

# SESAME

Number 179: May 2013

New leaflets/Faith in Action/7VT Windows/ Kelso Meetings/Sufferings/Area Meeting April Minutes



*Elderly Quaker woman, artist unknown. Garbisch Collection*

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## SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

Area Meeting will be held on Saturday 18 May at 2 pm at the Community Centre, Rossland Place, Kinghorn, Fife, just 3 minutes' walk from Kinghorn railway station. Trains leave Edinburgh Waverley at 12.39 (arriving 13.18) and 13.08 (arriving 13.47). Returning, they leave Kinghorn at 17.05 (arriving Waverley at 17.50) and 17.37 (arriving 18.23).

The agenda will include reports on our work with prisoners; on the work of the John Wigham Enjoyment Trust and of a very interesting Meeting for Sufferings, at which was discussed Quaker participation in the campaign of boycott, divestment and sanctions directed against Israel's policy of settlement on Palestinian territory in the West Bank. Some Area Meetings are asking that this be extended to a wider boycott of Israel; we will take the opportunity to consider this ourselves.

I look forward to seeing many of you in Fife.

**Phil Lucas**, Area Meeting Clerk

### AGENDA

1. Worship
2. Attendance
3. Signing of minutes of last meeting
4. Matters arising
5. Tackling the Poverty Premium – minute from South Edinburgh meeting
6. Report: April Meeting for Sufferings (*Janet Grimwade*)
7. Britain YM and the Israel/Palestine situation
8. Report: Our work in prisons *Margaret Mortimer*
9. Report on the work of the John Wigham Enjoyment Trust (*Annie Miller*)
10. Appointments and release from service
11. Membership matters
12. Minute of Junior Yearly Meeting 2013
13. Clerking of September Area Meeting
14. Correspondence
15. AOCB
16. Concluding minute

### Leaflets on Ministry and on Meeting for Business

Elders attached to Central Edinburgh have produced the following documents: they are published here for the information of AM. Comments are welcome and should be directed to the Convenor LM Elders

#### Ministry during Meeting for Worship

*Everyone in the meeting participates in the act of worship, though some may find silent worship unfamiliar. The suggestions below may help you if you are new to Quaker worship, or remind you if you've been many times before.*

In Quaker Meeting stillness and silence are as much a part of our worship as our speaking.

Once the meeting has gathered into silence, someone may feel led to rise and speak, pray or even sing: this is known as 'vocal ministry'. Ministry should be prompted by the Spirit within.

Listen to all ministry in a spirit of acceptance.

- Whatever is said, even if it does not seem to speak directly to you, may speak to others in the room.

If you are prompted to minister, wait until you are sure that your message—and the time—are right:

- Let your message grow within you and then try to speak in humility, from your own experience and from the heart;
- Speak clearly and loudly enough for all to hear;
- Aim for simplicity and clarity;
- It is usual to stand up to minister, but feel free to remain seated if you have difficulty standing.

When ministering, respect the ministry of others:

- Leave time for yourself and others to absorb what has been said;

- Speak your own truth, without challenging what has been said before;
- It is very rarely helpful to speak more than once during Meeting.

It is helpful for Meeting to close with a period of silence, so please avoid making additions towards the end.

If you wish to read to yourself, try to do so sparingly—reading tends to shut you off from sharing the experience of the meeting, and those near you may find it distracting.

We should be tender with those who find it difficult to follow these guidelines—please bear with them in a spirit of care while in the Meeting, and consider looking for ways to offer them help outside it.

[For those seeking further guidance, the red booklet of *Advices & Queries* is a good place to start.]

#### Quaker Meeting for Worship for Business Brief Guidelines

- When Quakers meet to do business, it is a Meeting for Worship.
- We are seeking a sense of God's will, or the common spirit of the group, so the discipline is to let go of our own will.
- Silence at the start allows us to gather together in the Light, or in community, and settle into sensing our inward guidance.
- The clerk will introduce each business item and, after a brief silence, anyone wishing to speak will usually stand. The clerk will then sense who to choose to speak. Not everyone may be called.
- We try to listen attentively, without interrupting, leaving space between contributions.

