

SESAME

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High Pay/ Horace Alexander / Easter Week / Festival Charities / Joan Tansley / John Wigham Trust/ Circles of Support/"Seeds of Action"/QPSW Conference/ Quakers and Political Engagement/ AM Minutes



Gandhi during the Salt March (see pages 4-8)

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SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

Saturday 12 May 2012 at 2 p.m., Kinghorn, Fife

Our next Meeting for Worship for Business will be on Saturday, 12 May 2012 at 2 p.m. at Kinghorn Community Centre, Kinghorn. We will be looking forward to General Meeting in Edinburgh in June, and hear from QPSW Conference.

There are good public transport links to Kinghorn, and car parking is also available. Trains leave Edinburgh Waverley at 12.39 (arriving 13.18) and 13.08 (arriving 13.47); they leave Kinghorn at 17.07 (arriving Waverley at 17.50) and 17.36 (arriving Waverley at 18.22). The venue is wheelchair accessible and has an induction loop. Central Fife Friends will provide tea, etc at the end of the Meeting, which will be about 4.30 or 5.00.

Kate Arnot Clerk

South East Scotland Area Meeting

High Pay – what can we do?

Excessive executive pay is of growing concern to the public. Recent press reports have highlighted that executive remuneration has been growing much faster than either other people's pay or share value, and that company boards have largely failed to curtail this.

The government has suggested it is up to shareholders to apply the pressure on boards to get a grip on executive remuneration.

The majority of us will be shareholders in large, stock-market-listed (FTSE 100) companies, through our pension funds if in no other way. Many readers will hold shares through nominees or pooled investment vehicles.

You may think that as a small indirect shareholder, who may never receive company reports or even be aware of which companies you are invested in, you can't have any real influence on the big companies. You might feel that you don't understand how the stock market and shareholding works.

But, however small your holdings, someone will manage them for you. And you can ask for action by that intermediary body on your behalf on the issue of high pay.

Suggested Actions

1. Email your pension fund or stocks and shares ISA provider through the 'FairPensions Your Say on High Pay' web page to ask them to vote against excessive remuneration at company AGMs this year: www.fairpensions.org.uk/highpay.
2. Write a more in-depth letter to the managers of your pension fund, ISA, unit trust, or to your investment broker:
 - (a) raising your concern about the failure of company boards to curtail excessive executive remuneration; and
 - (b) asking them to use the current AGM season to question companies on your behalf about executive pay. (Key questions might include:
 - (i) Does the company's executive incentive plan specifically link into company strategy and objectives?
 - (ii) Has the company awarded transaction related bonuses and "golden hellos" and, if so, will it end this practice?
 - (iii) Has the company adjusted performance targets on incentive plans if the initial ones are not achieved and, if so, will it end this practice?
 - (iv) What is the maximum bonus (variable pay) the company offers as a percentage of base salary? and
 - (v) What is the ratio between the highest and lowest pay levels in the company?

They could be urged to vote against remuneration proposals that do not address these questions satisfactorily.

Helen Boothroyd, ECCR

(Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility)

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Book Review

Gandhi's Interpreter: A Life of Horace Alexander

By Geoffrey Carnall

(Edinburgh University Press 2010)

Horace Alexander died in 1989 at the age of 100. During his long life, he had been both a witness and a participant behind the scenes in most of the great public events of the 20th century. Geoffrey Carnall's biography of Alexander is therefore not merely a biography of one very remarkable man; it is a history of the 20th century seen through an unusual and very particular lens, that of a committed pacifist and active peace-maker. Philippa Gregory in her foreword to the book quotes the author's characteristically modest description of the book as 'a work about a relatively unknown pacifist by a relatively unknown academic' but, as she says, the book is far more important than this self-deprecating assessment would indicate. Horace Alexander is a significant figure in his own right and worthy of such a biography but this is also a fascinating, beautifully written and meticulously researched account of a momentous period in the history of the world, focusing on the decline of Empire and the rise of the independent nations of Asia and Africa. Alexander's chief engagement was with India but he viewed the emergence of independent India as a step towards a new configuration of international relations in a global context.

The friendships of his early years at Cambridge and then Woodbrooke provide a remarkable roll-call of names that were later to become famous, such as Philip Noël-Baker,

Lowes Dickinson and many others. Then, increasingly as his international interests developed, Alexander himself travelled astonishingly widely. The first of his many visits to India extended also to Malaya and the Dutch East Indies and much later he visited China. Before World War II he was involved in peace work in Europe and in Quaker relief work in Catalonia during the Spanish Civil War; after 1945, he visited the USA, travelling the length and breadth of the country to address Quaker meetings and peace conferences. His engagement with Indian politics and with Gandhi in particular dates from the visit in 1927-28, when he met Tagore and Gandhi for the first time, both significant encounters. He said later of Gandhi that he was 'the kind of man my ideal Quaker would be!' He was one of those who welcomed Gandhi's visit to Friends' House in London in 1931, despite the disapproval of some older Quakers, including his own father-in-law. His relationship with Gandhi continued to deepen at a personal level as well as in political negotiations and there are some delightful instances of this: he visits Gandhi in prison with a nosegay of flowers tied with yarn of his own spinning; and when Alexander is ill, Gandhi writes to him:

My dear Horace,

Naughty of you to be ill. I must make a desperate effort to see you in your bed and make you laugh.

