



GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

2 Mar 2013

Glasgow

Min. 1 Reading

During Meeting for Worship we heard a reading quoted from Quaker Faith and Practice 19.32 in which George Fox writes from Launceston Prison on walking cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one.

Min. 2 Welcome

We welcome four attenders to this GM. We also welcome as a visitor Mitchell Bunting of the United Reformed Church.

We will record the total numbers of all present and add them to these minutes.

East Scotland	6
South East Scotland	14
North Scotland	4
West Scotland	<u>16</u>

Total: 40 plus 1 visitor

Min. 3 Reporter

We appoint Alyson Buchan from East Scotland AM to report this meeting to *The Friend* and the *Scottish Friend*. We ask West Scotland AM to report on the next GM.

Min. 4 New members and deaths

We record the following new members since our last meeting:

Phillida Ball (W)
Zem Moffat (W)

We record the following deaths:

Ian Richardson (W)
Barbara Organ (W).

Min. 5 Dates and venues for 2014-15

We propose the following GM dates and venues for 2013-14:

West – 8 March 14 (already agreed)
South East – 14 June 14
North – 13 Sept 14
West – 15/16 Nov 14
East – 7 Mar 15

We ask AM Clerks to consider these dates and for GM to confirm them in June.

General Meeting – Glasgow 2 March 2013

Min. 6 Tabular Statement 2012

We note the following numbers at 31 Dec 2012:

	2012	2011	2010	2009
East	111	107	108	113
West	227	228	224	224
North	122	118	123	128
South East	247	254	265	268
TOTAL:	707	707	720	733

Min. 7 Parliamentary Liaison Function Group

We have heard a report from Elizabeth Allen on the work of the Parliamentary Liaison Function Group. The group works closely with Alastair Reid, our representative on the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Advisory Group, and with Alex Cole-Hamilton, our Parliamentary Adviser. They are also developing links with the BYM Parliamentary Office advisory group.

They ask Scottish Friends to reflect on what interests and skills each of us may be able to offer to this work, and to pass the information to our Administrator.

The first advocacy topic is Trident. The group is setting up an email group of those wishing to be involved in campaigning on this topic. They are also involved in the Marriage Equality campaign, and work on criminal justice reforms. They have written briefing papers on the Alternatives to Violence Project and on Circles of Support and Accountability.

The group is willing to visit local Meetings to assist with the process of linking directly with local Friends. They have also been thinking ahead to possible GM discussions relating to the Scottish independence referendum next year.

We have heard that South East Scotland Area Meeting have joined a new Scottish coordinating body "Scrap Trident". We agree that GM should also become a supporting body. We thank Elizabeth for her report.

Min. 8 Meeting for Sufferings Report

We have heard reports from Jane Pearn and Kevin Franz.

Jane spoke of aspects of a weekend residential meeting in January. They had considered how concerns originating with an individual or a local Meeting can best be tested and expanded to become a concern shared more widely.

Kevin attended Meeting for Sufferings in December. Participating in a much smaller body than before had been an interesting experience. The main topic was on the work of the Canterbury Commitment Group following from Minute 36 of Yearly Meeting in Canterbury in 2011 on sustainability and climate change. He concluded: "If our action is to flow from love, it means for me listening more attentively to the voices of the poor and powerless. Perhaps we will find there new springs of commitment and passion for change."

Min. 9 Scottish Churches China Group

We have heard a report from Margaret Anderson on the work of the Scottish Churches China Group.

Arising from her experience of working in Yunan in China in 1994-5 she has continued her interest and involvement with China through the work of the Group. It is an ecumenical group, aiming to strengthen links between Scotland and China, to support Christian witness of churches in China, and to help projects assisting vulnerable groups, for example those with physical or mental handicaps.

We thank Margaret for her report.

Min. 10 Report of Outreach Conference

We have heard a report from Phillida Ball who attended the conference "Reaching In, Reaching Out, rethinking Outreach" held in January.

There were three excellent speakers. In groups, there was discussion of the questions:

1. What makes a healthy Meeting?
2. What does being a healthy Meeting enable us to do?
3. How do we encourage and welcome new people in their first weeks, first months, first year?

Paul Parker had commented on the fact that 80% of British Quakers have come from other churches, and 80% of us are the only Quaker in the household. This has implications for outreach and witness.

Rosemary Hartill concluded that we need to try to create strong, welcoming, resilient and energising community meetings that are simple, contemporary and radical.

Min. 11 Preparation for Yearly Meeting May 2013

Jane Pearn has reported that Agenda Committee are making preparations for Yearly Meeting in May. They invite Friends and Meetings to reflect on the following questions:

1. How have you discerned the right way forward in your own life?
2. What experiences have you had of Quaker meetings being guided by the Spirit when making decisions?
3. What do you value about the ways in which Friends work together?