- Helpful contributions speak to the point without commenting directly on or repeating what someone else has said.
- It is normal to speak only once on any topic.
- The clerk may ask for silence, to help the Meeting reflect.
- The clerk chooses when to start writing a minute to sum up the sense of what has been said. This is done in silence and then read out. The clerk then asks if it is acceptable. We may show our agreement by saying "I hope so", or just nodding or keeping quiet. Anyone who wishes to amend the minute will stand, again waiting to be called by the clerk. The minute is then modified until unity is reached. We try not to make major changes or introduce new ideas at this stage.
- Once the minute is agreed, try to set aside any disappointment if it is not phrased exactly as you would like. Accept that the decision has been reached collectively in a spirit of worship, remembering that unity is not the same as unanimity.

### Edinburgh Quaker Gay and Lesbian Fellowship

Edinburgh Quaker Lesbian & Gay Fellowship (QLGF) was laid down in April after 7 years of meeting monthly. The reasons for this are both positive and negative. On the positive side, recent strides towards equality and the impending passage of legislation on Equal Marriage means that there is less of a need for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people to meet in a separate space. On the down side, after much searching and two Meetings for Clearness, this much valued group was laid down as no suitable replacement to co-ordinate the group could be found to replace the steadfast convenor,

Mary Woodward, who had completed two triennia in that role.

Despite the advancement of equality, there is still a need to provide outreach to gently support people who have still not yet come to terms with their sexuality or who wish to explore their LGBT spirituality in a safe, supportive and worshipful space. It is hoped in the meantime that new ways will be found to continue this outreach and ministry.

The group closed with a celebration at the Regent Pub and the following poem was composed for the occasion by one of our members, Derek Read, who came to the group regularly from the West of Scotland. A group continues to meet informally on a monthly basis in Glasgow.

*The Worship Space  
 Born out of connections, meetings  
 friendships, the will to create  
 A safe space, a meeting space  
 In the fastness of Edinburgh's stones  
 And looking for the silence  
 The Spirit speaking  
 In various places, various guises  
 In the Pink Triangle,  
 Looking for the worship space  
 And in Howe St, The Royal Oak,  
 Glasite Meeting House,  
 We found it, at various times  
 In various guises  
 And these places will speak  
 Of our presence, our struggle  
 And we will be remembered  
 In the stones, in the friendships  
 forged in the continuity  
 of queer quakers  
 Seeking another way  
 To express God's love  
 Speaking quietly and carefully  
 to those who are dispossessed*

*Finding a place to worship  
In whatever way seems fit  
To those who do not quite fit into  
square holes with round pegs.*

The group plans to use the remainder of its funds to hold an open celebration to which all Quakers in Edinburgh and beyond will be invited to celebrate Equal Marriage when it passes into law, to thank all Quakers who have been nationally visible in upholding and advocating the need to celebrate all loving committed relationships in the same manner. Get your Quaker gladrags ready for the event which will be announced when the right time comes!

**Mark Bitel**, Central Edinburgh LM

### **Helping to create Scotland's first community-owned organic farm.**

*John Fitzgerald, of Edinburgh Central Quaker Meeting, is putting his faith into action by serving on a steering group which hopes to launch Scotland's first community-owned organic farm later this summer. The farm is based in Whitmuir in the Borders, about 16 miles out of Edinburgh.*

I have always been interested in the idea of stewardship. From Advice 42: "We do not own the world, and its riches are not ours to dispose of at will..."

This is a simple idea, but for me it has profound ethical implications which I began to explore during my course in philosophy at Edinburgh. As a Quaker, it was great to move from theory to practice. Being involved with the project at Whitmuir has allowed me to put my beliefs about stewardship into effect. It has been inspiring to be part of a group which is working to model the future of sustainable food, right here in South East Scotland.

The steering group grew out of community discussions in late 2012. Now incorporated as a community benefit society, we have launched a share issue and plan to buy 140 acres of farmland in the Scottish Borders and man-

age the farming there. We will also develop a pioneering educational programme in order to inspire and empower people across Scotland to discover and take their part in the future of food.

#### **Whitmuir today**

Whitmuir is a beautiful 130 acre organic farm, which also hosts a successful farm shop, a butchery, an organic cafe, the Breadshare Bakery, an art gallery, and a couple of community education projects, not to mention our many pigs, cows, hens, sheep and turkeys.