Love

Bapu

And Alexander recounts that Gandhi did indeed visit him and succeeded in making him laugh.

It is an indication of the significance of the Quaker presence in Indian politics that both Alexander and another

Quaker, Agatha Harrison, were included as part of the Congress team in the pre-independence Simla negotiations with the Cabinet Mission. Interestingly, one of their contributions was to organize regular Sunday meetings for worship, which were attended by many of the negotiators on both sides and clearly much valued. When Independence eventually arrived, Alexander was in Calcutta with Gandhi and the Muslim leader Suhrawardy and their united courageous witness helped to bring about a precarious peace in the city.

He was again in Calcutta when Gandhi was assassinated. I have a small personal memory associated with that momentous event. My parents were educational missionaries (I like think they were missionaries of whom Alexander would have approved, though he disliked missionaries in general!) and we lived in the college campus near Madras. My 7th birthday was to be celebrated with a party on 31st January. On the afternoon of the 30th, a student burst into our house with the news of the Mahatma's assassination. I remember the first thing everyone said was, 'Pray God it's not a Muslim!' I vividly recall the tension of those hours and soon afterwards I was told that my birthday party would have to be cancelled. Even as a child I realized it was entirely right and proper that something very significant to me should be swallowed up by an event of far greater significance.

Alexander continued to follow the Gandhian (and Quaker) way and felt also the need to explain Gandhi to the west, culminating in his book *Gandhi through Western Eyes*, first published in 1969. It must have given him a sense of quiet pride, despite his modesty, to be awarded

the Padma Bhushan Medal in 1984, the highest honour India awards anyone who is not an Indian citizen.

The picture presented by Geoffrey Carnall is of a complex, at times diffident, at times almost arrogant, personality. In his early years, he seems to have been one who didn't suffer fools gladly, yet in India he was respected for his 'gentle-ness, almost saintliness, which in India means much more than executive ability' and is unexpected in an Englishman! He was someone whose commitment to the task he believed was given him overrode more personal considerations. A week after the death of Olive, his first wife, he sets out to follow a new call. Despite the devastating assassination of Gandhi, he seems almost immediately to begin on the next project. Such commitment to the 'call' over above the personal, while admirable, can seem a slightly chilling aspect of his personality. Geoffrey Carnall's personal memories present him in a more relaxed and attractive light and it is quite a relief to read of his passion for birdwatching and learn that on one occasion at least he put birds before duty!

A comparison comes to mind between this book and Richard Holloway's recent memoir *Leaving Alexandria*. The two men are of different generations and the books are, of course, different in genre, one being a first-person memoir and the other a biography, but they both concern men whose passion for a just and peaceful world springs from a deep inner spiritual source. Holloway's book is primarily an analysis of self, faith and doubt, and it is a familiar story to many who belong to the mainstream church traditions – the story of theological angst and self-doubt.

Carnall's depiction of Alexander shows a man whose religious commitment, while by no means unexamined, does not appear to be an area of personal questioning or tension. Perhaps we cannot know much about his personal spiritual experience but his own emphasis seems to be on the outward expression and enactment of his convictions rather than on analysis of the source of them. It is perhaps unfair to compare two books that set out to do such different things, but while Holloway's story is dominated by spiritual searching and angst, Alexander's seems remarkably free of it, and (as a non-Quaker) I imagine this to be a general reflection of a difference between the Society of Friends and the traditional Christian churches.

I found this a compelling book, partly because of a personal interest in India and knowledge of some of the people involved, such as Laurie Baker and Marjorie Sykes, but also because to a non-Quaker it offers an insight into what it means to belong to the Society of Friends: the centrality and tenacity of the pacifist conviction; the range of Quaker concern and active involvement in all sorts of schemes of meeting and conciliation at many levels; the central place of the meeting for worship; and a different perspective, an alternative view of history, where the key emphasis is on peace rather than conflict.

Helen Reid Thomas

Helen Reid Thomas was brought up in India where she returned as an adult with her husband. They worked in education there for nearly twenty years. She was a student in the English Department at Edinburgh University, where Geoffrey Carnall was one of her teachers