Agenda Committee hope that sharing of responses out of individual lived experiences of Friends will assist in the preparation for the YM sessions, both for those attending and those who will not be personally present.

Min. 12 Commonwealth Games 2014

The Commonwealth Games will be held in Glasgow in 2014. We note that although the deadline for applying to be a volunteer has now passed, a number of Friends have already applied.

The Clerk has read from a report by Peter Green, a Friend who became a volunteer Quaker Chaplain at the Olympics and Paralympics last summer and found the experience rich and rewarding. He has applied for Glasgow next year, hoping to serve again on the chaplaincy

team. We are pleased to hear this, and will give whatever support we can to Peter and any other successful applicants.

We have heard that the interdenominational organisation “More than Gold” will also be supporting athletes at the Games, and we encourage involvement in this by interested Friends.

Min. 13 Appointments and Representatives

Nominations Function Group has brought forward the following names, and we agree to them:

GM Trustees April 2013 to March 2015
(Robin Davis has been appointed as convener of GM Trustees)

North Scotland: David James (2nd triennium)
West Scotland: Margaret Morton (1st triennium)
East Scotland: Pam Brunt (3rd triennium)
South East Scotland: Martin Burnell (3rd triennium)

Representative Friend June 2013 to June 2016
Margaret Peacock

Representative Friends Pool June 2013 to December 2015
Leslie Stevenson

One-off nominations

Iona Community- GM Rep to 1450th anniversary of arrival of St Columba 19 May 2013
Mike Shilson (Tobermory Meeting)

General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 18-24 May 2013
David James

United Reformed Church annual assembly 15-17 March 2013
Alison Burnley

Methodist Spring Synod 27 April 2013
Leslie Stevenson

Church of Scotland Guild 15 June 2013
Pamala McDougall

We also agree that the appointment of representatives to annual conferences of other churches be delegated in future to the Representative Friend using the Pool and other interested Friends without coming to GM for approval each time.

Min. 14 Quaker Life in Scotland over the centuries

Paul Burton, who is responsible for oversight of our Scottish Quaker archives, has given us an informative and enlightening presentation on Quaker Life in Scotland over the centuries, and on our archives.

Quakerism in England was initially an outward-looking mass movement arising out of the egalitarian ideals of the Commonwealth and dissatisfaction with the established Church. It met considerable opposition from the ecclesiastical and civil authorities with persecution of individual Friends. Quakerism was first recorded in Scotland in 1653 in East Kilbride, not long after its origins in England. As in England, the movement met opposition from the existing churches, both Presbyterian and Episcopal.

Meeting for Sufferings was initially formed to support individual Friends suffering persecution for their beliefs. In Scotland, Friends in Aberdeen and elsewhere had property confiscated, faced excommunication, and various Acts of the Scottish Parliament were passed to restrict their activities.

Around the start of the eighteenth century, Quakers became more inward-looking and exclusive, leading to a great drop in numbers. This was the period when emphasis was placed on sober dress and plain speech; marrying outside the Society was banned, and small Meetings were often based round one family. Successful Quaker businessmen tended to move to England and by the 1790s the number of Quakers in Scotland had dropped to approximately 100.

John and Elizabeth Wigham, two English Quakers from Northumberland, led a revival in southern Scotland in the early nineteenth century. Record-keeping was improved, Quakers began to work with other churches to support social reform, and new members were attracted from England and Ireland. The ban on marrying out was ended in the 1860s and there was a move, initially to an evangelical, and later to a liberal approach which continued in the twentieth century.

The occupations of Quakers in Scotland reflect the changing nature of the Society. Most 17th century Quakers in Scotland were associated with the land – farmers, Border lairds, seedsmen and gardeners. By the nineteenth century there was a marked change with almost three quarters being merchants, craftsmen and manufacturers. By the twentieth century over half of Friends worked in education, medicine and other professions. The proportion of Attenders has also grown, approaching fifty percent in some Meetings. Today eighty six percent of Friends are aged over forty five.

Friends have emphasised the keeping of accurate records since the early days of the Society, when there was a need to keep track of those suffering persecution or discrimination. Paul has shown us a selection of these records, which cast an interesting light on the composition of the Society at the time. Guidance on keeping of records is available from Friends House. For various reasons, digital records are not a substitute for printed records on acid-free paper. We need to have regard to the confidentiality of any information relating to living individuals.

Finally, Paul has spoken about the theologian Robert Barclay (1648-1690) and the development of the Ury Estate near Stonehaven, the family seat of the Barclays. Robert Barclay was connected by marriage to many influential Quaker and non-Quaker families.

We thank Paul Burton for leading a most interesting session.

Min. 15 Closing Minute

We record our thanks to West Scotland Friends for being our hosts at this GM, and look forward to meeting again in Edinburgh on 15 June, when our speakers will be Eva Schonveld and Jane Lewis from Portobello on the Transition Towns movement.

Robin Waterston

Clerk