Over the last six years, the owners, Pete and Heather, have transformed their small private farm into a public space. Many of the 70,000 annual visitors to the shop, gallery and restaurant already walk round the farm and each year we organise tours and talks for schools, universities, community groups and farmers. To ensure Whitmuir continues and develops, we are involving the community to raise much-needed capital and engage committed supporters in the future of the project. As acting chair of the community farm steering group, I have been using a version of the Quaker business method to keep our discussions open and productive.

#### **Whitmuir tomorrow**

As well as continuing to produce good food every day, we want Whitmuir to become a living learning space that is experientially rich, intellectually engaging and accessible to all. We plan to develop a number of discovery trails, exhibits, educational opportunities and citizen science projects.

#### **Growing the future**

Quakers have always had a commitment to socially and environmentally responsible investment. We hope that you will help us put our vision into practice.

Shares are available to purchase from £50 – £20,000 and each shareholder gets one vote. To join you must be over 5 years of age, support the purpose of Whitmuir Community Farm and buy a minimum of one £50 share.

Among our first shareholders are Maya (age 5) and

Innes (age 10).

To purchase a share or to get in touch with us, please visit [www.whitmuircommunityfarm.org](http://www.whitmuircommunityfarm.org)

Tel: 01968 661908

[info@whitmuircommunityfarm.org](mailto:info@whitmuircommunityfarm.org)

Please consider supporting us, and spread the word!

**John Fitzgerald**

*John hopes to have the chance to talk to Edinburgh Quakers about his experiences with Whitmuir Community Farm sometime in May or June.*

### ***Windows to the World Appeal Spring 2013 Update***

An article appeared in Sesame in June 2012, explaining the work of the small committee formed to raise funds for the replacement of the failing windows to the Meeting Room and Hall at 7 Victoria Terrace.

We wrote another article in November last year, when we were able to express, on behalf of the committee, our astonishment and delight at the phenomenal generosity of *very* many individual Friends, Meetings and visitors to our building, who have helped so generously so far.

We have actually passed the half way mark to our original total of £108,000. We have managed to raise an encouraging £18,500 from grant making Trusts and Foundations, with the latest, £10,000 from the Garfield Weston Foundation arriving at the time of writing in late March! This brings the current total to around £65,000, well over half way to our original total of £108,000.

A combination of this heartening fundraising progress, and the actual condition of some of the windows, led our Trustees to make the decision to phase the window repairs. Work will begin on the six windows on the West facade, as these were in the worst condition - originally identified as needing repair or replacement in a

condition survey carried out in 2008. It was also felt that starting some of the work would allow our many generous donors to actually see some progress. Watch out for scaffolding on the Upper Bow! We hope that this work will have concluded by late summer. The work has been re-quoted, and executing the window works in two phases will allow us a much clearer idea of the costs to scaffold and replace the windows on the other faces of the building, so our remaining fundraising total will also become clearer after this first phase concludes.

Despite the important contributions from Trusts and Foundations, the great majority of the appeal funds to date have come from Friends, other Local and Area Meetings and users of the building who have seen the appeal leaflet. The fundraising committee is enormously grateful for the extraordinary generosity shown in this way. Thank you.

**Emma Griffiths  
Anna Deregowska**

Individual donations to the appeal are welcome by cheque or BACS. Please make cheques payable to: **South East Scotland Area Meeting** and send to: Henry Thompson, Assistant Treasurer, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2JL.

BACS payments can be made to the following account:  
*Name of Account holder:* South East Scotland Area Meeting

*Name of Bank:* Triodos

*Sort code:* 16 58 10

*Account number:* 00652501

*Reference:* Windows to the World Appeal

(If sending donations by BACS, please drop us an email at [sesam.appeal@gmail.com](mailto:sesam.appeal@gmail.com), so that we can thank you, and keep track.)

Please include a statement if you are a UK taxpayer to enable us to reclaim Gift Aid on your donation. To qualify for Gift Aid you must pay an amount of UK income tax and/or Capital Gains Tax, at least equal to

the tax the charity reclaims on your donations in the relevant tax year.

### 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 has been distributed over the past 8 years, totalling £43,000 up to Spring 2012. The money now in hand is likely to run out this year unless new donations are forthcoming. .*

*We welcome applications from Quakers and others 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](mailto:sylviamassey293@btinternet.com)

*The completed form should be passed to a Friend of long standing, well-known to his/her meeting, who will counter-sign 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.*

**Hilary Davies**

### Where is that of God in your life?

A meeting on 28 April to discuss this issue and consider the place of theism and non-theism in Quaker life produced these questions for further consideration

### Questions

Why do we need (a) God?