EASTER WEEK

I spent 'Holy Week' at The Coach House, a retreat centre near Inverness. I arrived to find that I was the only non-Episcopalian, and a non-conforming Quaker at that! And so I thought I would be in for a week of Anglican rituals from the prayer book, because two of them were priests and the rest were pretty high-powered. But have you heard of CANA? Christians Awakening to New Awareness? Well, 7 of the 10 who were spending Holy Week with me were members, and were preparing to celebrate Easter weekend at Findhorn, a New-Age community, where there was a large conference to explore the theme 'Into Christ Consciousness'. I found that to them this meant the Cosmic Christ, there since the Big Bang, the Spirit that eventually through evolution filled Jesus the human being, appears under different names in different cultures, and which is now pushing the global village into a spiritual revolution. The retreat house framework provided meditation morning and evening, and we spent time each day first choosing what incident we would focus on for the day, then exploring how we would have reacted if we were one of Jesus's followers who didn't know what would happen next (Ignatian stuff of course!) and then spending the rest of the day quietly meditating on it for ourselves. We then invented a suitable ritual to bring it into our lives. CANA has dropped hierarchies. Everyone is equal and decisions are corporate. I couldn't believe that that here was a traditional denomination behaving the way we do in Quaker business meetings, listening to each other respectfully, silence between contributions, not getting into arguments, going deeper and

deeper together to discover a shared truth to live by. It brought the Jesus story to life in a way that cut through the Christian 'Law' (e.g. you must be given water baptism before you can communicate) just as Jesus cut through the Jewish Law, and I felt accepted as never before. I was given CANA's group study book and felt that if I gave it to a Quaker they would tick it nearly all the way through! (e.g. Quakers agree with Matthew Fox about Original Blessing, and always have. He was one of the speakers at the conference, talking about his new book.)

I left on the Saturday, and have been pondering the resurrection story ever since. Have you come across Cicely Bourgeault's book *Wisdom Jesus?* I was pointed to it at Inverness. It discusses the light thrown by the Gospels of Thomas, Philip and Mary Magdalene on the Jesus story as presented in the canonical New Testament. Explosive stuff. But fills history out. After all, those gospels (only three out of many so-called gnostic, i.e. wisdom, gospels) obviously circulated fairly widely until the male Christian hierarchy suppressed them in the name of The Only Truth. They contain the beliefs of a parallel group of Christians in the first and second centuries. Bourgeault claims that they come from a wide and deep spiritual dimension that Jesus was part of, which he had imbibed through the ancient Middle East Wisdom tradition, and she believes that they add to, rather than contradict, the developing Jesus movement. I'm still digesting this.

Well, if you've waded through all that you have an inkling of the fact that all my life I've had to be very careful with whom I shared my Quaker way of being Christian, because although I wanted to understand the traditional

creeds and what they stood for, and because I was frequently at one in the spirit of their worship, I didn't want to accuse others of what I have been accused of *i.e.* of being "theologically unacceptable". In my lifetime attitudes have changed and now I'm beginning to realise that what George Fox proclaimed 350 years ago is becoming acceptable in mainstream Christianity.

Avis Swarbrick

Cicely Bourgeault's books, *The Wisdom Jesus* (2008) and *The Meaning of Mary Magdalene* (2010) are published by Shambala.

Following Minute 10 of March 2012 AM

Proposal to Area Meeting for support to Charities from Venue 40 proceeds during Festival Fringe 2012

As Friends will know, Festival Committee has for many years given financial support to three Charities from money raised through our activities as Venue 40. Usually we maintain this for three years, in the hope we will enable the charity to plan its work, and so help it make a difference.

Last year we gave to Alternatives to Violence (Scotland), *Comann na Mara* (Society of the Sea), and Quaker Bolivia Link. We have never supported a charity for more than three years running, and so last year our support for AVP (Scotland) and *Comann na Mara* came to an end. We wish to continue our support for Quaker Bolivia Link: this will be its second year and we hope to keep supporting it until the end of 2013.

We try to contribute to a range of work, by supporting three small registered charities which work in at least one of the following areas: the environment, non-violence, justice and human rights; a 'Majority World' nation, Scotland. This year, the mixture we are proposing is slightly different.

As said above, Quaker Bolivia Link fulfils our support for the environment within a 'Majority World' nation. For our work on justice and human rights, we would like to support the Refugee Survival Trust – which has suffered a severe cut in government support. It is Scotland-based, but embraces asylum-seekers from all over the world and fleeing from all sorts of difficulties abroad. As to our third charity, it seems appropriate that at AM in March we were considering our Yearly Meeting as a 'Sustainable Community'. The committee in past times has supported the AM when it undertook major work for example in the new entrance to the Meeting House. We see the proposed alterations to the Meeting House as an ongoing effort to lower the carbon footprint of the upkeep and use of the building. Furthermore, as a committee we have heard of the 'Green Initiative' of the 'umbrella' organisation, Festivals Edinburgh, and we see that supporting our Meeting House Improvement Fund is in line with both objectives. So, we bring forward this as our third charity, and you may note that we have already been approached by the fund-raising group for support.

We know that many volunteers, theatre-goers and customers are impressed that we donate a large proportion of our money to other groups. For the time being we are proposing both these charities, the Refugee Survival Trust

and the AM appeal, for one year only – we do not want to move to a position where we automatically use Venue 40 money to further our own work.

So this year we propose to support Quaker Bolivia Link, the Refugee Survival Trust and the AM Meeting House Improvement Fund.

AM Festival Committee

MEMORIAL MINUTE

The following was Minute 7e of February Area Meeting.

