



Yearly Meeting 2018 Children's Epistle of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia

Thanks to those who helped in various ways this week to make it happen.



This year's children's meeting took our inspiration from nature. We went outside and explored, as well as sketched and drew and painted the natural materials we brought back to our meeting room. Some of our time in nature was exploring the wider campus, including two (or three) bridges and some of the other interesting things to climb on and over, like stumps, stone blocks, or slowly rotting logs.

As Charlie said when asked about his favourite things - 'watching the goats was a highlight.' Who else saw the angora goats out on the main road into campus? Did you also wonder if they were sheep or goats or shoats (as we sometimes called them)?

We learnt many things during the week. Some deliberately and some accidentally. One unexpected aspect was that we all learnt about origami and Japanese culture. Friends had brought origami paper and books which was one of Will's favourite activities. Will and Charlie spent many hours making elaborate origami models, including some kirigami, which for those who don't know, involves cutting as well as folding. Your last piece of Japanese learning for today is that the special paper is called chiyogami, which replicates the traditional silk patterns on clothing.



We continued the Japanese theme with some Japanese watercolour painting with beautiful art materials that Wilma provided. We learnt about the different brush shapes which can produce different effects in watercolour. And there was always more drawing and sketching to do. Sometimes we almost had to beg to be allowed to sketch. We had long quiet moments of attempting to capture the right lines and shapes to match what we saw around us.

At times we got more rowdy, such as paper plane fights with the JYFs. Ryan and Miles and Samuel and Charlie had to fly paper planes at each other. When you got hit, you were out. In quieter moments with the JYFs, we played UNO - at one stage there were three games going at once. Games can be a great way to build community - we enjoyed playing Sushi Go Party (another of Charlie's favourite activities), a game where you work to build a hand of tasty and nutritious sushi (all with their appropriate scores), and is fun for all ages. Apparently the cutest sushi were the dumplings, the tofu, and the onigiri.

Even though the Children's Meeting was smaller in size this year, with four children attending at some point during the week, we know that it still matters deeply to those who attend. I will end with what Will said, when asked what he liked - 'I think... everything we did together. I just loved hanging out.'



Yearly Meeting 2018 Junior Young Friends' Epistle of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia

On Saturday 7 July 2018, the Australian Yearly Meeting Junior Young Friends came together at Avondale College, in Cooranbong, NSW.



We arrived by planes, trains and buses from around the country. The program commenced with a parents' children session and JYFs getting together with old friends, reuniting and making new friends with several first-time JYFs. On Sunday, we headed off to Winter School on a farm in Morisset, to learn the Permaculture principles: care of the earth, care of people and sharing surplus. We were hosted at Robyn Crosland's property, and led by permaculture Friend, Rowe Morrow, author of "Earth Users Guide to Permaculture". We saw Robyn's chickens, bees and worms; learnt about her egg shell drying process, recycling and sieving coffee grinds, prepared a new kitchen garden bed area and learnt how to make hessian logs. We got grubby pulling weeds, planting potatoes, moving a mountain of mushroom compost and took away new found skills, honey and pumpkins.

On Sunday evening we began to think about the theme - "I have a Dream", inspired by Martin Luther King Junior, who was killed 50 years ago this year. We heard from Friend, Anne Udy who had met Martin Luther King Junior only months before his assassination, when her husband hosted him at the Ohio University. She was not disappointed.

Monday featured a Quaker Q&A (Question and Answer) Panel with five Friends. We learnt about their journeys in Quakerism, i.e. how they came to Quakerism, what they believe and why. In free time we cooked, played Scrabble, and had afternoon tea with Penn Friends. We visited the Childrens' Program session, and some of us went on a bush walk. On Monday evening, we attended the Backhouse Lecture. The JYFs were enlightened by hearing Cho-Nyon Kim speak about the connections between various religions as well as hearing his life story.

After All Age Worship on Tuesday morning, we set out for a three-day camp, at Callicoma Hill. On our way, we went to Baiame Cave, to see the Aboriginal creator cave painting, and to listen to Uncle Warren from the Wonnorua People. St Claire Mission followed, to meet Laurie, who discussed intergenerational trauma experienced by the Stolen Generation. How do you tell your grand-daughter about such things?

The camp site set up came next, in a pocket of wilderness surrounded by trees. Martin took us on a guided bushwalk around the property. Some of us also had a tour of Martin and Jan's eco-home. On Wednesday as Service, some of us carried out fencing activities, and others learnt from Wilma to crochet string bags from string.

On Thursday, we said goodbye to Callicoma Hill and headed to Newcastle. On our way back, we met George and Jo, Australian coal Activists, who gave a talk about the "Lock the gate" campaign against coal seam gas fracking. We feasted on pizza and garlic bread at the Foreshore Park next to Newcastle Harbour - a busy Port with Coal ships coming and going. A visit to the Newcastle CSIRO followed, to view solar thermal radiation generation, using heated molten salt. They also had photovoltaic cells, wind turbines and powerful batteries to store the energy.

Thursday night a tired team watched "WALL:E" a science fiction movie about reversing climate change and the problem of pollution on Earth. Friday morning featured a JYF led All Age worship, a lesson in letter writing to Members of Parliament, with Michael Searle, and preparing for the evening concert which featured some of us explaining the story of 'Danny Boy' and playing flute, violin, trombone, piano and juggling!

Our *Highlights* were meeting new people, seeing the stars, the campsite including the campfire, going to the Baiame cave, sharing music and circus tricks, the crochet with Wilma, bike riding, just being together and reconnecting and connecting with other Quakers, and making and eating pancakes with the older Young Friends.