Why do we think we can cope without God?

Is it necessary to believe in God to belong to Quakers?

When we use the word *God* does it stand for something or is it a 'catch all' for our spiritual experience?

**Jasmine Perinpanayagam**

### Meetings at Kelso Meeting House

The next 'Learning Saturday' at Kelso Meeting House will be on 1 June. It will start with refreshments at 10 o'clock for a 10.30 start, and will finish by 4.30 at the latest. Lunch and tea will be provided.

We will be led by Thomas Swain of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Thomas has travelled in ministry among British Friends since 2005 with a concern for enabling spiritual gifts among Friends, and is an Associate Tutor at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre where he has regularly facilitated learning in this concern. He is a member of Middletown Monthly Meeting of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and served as Y.M. Clerk for six years.

In his words:

*One of the areas of our own lives that we might minimize in ourselves is our spiritual gifts – those things that we do so naturally and effortlessly. On the other hand, these are the capacities others generally value in us. When we create a comfortable space to discover our gifts with one another, we begin to see the power we are given to transform our world and ourselves. We really can find the “power to heal, to liberate, to tackle the demonic systems and structure of society” in short, we can find the grace to rebuild or restore our world. This work together is a beginning of naming our gifts that will enable us to be more effective Friends.*

The evening before - Friday 31 May - Thomas will be at Victoria Terrace where he will facilitate our exploration of 'The guidance of the Spirit – seeking and finding'.

Refreshments at 6.30, for a 7 pm start, ending at 9 pm.

All are welcome to either or both events. They are free of charge, but any contribution towards costs would be welcome. It would be helpful to have an idea of numbers, especially for the Saturday. Please let Jane Pearn know if you hope to come.

Email: [jane.pearn@btinternet.com](mailto:jane.pearn@btinternet.com)

**Jane Pearn**

### ***European and Middle Eastern Young Friends Spring Gathering Epistle 2013***

EMEYF would like to present the epistle from the Spring Gathering 2013 held at Gearstones Lodge, Ribbleshead, North Yorkshire. Our week was inspired by the theme of 'The Body Electric: exploring spirituality through creativity'. We were able to realise these themes through workshops, discovering the local area (hills, caves and red squirrels included) and through both programmed and unprogrammed time together. Our Meetings for Worship for Business led to an understanding that each member of EMEYF has an active role to play within our community. Our spirituality and creativity can allow us to do this.

[ . . . ]

#### ***Reflections and Memories of Spring Gathering 2013.***

On a Friday early in April, I drove my wee car, full of candles and crafts, over the mountainous landscape towards Gearstones Lodge, set deep in the Yorkshire Dales. It had been an early start, and as I neared the flag on my satnav, the unexpected curves and twists of the road focussed my attention. However I was conscious of the bleak beauty of the countryside around me. Suddenly the sun came out, and the scenery was unimaginably transformed. Deep troughs of glinting snow remained, framing the stone walls, and contrasting with the golden grassy rises. Ahead, the white-tipped peak of Ingleborough beckoned. Even the sheep seemed to turn their faces upwards, and the lambs began to prance and bleat in sheer joy.

*It was my first visit to the Dales, as it was for many of the group, and the incredible setting provided the perfect backdrop for our Gathering. It inspired awe and silence; it calmed our busy minds, and its vast power and austerity demanded attention. When the sun shone, we flocked outside to feel its warmth on our faces and breathe the air. Even the water we drank came from a local, natural spring!*

*In ones, twos and threes, our group gathered together, forming a close-knit troupe from all over Britain (Aberdeen to Brighton) and beyond (Norway, Germany, France and the Netherlands). It was noted by many that we formed a comfortably close bond with each other; from a personal perspective, I found our dynamic to be particularly considerate and compassionate. The diversity amongst us was clear, both in language, culture and temperament. We created acceptance and adapted to support the needs of each other with ease.*