JOAN TANSLEY 8.4.18 – 25.10.11

[Joan Megan Williams–Jones]

Joan's first encounter with Quakers was when her school teacher, a member of the Society, invited all her class to her Quaker wedding. It must have impressed Joan, for years later, married to Will and with two children, Peter and Christine, in 1958 she suggested that they all went to Birmingham's Bull Street Friends Meeting, later transferring to the nearer Hall Green Meeting.

Though working hard in a busy insurance office from leaving school and through the war years, Joan enjoyed reading, playing the piano and singing in choirs, often as soprano soloist. Cycling, rambling and gardening were other interests. She passed the happiness and stability of her own childhood and youth to her children and friends, using her skills and imagination, recognising talents as well as needs, extending warmth and encouragement.

Gentle and calm, though with a lively sense of humour, Joan could analyse situations clearly and sensitively. She had a concern for the important things in life, and stood up for her beliefs. She was willing to lay her own affairs aside to help someone in need, or for a good cause. She encouraged people quietly and tried to bring out the best in them. She had great wisdom and integrity.

Throughout the 'cold war' period Joan was an active supporter of the Peace Movement and CND. She marched in London, led by Bruce Kent, and often demonstrated at Greenham Common and Aldermaston. She helped in the Birmingham CND office until, widowed in 1999, she moved north a year later to live near Peter and his wife in Berwickshire. She was pleased to find a meeting in Kelso and when she could no longer drive, travelled with Katie Bishop through the beautiful Borders countryside she came to love so much.

For three years, after a severe stroke, Joan lived in a Berwick Care Home. She was deaf and almost blind but her mind and incredible memory remained acute. She could recall her active years but was a stoic realist and lived in the present, making the best of things. She looked forward to the letters written daily by her daughter Christine in Canada, and of course her visits, and those of Jean McAuslin, a f/Friend from their Birmingham years now in Peebles, and a loyal and witty correspondent. Joan did crosswords with Peter and Kath his wife, and listened to recorded music and radio poetry and talks. News from Kelso was taken in by Katie Bishop and Marianne Butler, who both read her books of all kinds, chosen by Joan; and in her private room held quiet times of worship, a Quaker

mini-meeting followed by secret Brie sandwiches, and a special joy. Everyone who knew Joan felt better for being with her. She was greatly loved, firm in her faith and passed away serenely. A life well lived.

JOHN WIGHAM (ENJOYMENT) TRUST

We are in the happy situation of having a modest legacy to disburse. John Wigham directed that grants should be made to 'deserving persons resident in Scotland who owing to straitened circumstances are unable to enjoy the usual pleasures of life, the purpose of such grants being to provide the recipients with some additional comfort or pleasure of an exceptional nature, over and above the usual necessities of life'.

Money distributed over the past eight years totals £43,000 up to Spring 2012. The money now in hand is likely to run out during 2013, unless further donations are forthcoming.

We welcome applications from Quakers and non-Quakers resident anywhere in Scotland, for grants large or small. £500 will normally be the maximum. Applicants may obtain an application form and further information from :

Sylvia Massey,
John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust,
22, Bruntsfield Gardens,
Edinburgh EH10 4EA .
Tel: 0131 229 4238
Email: sylviamassey293@btinternet.com

The completed form should be passed to a Quaker of long standing who is well known to their meeting, who will

countersign it and forward it to the address above, to arrive by 31 March or 30 September. Applicants will normally hear the results of their application within 8 weeks of these deadlines.

Hilary Davies

Circles of Support and Accountability

A report from the new coordinator of the Fife Circles Project, Mike Innes, confirms that the two continuing Circles are providing evidence of the effectiveness of this venture in safe management in the community of sex offenders in the medium to high risk category, and of its potential for application across Scotland. Funding is key to the development of Circles, and as far as Fife is concerned, resources are guaranteed for 2012, with the option of another Circle before the end of the year.

Before this can happen, more volunteers are needed to make a training series viable. Interest will be much welcomed, both men and women being needed, the former being in particularly short supply in the current waiting list. Mike Innes can be contacted for further information at SACRO office, tel. 01592 593 100.

David Turner

Book Group

The book for 20 May is *Lost in Translation* by E. Hoffman - again an autobiography, but about changing language and culture as a teenager.

We need titles for June and July; suggestions are welcome.

Rachel Frith

Taking forward Minute 36 from YMG 2011

Rachel Fitzgerald, Phil Lucas and Don Stubbings, led a session aimed at inspiring Friends to think about needs and values and how nourishing these can help us to think more sustainably about our lifestyles.

Friends split into small groups to discuss and then fed back to the whole meeting. A number of themes emerged and Friends found they were in agreement on a variety of issues. We have grouped the responses below and attempted to draw some of the threads together.

“Sowing the seeds of action”

1. What do you really need and what do you value most in your life?

A strong theme running through the responses here was of love, support and community. Once the basics are provided for, it is the presence of other people, and the ways we work and play together, that we value in our lives.

