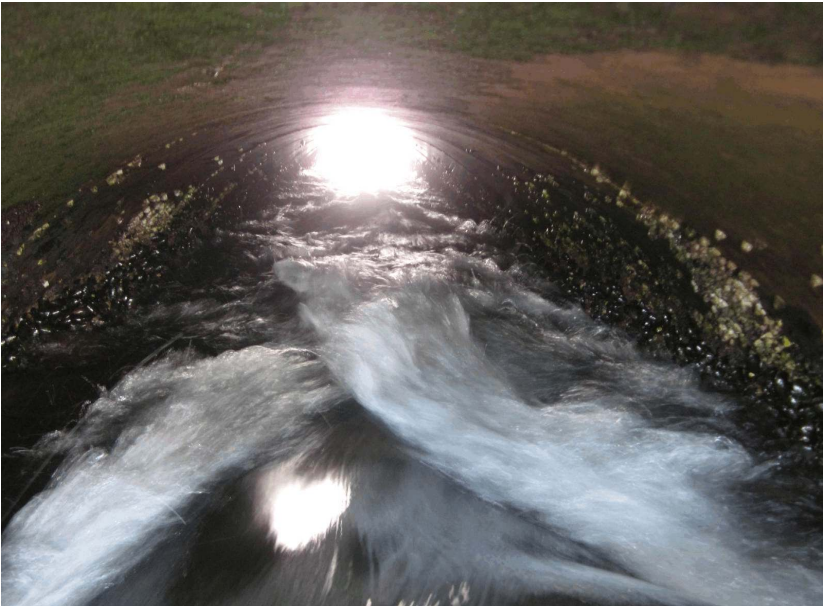




October
2013

Scottish Friend



Whoosh!

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Sheila Peacock took the cover photograph leaning upside-down over the entrance to the culvert - in danger of being swept through with the ebb-tide!

Please send material for next Scottish Friend by 25 January to Margaret Peacock, 16 Drumlin Drive, Milngavie, G62 6LN, or nmjpeacock@yahoo.co.uk.

Scottish Friend will be posted on the GM website and can also be emailed directly to you. If you would like an email copy instead of a paper one, please email scotfriends@gmail.com, to let Bronwen Currie know. You are strongly encouraged to do this, in view of escalating postage costs - and of course you get the photographs in colour, as an incentive!

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writers and not necessarily the opinions of the Society of Friends in Scotland, Britain or elsewhere.

Published by Quakers in Scotland, 01496 850 006
quakerscotland.org.uk (British website: quaker.org.uk)
Printed on recycled paper by
Print Force, Milngavie, 0141 956 1052 

Scottish Churches Asylum and Destitution Task Group is a project of the Church and Society Network of Action of Churches Together in Scotland. It has produced a pdf leaflet for distribution in churches. The text is reproduced below, but I can't deal with the pdf photographs. MP

It is available from the website - www.acts-scotland.co.uk
Or Tel: 01259 216980 for hard copies.

Who are asylum seekers?!

Asylum seekers are people who have left their home country because they have been injured, persecuted or threatened and fear for their safety.

Under international law they can seek sanctuary in another country. When they arrive in Britain their asylum claim is assessed by the Government.

Why is there destitution?

Whilst an asylum seeker is waiting for his or her claim to be assessed they are not allowed to work, are given very limited support and are housed in low-quality accommodation. Sometimes administrative errors or bureaucratic delays during the time a claim is being assessed can leave an individual with no support for days, weeks or even months at a time. The Scottish Refugee Council has identified that there are seven occasions where this can happen during any one particular asylum claim.

If the Government decides that an individual's asylum claim is not genuine the small amount of support that they receive comes to an end and they can become homeless. In some circumstances they are returned to their home country, but sometimes there can be very good reasons why this is not possible, such as if the home country is in civil war; there is no way of getting people from Britain to there; or if the individual does not have any proof of nationality and their country does not recognise them.

Why are Churches concerned?

The Churches are concerned for the welfare and dignity of vulnerable and marginalised people. Jesus said that his followers would be judged on how they care for the least of God's family; if we give food to those who are hungry, drink to those who are thirsty, clothes to those who are naked, welcome to strangers, care for the sick and if we visit those in prison then it is as if we are doing those things to him.