*We created a lot more than that though; our theme (The Body Electric, based on the Walt Whitman Poem) was to explore spirituality through creativity. Through workshops with the Leaveners, we explored how we use our bodies – to interact, to share emotion, to mirror one another and create relationships. We played games, becoming playful with each other, laughing at the frankly ridiculous noises we made at each other, and becoming intensely aware of each other in space. We created living statues with our bodies, representing hope, justice, truth and light. And finally we explored why we are creative, and why we are spiritual.*

*For many, the two were, are, inextricably linked: "When I am creative I am silent, and when I am silent I am spiritual." For some, creativity provides an outlet for deep-felt emotions, and spirituality provides time to process this. Both allow connection to others, through shared interpretations of words and thoughts as well as art. Our Epistle is created from words shared and spoken throughout the Gathering, and also includes an audio-file of a soundscape, produced by one member of the Gathering. It is a noise collage of songs, games, the wind, the river and the caves. It represents our week beautifully, and we are grateful for it.*

We are also incredibly grateful and appreciative of the welcome we received in Yorkshire. On our first full day, we welcomed John and Jean Asher to the Lodge for tea, and they gave us talks on the landscape, and nature of the Yorkshire people, and the sociological significance of their history in relation to the 1652 Quaker heritage. We discussed the Sufferings, and learned more about British Quaker history in the region. We were also able to meet Alison, who invited us to Settle Meeting House later in the week, and on our soggy arrival plied us with tea and coffee and a comforting sanctuary from the rain. We also met Chris Hart, who, along with his wife Jess, generously offered their time and expertise to take a group of us down the local caves.

For many, this was the highlight of the trip, and with a bit of quick negotiating with the equipment hire company in Ingleton, a dozen Young Friends went down underground for a morning, learning more about the geological relevance of the area. Again there are pictures in the collection.

We were also delighted to meet Judith Bromley and Friends from Wensleydale and Swaledale Meeting, who took us on a peaceful wooded walk near Hawes. Led by Judith, we explored different ways of walking, sometimes alone, sometimes in silence, and at the end of the walk were rewarded by the red squirrel reserve, which lived up to all expectations. The squirrels were completely aware of our presence, and completely unfazed. It was just lovely.

Judith returned to us the following day and led a workshop in Body Prayer, stretching our physical and emotional selves in the sunshine, and holding each other in the Light as we did so. It was an incredibly powerful moment, as we sat together appreciating the beauty around us, and the bonds forming between us as a group, as well as with the landscape were palpable.

Now, catering for 25 for a week is no mean feat, especially our unique combination of vegans and vegetarians. But we all mucked in, and cheerfully produced hearty meals, primarily featuring vegetables from the local organic farm, run by Quakers. One aspect of our week was using our entire bodies as tools for creativity and spirituality – and what better way to

explore this than to volunteer at the Farm for a day, not only providing a service with our able bodies, but also giving back to the local community which had welcomed us so warmly. So off we went, in the community-run Little White Bus, and worked for the day digging compost and planting seeds. We even rebuilt a wall! We were privileged to be able to see exactly where our veggies had come from, and to help produce the next harvest. It was a wonderful, head-clearing day after what had been an intense week of processing and worship. Some of those hop-plant-roots got the better of us though, as you can see in the pictures!

Our Meetings for Worship for Business formed an important part of the week, and immediately helped to create a sense of self, as those who were new to EMEYF and old timers alike grappled with ideals and practicalities. We were reminded of the quotation, 'Business Meeting, where Minutes take Hours' However we discerned a strong feeling amongst the group present that outreach to isolated Young Friends in Eastern Europe and the Middle East must be a priority, and therefore decided upon Macedonia as the location for Spring Gathering 2014. We hope that the accessibility will encourage more Friends from these regions to join us, and are committed to making this a reality. Our involvement in the wider Quaker community was also raised, and we ultimately felt that as well as grounding us as part of a wider network of Friends, these Meetings helped to galvanise and shape our vision for what EMEYF can be and do. We took Advices & Queries 27 to our hearts:

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? 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?