- Warm house, food, public transport, partner’s friendship, creative outlets, water
- Freedom to follow one’s own Inner Light
- Good health and simple living
- Mental and physical nurturing
- Engagement in the wider community
- Love, support, companionship, family and relationships
- Fresh air, nature, time and space/peace and quiet
- Work and working with others, travel and mobility
- Fairness, justice, meeting for worship and prayer
- Music and other ‘food for the senses’

2. How does your Quaker involvement support or challenge your needs and values?

It was clear from these responses that Quaker involvement can present both a support and a challenge in our lives, very often on the same issue! Again, community was a vital source of support as well as offering constructive challenges to our lives.

Support	Challenge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Being part of a like-minded community ▪ Feel you fit in rather than having to explain oneself ▪ Mutual aid and the sharing of problems ▪ A sacred space in busy lives ▪ Support and companionship on social justice issues ▪ Meeting for worship – pastoral and moral support ▪ Our testimonies help us to live the challenges; to be happy with less ▪ We gain a faith so that difficult outcomes are possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Quaker values challenge us even on the basics (where does our food come from?)</i> ▪ <i>Asks us – do we really need our needs?</i> ▪ <i>People within our Quaker community can challenge us on a personal level, as well as giving us the opportunity to look for God within them</i> ▪ <i>Transport – we need to travel to get to Meeting</i> ▪ <i>The diverse commitment of Friends is very valuable but also challenging</i> ▪ <i>Challenges us to look more widely in our community and stops us being complacent</i> ▪ <i>The commitment of time, particularly when our Quaker family comes into conflict with our own family</i> ▪ <i>The sense of privilege we may feel can lead to a feeling of guilt; and a sense of urgency</i> ▪ <i>Quakerism challenges any feeling of self righteousness or being judgmental</i>

3. *Your needs and values are the seeds that can lead you to act and to try to build a world in which these values flourish. What kind of nourishment do your seeds need to flower?*

Predictably perhaps, Quaker values played a large part in the things people felt they needed to nourish their own needs and values.

- Time and space, ideas from other people
- An acceptance of the “world without form” (Genesis Ch 1) and the need to be open to the water of life in order to grow
- Learning from the example of others
- Having surplus resources – a subsistence level existence is limiting
- Harmonious life – stress is damaging
- Ability to develop ideas
- Communication with the younger generation
- Openness and realising we’re all at different stages on our journey
- Encouragement, not judgment
- Be kind to ourselves, we’re part of a community that is doing its best
- Stimulation from Friends
- Challenging, nourishing environment
- Meeting for worship
- An openness to address issues without fear
- A supportive community
- Mental and emotional strength and freedom
- Labour-saving devices
- The seeds are our testimonies and are a way of reminding us of our responsibilities

- Weeding - pursuing the horticultural metaphor, the values we cherish will flourish when we weed out the things that absorb our time and energy unhelpfully.

Following the feedback from the small groups, AM settled into meeting for worship, from which came a sense of our needing a ‘demanding common task’ to draw us together on these issues. An ever-increasing need to feed ourselves in a more sustainable way led to ideas of community growing and harvesting.

Whatever form our response to BYM Minute 36 takes, it is clear that our Quaker values, and particularly our Quaker community, will play a key role in encouraging and supporting us in our journey towards becoming a low carbon community.

Rachel Fitzgerald

Quaker Peace and Social Witness Conference, Swanwick, Derbyshire - 23-25 March, 2012

In common with most of the other one hundred and thirty delegates I was attending this Conference for the first time which came as a surprise: I wondered why there were so few ‘returnees’ to such a stimulating event, meticulously organised and enthusiastically led. We were divided into base groups, each numbering eight-to-ten participants, which met on three occasions. Our group was fortunate to have a facilitator eager to draw us out and seek our opinions. This enriched the weekend and made for some compelling debate.

There were two main speakers: the first was Helen Drewery who spoke about the history of the Quaker movement and of the work of QPSW, which includes advocacy and campaigning, Parliamentary liaison, networking and sustainability. The second was Susan Seymour who spoke about her testimony as both Prophet and Activist, using Jonathon Dale's "Beyond the Spirit of the Age" and Tony Stoller's "Wrestling with the Angel" as her twin inspirations. This was a wide-ranging account of a life impressively lived which included her time in Macedonia during the Kosovo War, challenging Elsevir (Publishers) to abandon its arms exhibition, joining the Occupy movement at St. Paul's and her work with the New Economics Foundation which defines Capitalism as unsustainable, unfair, unstable and unhappy. Her talk, for me, was the highlight of a weekend filled with stimuli to action.

We were given the opportunity to join two of nine workshops; mine were both excellent. The first, led by Laura Shipler from Chico, was about the Turning the Tide programme developed in Kenya since 2005. We were given a 'hypothetical' case study and invited, in small groups, to decide how to effect a fairer resolution, using tools from this non-violence training programme. Afterwards Laura told us these were real situations and described how they had actually been resolved.

The second workshop was about the work of the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva which has nine staff mainly funded through Britain Yearly Meeting. Unlike the first workshop which has seen some impressive results within a few years, their work is slow, unspectacular and process driven. Lynn Finnegan, a lawyer, described how,

after five years of awareness-raising ("chipping away") the Children of Prisoners issue was finally debated at the UN for the first time this year. QUNO has since produced a booklet of good practice.