The Government's obligations are legal - to determine the validity of an asylum claim. However, the Church has a moral and ethical responsibility to ensure that all people are treated with a level of dignity and respect. No one should be abandoned with absolutely no help and no hope. What are Churches doing?

Asylum seekers in Scotland are housed in communities in Glasgow. Glasgow Churches are playing a key role in offering urgent care and support to asylum seekers through grants of money and food; through night shelters for homeless people; for activities such as social gatherings, English classes, and helping people get access to professional advice.

Across Scotland, churches are working to raise awareness of the political issues involved and are encouraging members to write to their elected representatives to try to make the system fairer and to acknowledge the need for support so that no one is left destitute.

Prayers for asylum seekers and ourselves

When we see the troubles on our TV screens we cannot be surprised that people flee.

Help us to welcome the stranger

To provide for the needy

To counsel the abused.

Make our country a place of refuge and hope

Jesus, You knew what it was to be a refugee when your parents fled from Herod

You knew what it was to be homeless with nowhere to lay your head

You knew what it was to be friendless when those you loved betrayed you

You knew what it was to be utterly derelict as you cried from the cross

Whatever we suffer You have been there first.

Forgive us for doubting you and give us the strength to go on.

Amen

What can I do?

Write to your elected representatives expressing concern about the plight of destitute asylum seekers and asking that something is done.

Challenge attitudes which treat asylum seekers as less-than-human or that it is somehow not our collective responsibility to seek to care for them.

If you live in an area where asylum seekers are housed, such as Glasgow, think about volunteering time or money to help projects which support asylum seekers, or befriend asylum seekers who are present in your church or community.

If you cannot give practical help consider giving to one of the charities listed on the back page of this leaflet.

Refugee Week takes place in the UK in the middle of June each year. Find out what local events are taking place and see if you and your congregation can take part.

Where to obtain further advice, support and information:

Scottish Refugee Council

www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk

Tel: 0141 248

Refugee Survival Trust

www.rst.org.uk

Tel: 0131 243 2660

British Red Cross

www.redcross.org.uk

Tel: 0844 412 2804

Govan and Craigton Integration

www.gcin.org.uk

Tel: 0141 445 3718

Unity Centre (Govan)

<http://unitycentreglasgow.org>

Tel: 0141 427 7992

Glasgow Destitution Network

www.destitutionaction.org.uk

Tel: 07961098430

Still Human Still Here campaign

<http://stillhumanstillhere.wordpress.com>

Stop Destitution campaign

www.stopdestitution.org.uk

Scottish Churches Asylum and Destitution Task Group is a project of the Church and Society Network of Action of Churches Together in Scotland. (ACTS)

Meeting for Sufferings - 5th October 2013 at Friends House Jane Pearn

Although the phrase 'faithful lives' was mentioned only once, it seemed to me that this was a thread that ran through this meeting. At the start of our time together, we heard section 18.11 from Quaker Faith and Practice, about William Dent and the influence that 'one quiet life' can have. We reflected that we might not be able to change the world immediately, but individual faithfulness matters.

It was encouraging to hear about the work of BYM's own housing charity, Friends Housing Trust. In supporting the provision of safe, secure homes for the vulnerable or those in transition, they facilitate stability, employment, and the ability to contribute to society. Durness in Sutherland has benefited from QHT support in the past two years.

Minutes from Area Meetings suggested that most Friends were supportive of the decision not to extend the boycott of goods originating from settlements to Israel itself, although some wanted stronger action. We gave it more thought, and again discerned that now was not the time to extend the action, and put at risk the work being done. The Ecumenical Accompaniment commitment is being extended: we heard that there are more EAPPIs than UN observers and that the programme is highly valued by others working for peace. EAPPIs now spend some time staying with ordinary Israelis in Haifa: this can be challenging. They also have the chance to meet 18-year old Israeli Army conscripts. There have been several initiatives in local meetings to engage with their local Jewish community, and we listened to the pain of Friends wrestling with the difficulties of dialogue when opposing beliefs are so firmly entrenched. At Yearly Meeting level, meetings continue with the Board of Deputies and Rabbis for Human Rights.