On a lighter note, we set up a Secret Friends game, which, with 25 of us, resulted in gift-giving on a colossal scale! We also held an Easter Egg Hunt, made badges for each other, jammed together on a motley collection of instruments, and visited the local pub where we bewildered the locals with a

*raucous game of Unwilling/Unable in the corner. We packed in really quite a lot.*

*I suppose if I had to sum up the Gathering in three words it would have to be singing, laughter and silence. We sang almost constantly; whilst cooking, walking, digging earth or making friendship bracelets. There was always a melody in the air, and always a harmony quick to follow. "We are a gentle, angry people and we are singing, singing for our lives." And we laughed; at ourselves, at each other and at our mistakes, but also for our delightful successes, in celebration of an absurd moment, and at the joy of being together. Most of all, we appreciated the chance to be silent, to raise ourselves and each other to heights of spiritual contemplation we had not necessarily anticipated, and to be accepted for our desire to do so. We gathered together in song, in laughter and in silence. What greater gift can there be?*

***We would like to thank EMES, all the Local and Area Meetings in Britain and Germany, and all the individuals who offered us financial support to help make Spring Gathering a success.***

[Some 15 lines of *I Sing the Body Electric*, by Walt Whitman are quoted here]

***Miranda Barty-Taylor and Laurina Pfeiffer***  
*Spring Gathering Committee 2013*

### **Meeting for Sufferings, April 2013**

Meeting for Sufferings took place on 13 April, unfortunately clashing with Area Meeting. Most of the meeting was given over to discussing two major issues; although we started by considering a number of minutes from Area Meetings or Central Committees. These were either referred elsewhere, or the information simply noted. There has been some concern about what happens to minutes and as a result a "Minutes Monitoring Surgery" was held at lunchtime when a summary of what had

happened to all the minutes received by Meeting for Sufferings since January 2012 was discussed.

Following a minute received previously, there was some discussion about whether it is the right time to revise *Quaker Faith & Practice*. It was agreed there should be wide consultations about this and the Recording Clerk will prepare a briefing paper for Area Meetings – but not until after Yearly Meeting.

We then spent the rest of the morning considering the issue of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions: Israel/Palestine. This was prompted by a minute from Devon AM, among others, suggesting that the boycott be extended to *all* Israeli goods, a proposal resulting from a report by a working group they had established on Israel/Palestine. We had copies of this and of a report from QPSW about the work that has been going on since the decision was made at Meeting for Sufferings in April 2011 to boycott products from Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territories. (Both reports are available on the Quaker website). We heard from QPSW of the ecumenical work being done to end all settlement goods coming to Britain, of the advocacy work being done both here and in Europe, and about the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) which is internationally respected. We also heard about the dialogue with Jewish groups both nationally and locally. While we were deeply concerned at the deteriorating situation and the wrongs being perpetrated against the Palestinians, we recognised that extending the boycott could put at risk the current dialogue and advocacy and as a result be ineffective. We reaffirmed our previous decision and encouraged Friends to be active locally. We will return to this topic in October to hear from AMs following discussions about any actions they are involved in. Although this is an issue that arouses strong emotions the discussion took place in a very calm and considered manner.

After lunch, we heard from the clerk of Trustees about what they had been discussing at their most recent

meeting. One issue was “reputational risk” which affects the wide use of the word *Quaker* and Trustees are considering how to protect our reputation. They had also been discussing all aspects of giving and will be exploring whether a per-capita guide figure would be helpful, and what the different practices are in area and local meetings around giving.

The afternoon’s major issue was the government welfare cuts. Several AMs had sent minutes on this topic and we shared information about the situation in different areas. We received a paper prepared by QPSW on Government Cuts: *Welfare Reform –what can Friends do* which contains a lot of useful information and suggestions for action.

There was some concern that the Quaker voice had not been heard nationally, but we were reminded that it was important that we all try to work with others locally.

This felt like a worthwhile meeting with space on the agenda to consider two important issues fully. All the papers for the meeting are available on the website and there are reports in *The Friend* of 19 April. Please contact me if you would like to discuss anything further.

**Janet Grimwade**

## **SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING**

Minutes of Area Meeting held on Saturday 13 April 2013 at East Linton Community Hall.

### **2013/04/01 Worship**

During opening worship, paragraph 3.29 of *Quaker Faith & Practice* was read to us, reminding us that our meetings for business should be times of enjoyment as well as of hard work.

### **2013/04/02 Change of Clerk**

Today’s meeting is clerked by the new clerking team of Phil Lucas and Rosie Roberts. We place on record our gratitude to the retiring clerk, Kate Arnot, for her

diligent clerking of our Area Meeting during the past three years.