There were other events which I was unable to attend owing to clashing commitments. I particularly regretted missing the talk on tar sands, and the environmentally-catastrophic effect this Canadian oil-extraction scheme is having. The EU will vote whether or not to allow tar sands oil into Europe in June. It is banned from the USA on environmental grounds. I urge you to get involved by contacting Chris Walker at QPSW on 020 7663 1009 or chris@quaker.org.uk

So much to be done and with sustainability at the heart of every discussion. I leave you with this poster from St. Paul's: 'Apathy: the greatest weapon of mass destruction'.

Lynne Barty

Quakers and Political Engagement

Over a long period of years, South Edinburgh Friends have engaged with successive political representatives for the constituency, early contacts being with Westminster MPs, then also, from 1999, with MSPs at Holyrood. These contacts were arranged from time to time when Friends were concerned about particular issues. Recently, however, it was felt that the arrangements were *ad hoc*, depending on who might just turn up, and that some who did might be uncertain of what was on the agenda. It was agreed at Local Meeting that a small group be formed of

Friends willing to commit themselves to the idea of regular, well-prepared meetings with politicians.

Before any such meeting, the Group would meet and agree an agenda, a possible date, and the roles Friends would adopt, for example presenting an item, chairing, minute-taking. On each occasion a report would be made available to the wider meeting, appearing as a business item of a following Local Meeting and in the Newsletter.

So far this arrangements has been working well, with numbers attending between six and twelve. It has been agreed that dialogue is the form of the meetings rather than lobbying. Discussions have been more focused since more of those attending are well informed. Topics have been on both national issues, such as welfare benefits, disability and health services, housing, sustainability, and on international issues such as nuclear weapons, the arms trade, Millennium Development Goals, and the Jubilee Debt campaign. Between meetings, correspondence can continue over questions on which we have asked for information, or have suggested a matter be taken up with a Government Minister. Politicians involved have expressed their appreciation of the opportunities to get to know us in terms of a long-term relationship. We, for our part, welcome the careful listening during which issues are explored without conclusions at times and leave us all with more to learn.

David Turner

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

**Minutes of Area Meeting held on Saturday 31 March 2012,
at the Quaker Meeting House, Abbey Row, Kelso**

Minute 1: Sustainability and Economic Justice

We continued our reflection and consideration on the above, responding to Minute 36 of Yearly Meeting Gathering in Canterbury, August 2011. Before we went into small groups to consider the questions below, Don Stubbings reminded us that BYM had as an aim that individual Friends, local and Area Meetings and BYM itself should become low carbon communities.

In September 2011, we became a member of Living Witness.

Phil Lucas read part of Minute 36 including:-

- “we are renewing our commitment to a sense of the unity of creation which has always been part of Friends’ testimonies. Our actions have, as yet, been insufficient.”
- “... we have ... unfairly benefited at other’s expense, to redress inequalities which are... ‘wretched and blasphemous’.”
- “We need to allocate resources to this process... which needs to be joyful and Spirit led... Only demanding common task builds community.”

At February’s Area Meeting, we agreed to hold a Threshing Meeting to help us today. A report on this day was circulated by email and is attached to these minutes. Rachel Fitzgerald summarised this as some Friends have not yet received *Sesame* and some Friends do not have email.

We split into small groups to consider the following questions

1. *What do you really need and what do you value most in your life?*
2. *How does your Quaker involvement support or challenge your needs and values?*

3. *Your needs and values are the seeds that can lead you to act and to try to build a world in which these values flourish. What kind of nourishment do your seeds need to flower?*

We fed back to the whole group and ended with Worship.

We agreed to the first recommendation of the threshing meeting. We ask Don Stubbings, Phil Lucas and Rachel Fitzgerald to co-ordinate forming a small group to progress our response to Minute 36 and also to write to all constituent meetings to ask them to appoint a representative/correspondent to be part of this group, whose remit is to respond to BYM's challenge regarding sustainability and economic justice.

Finally we ask that the small group discussion be written up and published in *Sesame*. [See page]

Minute 2: We welcome today three attenders, Chris Hall, Liddy Hall, and Kath McDonald, all of Kelso LM.

Minute 3: Apologies

The following Friends are prevented and send their apologies: Katie Bishop; Alan Davies; Hilary Davies; Daphne Foster; John Foster; Janet Grimwade; Marilyn Higgins; Rachel Howell; Mark Hutchison; Ken Jobling; Stasa Morgen-Appel; Margaret Mortimer; Jasmine Perinpanayagam; Rosie Roberts; Sue Sierra.

Minute 4: Signing of the AM minutes of 26 February:

The minutes of 26 February 2012 have been published in *Sesame*. A copy has been signed by the clerk and entered in the Minute Book.

Minute 5: Extract 21.08 of *Quaker Faith & Practice* was read during our opening worship. This was written by Anna Bidder in 1978.

Minute 6: Matters arising: None

Minute 7: Draft Summary Accounts for the General Fund and 7 Victoria Terrace:

Caroline Evens, Treasurer of South East Scotland AM, has presented to us draft accounts as above.

