**Assistant Clerk’s Pen picture of the Quaker Life Representative Council 21st to 23rd April 2017**

I came seeking a weekend which was worth the finding and this is what I found:-

* The terror of being part of the team putting this weekend together and the astonishment at the quiet effective work of Marlene, Andrew and Alastair as well as those on the Committee.
* Working as an Assistant Clerk with a man I had never met before and coming through the discomfort, so familiar in Quakers, to find the “joy in the other” when we are all so different. Finding a gentle, committed man (who is not dyslexic and does detail). For me that was certainly worth the finding.
* The old familiar ways may not work. I have worked with red and green dots for fifteen years and only in Quakers has the problem of colour blindness come to the light. Green dots and red dots were all the same to one facilitator. Things need to change. I need to be flexible. What I love about Quakers may not be fit for purpose for the future or may need to be adapted. Green dots and gold stars? Better I think, but it has to change.

Amazing talks.

* The Women’s Institute. How can we learn from Jam and Jerusalem? Does that mean accepting smaller groups of Quakers split by age and interest, doing there own thing, being their own communities, linked loosely? How that could be made to work?
* Aspiring perhaps to be an Albatross. Robins still work really hard and are not introverts. (And they are so very cheerful!) Increasing retirement age will impact on meetings. I will be 66 when I retire and I expected to be 60. I will probably have to continue to work as long as I am fit. My energy is reducing and it takes so much more time to recharge. What I can do for Quakers as an older Blackbird and then a Robin will be limited so perhaps I should be an Albatross? I do like to sit in the same place in the sun but the chair is not very comfortable.
* The longing to have been visited by a Quaker chaplain when I faced death not a dog collared man with the Gideon Bible and muttered set prayers. My desire to be able to fulfil such a role but the realisation that it is not for me. The gratitude for those that do work as chaplains.

Home groups

* Working and developing friendships. Working with others bringing new insights. The contacts you make by “serendipity” (for me that is another name for God).
* How to take back the essence of the weekend to the Area Meeting. The memories and ideas, the amazing hard work of the staff at Quaker Life. The resources which are there at Quaker Life, people and things. These resources that the “right “people in our meetings do not know about. How can I help them find them?

The personal spiritual recharging,

* Walking the Labyrinth challenged by geese
* Sitting in fire light telling tales and roaring with laughter.
* Epilogue and hot chocolate.

The knowledge that when I emerge from this beautiful bubble that it will not be so easy but Friends, the friends I have made and the staff give my rechargeable batteries a real boost. So for me it was “worth the finding”. Quakers are “worth the finding”. Now I am a recharged Duracell bunny who has found real gems in this amazing inspirational group of people and will take back so much!

Thank you for the privilege of serving.

Spoken by Sarah Fox Assistant Clerk Quaker Life Representative Council April 2017