We were asked by trustees to give guidance on BYM's minor investment in two fossil fuel companies, both considered to be 'best in field' for least environmentally damaging practices. We were reminded that, whether we like it or not, we all depend on fossil fuels and their products in one form or another. But mindful of our collective and individual commitment to live more lightly on the earth, in particular by reducing our carbon footprint, we felt that to continue the investment would be inconsistent with our witness. We asked trustees to take this minute into account when looking at BYM investments.

Many Friends responded to a survey about welfare cuts, and the actions that their meeting had taken. There were 360 responses, and 58% reported that they were actively engaged in helping those most harmed by the cuts. The themes which most concerned meetings were inequality, housing, and food banks. At last Meeting for Sufferings, QPSW was asked to discern whether there was a single piece of work or project on which we could focus our energies. Helen Drewery reported that although no single project had emerged yet, there was a sense of a groundswell of activity at individual and meeting level, out of which one unifying theme might arise in the future. We heard about Wanstead Friends' initiative in sponsoring the 'Fair Penny' petition on change.org, asking people to sign to say that they would be willing to "pay an extra penny per pound in income tax to protect the most vulnerable from austerity cuts".

I came away reminded that grassroots movements involve planting seeds - and those seeds are our own faithful lives.

Speaking to Clutter

Zem Moffat

Elmbank Meeting House, 1-5pm Sunday 17th November, 2013

The media portrayal of hoarders is often indecent and always distressing. Closer to home, most of us know of someone who is affected by clutter. Maybe it is an elderly friend living alone, who ought to move for health reasons, but can't because they have too much stuff that they can neither physically move nor emotionally let go of; or alternatively it is a busy friend who is not coping with the emails, mail and circulars that arrive unbidden each day, causing their daily rhythm to slow down and them to become depressed; or maybe it is someone whose books, clothes and beloved collections are overwhelming their loved ones, those whom they share space and/or time with. Or maybe this is us.

What do our Quaker Testimonies of Peace, Truth, Simplicity, Equality and Sustainability have to say to such sufferings? What Advices and Queries can we draw from our personal experiences? Glasgow Friend and passionate declutterer Zem Moffat invites all to a Creative Listening discernment session on Clutter, at Elmbank Meeting House, 1-5 pm on Sunday 17th November, 2013. It will be an afternoon of sharing and mutual learning, out of which she hopes will come some useful advices that can then be circulated to Friends further afield.

If you can and would like to come, please express your interest to Zem (in person, by phone or email) in good time. It falls on the third Sunday of the month, it follows a shared lunch, so it will be good to be aware of numbers!

Furthermore, on Saturday 16th November will be one of Zem's Simply Clear declutter workshops. These are now running monthly from Elmbank Meeting House, Glasgow. To find out more about these workshops and Zem's other decluttering ventures, simply visit her website www.insightfulmoves.com or give her a call 0797 1600301. It's her passion, and she's always more than happy to speak on Clutter! zem@insightfulmoves.com



The Windows to the World Appeal of South East Scotland AM is raising money for the replacement of the windows of Meeting Room and Hall of its Edinburgh Meeting House. Many Friends have helped us but we still need a little more. I have some bookmarks for sale at 60 pence each. These have, on one side, a 'Q' and panorama of Edinburgh taken from the Meeting House roof by John Fitzgerald and, on the other, the Meeting House icon and quotation from Quaker Faith and Practice. There is a choice of 7 quotations (given below). You could use them as 'stocking fillers' or with your cards at Christmas. The bookmarks are approximately 17 cm. by 4½ cm. (7 in. by 1¾ in.).

Andrew Farrar - aifarrar35@gmail.com

I will be bringing them to General Meeting in Aberdeen but to ensure I have sufficient of each quotation please send me your order by 10 November.

Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts. Trust them as the leadings of God whose Light shows us our darkness and brings us to new life.

Advices & Queries

(Quaker faith & practice 1.02.1)

Live adventurously. When choices arise, do you take the way that offers the fullest opportunity for the use of your gifts in the service of God and the community?

Advices & Queries

(Quaker faith & practice 1.02.27)

Let your life speak. When decisions have to be made, are you ready to join with others in seeking clearness, asking for God's guidance and offering counsel to one another?