The accounts are in a slightly different format this year and show income and expenditure for 2011 and 2010. Overall, we are in surplus in 2011. Our income has gone up and our expenditure has gone down.

We have income and expenditure for 7 Victoria Terrace for both 2011 and 2010, both years showing a deficit. The increased deficit for 2011 is almost entirely due to capital work, which cost £24,933.61. Caroline outlined expected costings of further known work required for 7 Victoria Terrace.

A balance sheet was not presented at this time. Caroline thanks all local meeting Treasurers for their work and service.

We have remitted no money to BYM in 2011, except for monies earmarked by Friends for this. This is because we have so many large capital works to pay for in the immediate or near future for both 7 Victoria Terrace and Kelso. We agree that it is prudent not to remit now to BYM but hope to remit towards the end of this year. However, this is dependent on fundraising and the cost of necessary work. We encourage Friends to donate individually to BYM.

We thank Caroline Evens, Henry Thompson, and Richard Williams for all their work on our complex accounts.

Minute 8: Report from Trustees:

John Phillips, Clerk of Trustees, has presented to us a report on the work of Trustees.

The AM trustees meet 4 or 5 times a year. They have two main functions

- a) Ensuring legal compliance
- b) Stewardship of our resources

They last reported to Area Meeting in September 2011.

Emphasis has changed away from accessibility (particularly for 7 Victoria Terrace), but this needs to be reviewed continually. Work is still required to improve Kelso meeting house.

The focus now is on on-going maintenance and on making necessary changes to both meeting houses which will lessen our carbon footprint. 7 Victoria Terrace is a major challenge. The high cost of window replacement meant that the schedule of works had to be changed. Work on the kitchen and adjacent areas is almost finished; the toilets will be upgraded, it is expected, in 2012 and a major fundraising appeal is imminent. As a result of these works we intend to reduce our electricity consumption in heating 7 Victoria Terrace. Although most of the roof faces south, the capital costs and other difficulties of installing solar photovoltaic panels means that this is not currently possible. However, Trustees will bear this in mind. Also to be considered is wall insulation. We ask Trustees to consider commissioning an analysis of the thermal needs of 7 Victoria Terrace. Staff are attempting to lessen heat loss and will also be grateful when the windows are replaced. Trustees and staff are seeking information and liaising with others re best practice and new information on aspects of the work required.

We recognise the difficulties caused to our staff during the work already carried out as well as the work required and we thank them for their work and patience.

We are grateful to previous and current Trustees for their work and service as this is often frustrating as the situation is constantly changing. We thank them for their work and for this report and ask that the report be published in *Sesame*.

Minute 9 : Nominations and Appointments

Our Nominations Committee has brought forward the following names for appointment to serve from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2015:

- a) Overseers, **Eileen Schott**, Central Edinburgh, to 31 March 2013 - new appointment, to be extended if personal circumstances allow; and
Maureen Anderson, Polmont, to 31 March 2015 – renewal
- b) Trustee, **Phil Lucas**, East Lothian, to represent Kelso *pro tem*, until someone from Kelso can take this on, to be reviewed no later than 31 March 2015
- c) Trustee, **Martin Burnell**, South Edinburgh, to 31 December 2014 – renewal
- d) Assistant Clerk Records, **Sue Sierra**, Central Edinburgh, to 31 March 2015 - new appointment. (We thank Janet Grimwade who has done this since 2006.)
- e) Archives Group: **Rhoda MacKenzie**, Central Edinburgh, to serve until March 2015

These names being acceptable we appoint our Friends as above.

Request for release: Mary Woodward serving on Archives Group. We agree to this request, with immediate effect.

Minute 10: Festival Committee

Festival Committee has recommended to Area Meeting over the past years financial support to three charities usually for 3 years, towards a range of organisations which focus on the environment, peace, justice and human rights. We hope our donations make a difference. Festival Committee are suggesting financial support for a mix of organisations as below:

continued support for **Quaker Bolivia Link**;
and (both for one year only, initially)
The Refugee Survival Trust; and

7 Victoria Terrace Improvement Fund, emphasising environmental concerns.

We ask that an outline of these organisations be published in *Sesame*. [See page]

We agree to the above request.

Marianne Ferguson Rice, on behalf of Alternatives to Violence Project (Scotland), thanked us for our previous financial support and let us know that, partly because of this, AVP(S) now has a part-time worker.

Minute 11: Report from General Meeting 3 March 2012: this was deferred

Minute 12: General Meeting - proposed dates and venues 2013 to March 2014

General Meeting is proposing the following GM dates and venues for 2013-14:

West:	2 March 2013 (already agreed)
South East:	8 June 2013
East:	7 September 2013
North:	16/17 November 2013
West:	8 March 2014

Subject to the availability of 7 Victoria Terrace on 8 June, we agree to the above.

ADDENDUM TO MINUTES: It is *not* available; the date is now 15 JUNE 2013 AT 7 Victoria Terrace.

Minute 13: Membership Matters

- a) Transfer In: Further to Minute 9d of 14th January we have received a Certificate of Transfer of Membership from Leicester AM in respect of **Ann Barrett** who has moved to Flat 2, 20 Darnell Road Edinburgh. We gladly accept this transfer.

