched gas-filled Zeppelins rain bombs and death from the air. She watched them go down in flames, shot down by British weapons. She watched her mother cry with the knowledge that piloting them were German boys not much older than Kathleen.

Trained as a physicist, Kathleen Lonsdale went on to become the pioneering X-ray crystallographer who illuminated the shape, dimensions, and atomic structure of the benzene ring that had mystified chemists since Michael Faraday discovered benzene a century earlier. She was still in her twenties. The chemistry of benzene would come to fuel the twentieth century. J.D. Bernal — the visionary scientist who first applied X-ray crystallography to the molecules of life and whose laboratory group she joined — came to see how beneath Lonsdale's quiet, unassuming manner lay "such an underlying strength of character that she became from the outset the presiding genius of the place."



Dame Kathleen Lonsdale. (Photograph: Walter Stoneman. [National Portrait Gallery](#).)

Lonsdale became the first woman tenured at London's most venerated research university and the first female president of both the British Association for the Advancement of Science and the International Union of Crystallography.

She also became one of the twentieth century's most lucid, impassioned, and indefatigable activists against our civilizational cult of war and the military industrial complex funding its planet-sized house of worship.

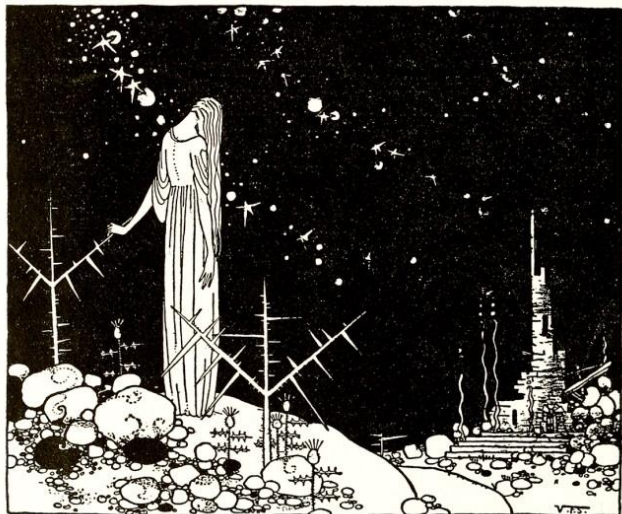
When the next World War broke out, Lonsdale — by then one of the world's most preeminent scientists — was imprisoned as a conscientious objector to military conscription. She went on to become one of Europe's most influential prison reformers, having seen how the prison industrial complex — a term then yet to be coined — is the price societies governed by the military industrial complex pay for the inequalities and injustices stemming from that foundational cult.

In 1957, as part of a Penguin series that invited some of the era's most lucid and luminous minds to reckon with some of the era's most urgent questions, Lonsdale composed a slender, exquisitely reasoned and deeply felt book titled *Is Peace Possible?* (*public library*), now out of print. In it, she writes: "History teaches us that time can bring about reconciliations that seemed at another time impossible, but only when violence has ceased, whether by agreement or through exhaustion."



A quarter century after Einstein and Freud's little-known correspondence about war, human nature, why we fight, and how to stop, Lonsdale challenges the misconception of pacifism as the simplistic idea that a perfect and peaceful world is merely a matter of individuals refusing to fight. "Truism based on Utopias are poor arguments," she observes, instead invoking the style of pacifism native to the Quaker tradition and its original formulation in 1660 as the refusal to partake of "all outward wars and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence whatever." Bridging the spiritual ethos of her upbringing with the scientific worldview of her calling and training, she writes:

The man or woman is sure, whether through the guidance of the Spirit of Christ or the guidance of their reasoning powers or both, that war is spiritually degrading, that it is the wrong way to settle disputes between classes or nations, the wrong way to meet aggression or oppression, the wrong way to preserve national or personal ideals: that man or woman who is *sure* of this must obviously take no part in war and indeed must actively oppose it. Most civilized nations are beginning to realize that there is such a thing as a genuinely conscientious objection to personal participation in war, even if they do not regard it as expedient to encourage young people to think along these lines or take this stand.



One of teenage artist Virginia Frances Sterrett's century-old illustrations for classic French fairy tales. (Available as a print.)

With empathic sensitivity to the confusions and intuitions that lead otherwise goodhearted people to see some applications of war as justified, she adds:

Most people, however, are not sure of anything... They are not sure that it is wrong to fight, if by fighting one can alter intolerable conditions, or prevent large-scale communal crime, or get rid of a dangerous dictator before he gains too much power, or stand up to international blackmail, or ward off an armed attack. In terms of reason, they find it arguable — as it is — to say that

although every possible way to avoid war must be sought, yet until men are perfect there will always be some who want to grab more than their share. They see no reason why this should be permitted if it can be prevented by the limited use of military force. They are pretty sure that it *is* prevented in many cases by the knowledge that force is there to stop it. For men are not perfect, but neither are they foolish enough, as a rule [with exceptions], to burgle or murder even on a national scale, if they know that they will be stopped and punished.

Citing a prominent politician who had once said to her that “pacifism is not practical politics” but “to be spiritually healthy every nation needs to have a spear-point of idealist opinion,” she dismantles the convenient illusion that pacifism is a purely ideological stance with no practical responsibilities of political participation:

The pacifist who argues that he is concerned only with principles, and that politics are not his business, is usually evading the discipline and the responsibility of hard thinking. His position is a logical one only if he does not either expect or desire the politician to put pacifist principles into practice for him. He won't expect it, but if he does desire it then it is incumbent on him to study the world situation and try to decide for himself how it might be done, in general at least, if not in particular.

To illustrate the interleaving of lives across the artificial pickets of national borders, she looks back on the 1947 cholera epidemic that quickly came to claim five hundred lives per day in Egypt but was also quickly curbed after twenty nations cooperated on a supply line for vaccines. In a sentiment of staggering timeliness in the wake of the twenty-first century's deadliest pandemic — which Mary Shelley anticipated two centuries ago — Lonsdale observes that “plagues are no respecters of sovereignty,” nor are the far-reaching economic, moral, spiritual, and radioactive consequences of war.

Our Programme: below is a reminder of the different activities each month.

All Sundays: Meeting for Worship, 10am, Quaker Meeting House, 30 Nile St. Whakatu

2nd Sunday: Meeting for Worship, 10am, Family Service Centre, Talbot St. Motueka

3rd Wednesday: Home Discussion Group, 7pm – 8.45pm. Topic & venue tba

Children are welcome at all Meetings for Worship and activities will be provided for them.