Advices & Queries

(Quaker faith & practice 1.02.27)

Every stage of our lives offers fresh opportunities. Attend to what love requires of you, which may not be great busyness.

Advices & Queries

(Quaker faith & practice 1.02.28)

Be patterns, be examples, ... wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people;... then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one.

George Fox, 1656

(Quaker faith & practice 19.32)

The produce of the earth is a gift from our gracious creator to the inhabitants, and to impoverish the earth now to support outward greatness appears to be an injury to the succeeding age.

John Woolman, 1772

(Quaker Faith & Practice 25.01)

There is a spirit which I feel that delights to do no evil, nor to revenge any wrong, but delights to endure all things, in hope to enjoy its own in the end.

James Nayler, 1660

(Quaker faith & practice 19.12)

In the printed version pages 10 and 11 are a centre spread. This spare page compensates for the shrinkage of page 10 in a booklet.

To fill this space, here is an advance printing of an article by Roger Quinn which I could not fit into the constraint of multiples of 4 pages - a pity because it is timely in view of our current discussions of revision. It will appear in the February printing.

QUAKER LIFE AND PRACTICE - (Formerly Christian Experience) - Review by Roger H. Quinn

In his article in Friends' Quarterly (Issue 1 2013) Ross Chapman, an Ulster Friend, describes the long and often painful gestation period of this book, the latest edition of Christian discipline as practised by Friends within Ireland yearly Meeting.

This week with its spectrum of rainbow colours on its cover, is a celebration of the wide diversity of thought among Irish Friends today.

Here is a cornucopia of distilled Christian Quaker wisdom from the past to the present day. It embraces contributions from "all continents and islands" where Friends met in worship. Read the Christian ministry of the doyen of Irish Quakers Victor Bewley, add to that the shrewd observations of C Winifred Lamb together with many other ministries of great weight, and you have a book that deserves to be on the table of every Meeting for Worship.

Word cannot do justice to express the gratitude one feels towards the Review Committee, whose work over the fourteen-year period from conception to birth made what was "humanly impossible" divinely possible.

Dementia in my Meeting

Jan Lethbridge

Thank you Constance M Tonge for bringing the issue of dementia to our attention, and describing how Meetings might best support and care for those who have it. Given the demographic composition of the average meeting, this is a development which we are likely to encounter increasingly in the future.

Dumfries Meeting welcomed my mother when she came to live with us - her dementia having become incompatible with independent living. She was a 'high' Anglican, and we went regularly to a midweek service at Dumfries Episcopal church, but on Sundays she attended Meeting for Worship.

Mum retained her basic sociability and liked that others wanted to see her and talk with her. It wasn't obvious to me that friends behaved any differently towards her than they would any other visitor or newcomer. Most greeted her warmly, some would speak to her, some sit with her over a cuppa, others not. Some shared with me their views and opinions about dementia, and how those afflicted with it should be treated and cared for, others kept their attitudes to themselves. Some of these comments were helpful, others less so. It was ever thus.

Prior to the development of her dementia, I don't remember that Mum had come to Meeting for Worship with us on her visits - she lived 300 miles away. But she certainly quickly absorbed the procedure of meeting and observed the silence. However, one Sunday morning, it became apparent that she was planning to minister, and to my great shame I discouraged her. I regretted this almost immediately, and longed for the circumstances to be repeated. Thankfully, in due course, they were, and so it was that on another Sunday Mum spoke the words of the first verse of the well-known hymn, The Old Rugged Cross. Later on one friend said how grateful they were to hear those words "..... in this place". Another told how she had felt when Mum had paused, as if strugling to remember the next word.

This friend had known the next word and longed for it to come to Mum, which in fact it did. For me this was a precious moment of bonding, and showed the depth of caring that was present.

I'm not a person who often gives advice, and probably don't take it either! But the best advice I had, early on in my encounter with dementia, was that "You (carer, partner or whatever) cannot win!". Those few words cover an awful lot, and if you can accept that then the relationship can be much less stressful. Of course, some of us are much more laid back than others, and less controlling. So much depends on personalities and the previous nature of the relationship with the person who has dementia. Yes, I agree with Constance, for me Mum was still there, until the very end. But she was my mother, not my spouse. It is a totally different love. I had not, subconsciously, chosen her for certain qualities she no longer possessed. So I think we must respect those who do feel they have already lost the person with dementia. We, who value experience above all else, must accept the validity of their experience for them, and I have met it many times and usually between spouses.