- b) Transfer out: Further to Minute 7a of 26th February we have received the Certificate of Acceptance of Transfer in respect of **Alastair & Gill Reid** from West Scotland AM
- c) We have received a request from **Emma & Gregory Norminton** previously of Central Edinburgh LM and now at 8 Burford Court, Cotterdale Close, Manchester M16 8EA to transfer their membership to Manchester & Warrington AM. We agree to this request, and ask Janet Grimwade to process it.
- d) We record the death of Helen Dickinson, an attender at East Lothian LM, who died on 29 March 2012. Funeral details to follow.

Minute 14: Request for financial assistance

Margaret Mortimer, our Prison Minister, who is at Sufferings today, has emailed to request two small enabling sums of money.

- a) £30, which Margaret would hold for prisoners going into prison with no money to (*e.g.*) enable phone calls to their lawyer. The Chaplaincy service would contact Margaret who can easily access Edinburgh Prison. This would need to be topped up from time to time but it is not yet known how much nor how often.
- b) The Visitors Centre could do with some minor, but very helpful, equipment for the children of visitors. This would make children's lives a little less bleak. The Salvation Army provides support and it is a pleasant waiting and refreshment area.

We agree, joyfully, to donate £250 to cover both and would be pleased to hear further. Perhaps the furniture could be produced within this or another prison.

Minute 15: AOCB

- a) Jane Pearn has told us that 4 April has been designated by the U.N. as Landmine Awareness Day. Mines Advisory Group (MAG), as a fundraiser, are selling Safe Socks – red with MAG's logo. This has been so successful as an initiative that all small sizes are sold out, but Jane will have more available. Also available are red pin badges.
- b) Living Witness Link Group are having a weekend at Bamford Quaker Community, 4-6 May. Don Stubbings has details and any Friend wishing to attend should contact him. We ask him to circulate this information to all constituent meetings. All costs, including travel, will be refunded.

Closing Minute: 22 Friends from six local meetings attended all or part of this Meeting for Worship for Business. Our next Area Meeting will be on Saturday, 12 May 2012 in Kinghorn, hosted by Central Fife LM.

Kate Arnot

Clerk, South East Scotland Area Meeting

FUTURE AREA MEETINGS

Saturday 30 June, at Polmont: 2 pm – 5.30 pm

Sunday 16 September, at the Open Door, South Edinburgh 2 p.m. – 5.30 pm

Saturday 20 October, at 7 Victoria Terrace: 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Saturday 8 December, at 7 Victoria Terrace: 2 p.m. – 5.30 p.m.

NEXT SESAME COPY DEADLINE

Tuesday 12 June

Quaker Meetings for Worship in South East Scotland**Every Sunday**

Central Edinburgh: 7 Victoria Terrace	11.00am	9.30am &
South Edinburgh: Open Door, 420 Morningside Road,		10.30am
Polmont: Greenpark Community Centre		10.45am
Kelso: Quaker Meeting House, Kelso		10.30am

Every Wednesday

Mid Week Meeting: 7 Victoria Terrace		12.30pm- 1pm
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First Sunday in the Month

Penicuik & Peebles: Valleyfield House, 17 High St., Penicuik		11.00am
<i>Children welcome, bring and share lunch.</i>		
Portobello: Old Parish Church Hall, Bellfield Street		7.30pm

First Tuesday in the Month

Edinburgh University Common Room, Muslim Prayer Rooms (opposite the Weir Buildings) at Kings Buildings: <i>contact Sarah Martin 07818050853 or sarah.martin@ed.ac.uk for more details</i>		1pm- 1.30pm
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Second Sunday in the Month

Tweeddale: Tweedbridge Court, Margaret Blackwood House, Dukehaugh, Peebles <i>All welcome but please phone to confirm. 01721 721 050 or 01896 850 389.</i>		10.30am
Central Fife: Hunter Halls, Kirkcaldy		10.30am
East Lothian: East Linton Community Hall (in Kirk Wynd opposite the Old Kirk)		11.00am

Third Tuesday in the Month

Edinburgh University Common Room, Muslim Prayer Rooms		1pm- 1.30pm
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Fourth Sunday in the Month

Tweeddale: Tweedbridge Court, Margaret Blackwood House, <i>Details as Second Sunday above</i>		10.30am
Central Fife: Hunter Halls, Kirkcaldy <i>as above</i>		10.30am
Portobello: CHANGES Community Health Project 108 Market St, Musselburgh, East Lothian EH21 6QA		10.30am
Barony St Meeting 33 Barony Street, Edinburgh		7.00 pm

Last Sunday in the Month

East Lothian: East Linton Community Hall		11.00am
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Distribution of Sesame & Scottish Friends Newsletter

The current practice is to distribute one copy of Sesame and the Scottish Friends Newsletter to every Member and Attender household. Contributions to the costs of Sesame are always warmly welcomed by the Area Meeting Treasurer, Caroline Evens. An email version of Sesame is more ecological and is free! A large print version is available on request.

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