I would also agree about visiting - do if you can, a very short visit is infinitely better than none at all. My mum spent the last 18 months of her life in a care home's special unit. Some from Meeting visited her there and sent cards too when visits were impossible. One friend crocheted a little blanket for her, in 'her' colours. And when Mum died, some from Meeting joined the small memorial gathering that we held at the home - the funeral having taken place in Mum's old home town. We shared thoughts, listened to music that was important to Mum, including of course The Old Rugged Cross, placed a ribbon on the home's memory tree, and shared some of the Mr Kiplings cakes that had featured so prominently in her diet! The small things matter so much. And I so love the quote from the late Humphrey Lyttleton, whose own wife had dementia. They had used to listen to music and 'dance' holding hands and swaying alongside each other in chairs: "Life", he said, "finds its own level."

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Each week the Friend offers a unique collection of Quaker news, insight and inspiration, from Britain and around the world. Some say it's like receiving a little bit of Meeting for Worship through the letterbox each Thursday. Our aim is to serve the Religious Society of Friends with a vibrant magazine, engaging with everyone in the Quaker world.

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GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND - Perth, 7th September

John Phillips

We were given a warm welcome by Perth Friends when we gathered for *General Meeting* on Saturday 7th September. The meeting started with a moving period of worship in which we received ministry concerning feelings of bereavement, and the value of shared silence in helping us at life's most difficult times.

Brian Bowes reported to us about ecumenical initiatives for an alternative commemoration of the centenary of the onset of the First World War in 2014. In Scotland there are no memorials to the service of conscientious objectors during the conflict.

Northern Friends Peace Board has prepared a pack for use in schools as the commemoration starting in August next year approaches, and Quakers might arrange visits to local schools to help pupils to focus on peace issues. We considered whether we might wish to mark the centenary within our own area meetings; an appropriate occasion might coincide with the gathering of Commonwealth leaders in Glasgow in connection with the Commonwealth Games, when a service is planned in Glasgow Cathedral on 4th August.

We heard reflections from Jan Lethbridge arising from a conference at Woodbrooke about inter-faith relationships. Quite a lot of Friends take part in various inter-church initiatives, but fewer of these have an inter-faith dimension.

Our parliamentary liaison function group has prepared a letter concerning our opposition to the renewal of Trident. This will be sent out to MSPs and Scottish MPs in the middle of September. It will be available on the GM website and Friends are welcome to refer to it when making contact with their own representatives. In a similar vein we heard about the Quaker public statement on the Syrian crisis, which has given rise to over fifteen short comments by Friends on local radio stations.

53 teenagers and 16 helpers had attended the annual Summer Shindig held at Ackworth School in August. The theme was "Who Decides?" and Bronwen Currie told us of the discussions and about the moving meetings for worship that took place during the course of the gathering. There had been an early-summer gathering for newcomers to the Shindig, and she and Madeleine Harding are now thinking about the possibility of arranging a GM Family Gathering next summer to help possible attendees to get to know each other. Any thoughts about this idea? Please do get in touch with Bronwen or Madeleine.

The Solas Festival - an "arts festival with soul" - was held at the Bield Retreat Centre, Perth this summer. Pete Stuart told us that two separate Meetings for Worship had been incorporated into the programme, with the help of Perth Friends.

After the formal business it was our pleasure to welcome Paul Parker to our afternoon session. Paul has served as Recording Clerk at Friends House for the past two years. He is

- secretary to Yearly Meeting, Meeting for Sufferings and the BYM trustees;
- senior staff member for 141 employed staff; and
- the public face of Quakerism in Britain for government, the churches, the media and for overseas Quakers.

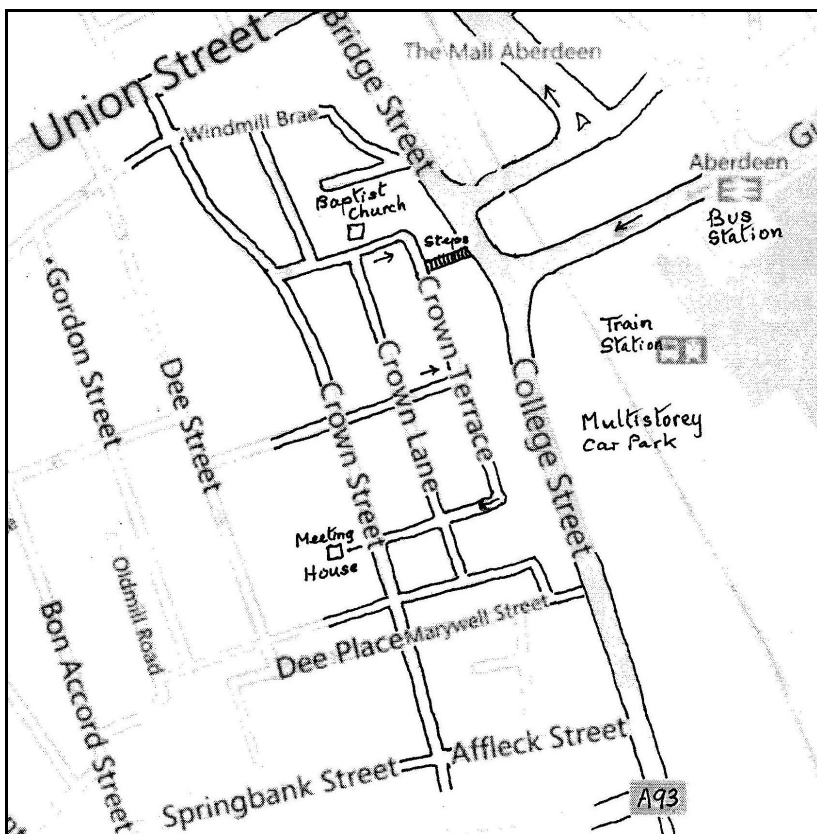
He is convinced that Friends today have an important message to offer to an uncertain world. As a faith group we are ourselves used to living with uncertainty, knowing that life is a journey which is bound to bring new insights and revelation. We need to find our voice on issues like peace, corruption in high places and the abuse of power - just as Friends did in the seventeenth century!

Then we started to reflect on the two questions "What is our personal ministry? What is the ministry of our own meeting?" Each meeting is different. We all know that living up to the standards of our Quaker testimonies is far from easy, but we should recognise that we all have gifts: these are not the same for each of us, so it is not surprising that meetings vary. We spent time in small groups thinking what our own meeting is like, and what image it projects to the world. Paul's talk began and concluded with thoughts about these essential communities of Friends; about how we sustain and develop all the relationships within our meeting, and how we nourish them through the act of silent worship.

Directions to Crown Terrace

Allow 10-15 mins from rail/bus stations if walking by Bridge St and Union St; 5-10 mins via steep steps.

Parking at the Meeting House for disabled Friends only. For other parking, see multi-storey car park on the map.



RESIDENTIAL General Meeting for Scotland

Crown Terrace Baptist Church, Aberdeen 16-17 November 2013

Dear Friends and Attenders throughout Scotland,

Our meeting in November will be in Aberdeen. The weekend starts on Saturday 16th November with refreshments from 10.15 am and then Meeting for Worship at 11 am, followed by business items.

The Saturday morning session will include consideration of how to proceed with the appointment of a new Advocacy staff-member, on which discussions have been taking place with BYM Trustees.

Our speakers during the rest of our time together will be Suzanne Ismail from the QPSW Economic Issues project, and Val Brown of Christian Aid Glasgow. The overall theme will be on how to promote economic justice within a faith context. A current focus of Suzanne's work is to assist Quakers and others explore what sort of economic system is needed if we are to live within the constraints of the Earth's natural resources. Val will be informing us about Christian Aid campaign work for tax justice.

There will be a social activity in the evening, and a further session on Sunday morning followed by worship. The weekend will finish after lunch on the Sunday.

Please join us in Aberdeen, and encourage anyone from your Meeting to come who may not have attended GM before. If you wish to attend for the day and have not already sent in a booking form, please contact **Pamela Affleck** on **01569-762 592** or email: apramtangle@btopenworld.com as soon as possible, so that Aberdeen Friends have correct numbers for catering purposes.

Robin Waterston, Clerk