### **2013/04/03 Recording attendance**

Our clerks intend to record at each meeting the numbers of friends from each local meeting who have attended and not to record the names of those who have told us they are prevented from attending.

### **2013/04/04 Engaging with our Yearly Meeting**

Our morning session was introduced and led by the Britain Yearly Meeting 2013 Group, a group we appointed to help us prepare for, engage with and follow up on the work of our Yearly Meeting.

How do we strengthen the links between Friends in their Local Meetings, their membership of Area Meeting and the work British Quakers do together? This year the group has identified about twenty Friends who plan to attend Britain Yearly Meeting, including five who will be there for the first time.

Zillah Scott, who attended Yearly Meeting last year for the first time, with her two young children, introduced the session. It was a wonderful experience for the children and Zillah found the work of the adult Yearly meeting very moving. Last year was concerned mainly with what it means for individuals to be Quakers. This year BYM will focus on trusting each other as we work corporately, trusting the Spirit working through our processes. It will also consider how the Spirit and our Quaker values can best inform trusteeship within the Yearly Meeting and how we can support the work of our trustees.

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee asks for our responses (online, by email or by post) to three questions:

- 1) *How have you discerned the 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?*

Responses to these questions will be distilled into the planning of the first session of Yearly Meeting 2013.

After discussion/worship-sharing in three groups during which we addressed these questions, we agreed the following:

*We tend to find personal discernment more difficult than corporate discernment, but our experience is often that taking part in the latter can feed back to the former, helping us to clarify the confusion and muddle which can afflict us. The giving of time and space to this discernment is so important, as is the cultivation of careful listening, both to each other and to the Light within. On the other hand, we must be aware that this very carefulness can smother spontaneity. We must allow that the Spirit, which is always present, even when we are not attending to it, can move in unexpected ways. Often it is the on-going process which is important rather than the decisions arising from it.*

We will encourage Friends able to attend Britain Yearly Meeting 2013 to come to a follow-up session at Area Meeting held on 29 June 2013 and to share their thoughts and impressions with us. We also encourage them to give similar feedback to their Local Meetings and will distribute the Yearly Meeting leaflet as widely as possible among Friends and Attenders not able to be in London next month.

**2013/04/05 Signing of the Area Meeting minutes of 24 February 2013**

The minutes of 24 February 2013 have been published in *Sesame*. A copy has been signed by Kate Arnot, the Clerk at that time, and entered in the Minute Book.

**2013/04/06 Matters arising**

**Visits to Broxburn Academy**

Further to Minute 13 of 20 October 2012 and Minute 4 of 24 February 2013, John Phillips has reported on two visits made by a small group of

Friends to Broxburn Academy in February 2013 to contribute to curricular work on the Quaker contribution to the abolition of the slave trade and on conscientious objection to military service. The group was made very welcome and the visits went well, the second better than the first, as both the Quakers and the teachers had learned how to do it more effectively. We hope we receive a repeat invitation.

**2013/04/07 Draft accounts for 2012**

Caroline Evens, our Treasurer, has introduced us to the draft Area Meeting accounts for 2012. We note that the General Account shows a surplus of over £46k while the 7 Victoria Terrace Account shows a deficit of over £58k. The latter was expected because of the major repair and development work at the Edinburgh Meeting House and it was noted that this means we have not recently been able to support our Yearly Meeting financially to the usual level. We regret this, which is necessitated by our careful stewardship of our property, but hope soon to be in a position to revert to making larger contributions. We note also the success to date of the Windows to the World appeal and are most grateful to all who have contributed. The draft accounts are attached to these minutes.

We note that Caroline Evens has completed her triennium of service as our treasurer, though she is willing to continue to give some financial advice. We place on record our gratitude to Caroline for the service she has rendered efficiently and cheerfully in what is a demanding role.

**2013/04/08 Requests for financial support**

**a) Northern Friends Peace Board**

We have received a request from NFPB asking us to increase our annual donation to that body. We have been giving £1200 for some years. Their letter suggests we allow for £7.50 per member. With a rough count of our members as listed in the new

book (not including attenders) this comes to around £1500.

We agree to increase our annual donation to £1500.

**b) Anna Levin**

We have been pleased to hear of Anna Levin's work for Woodbrooke, where she is training as a facilitator for the Life Writing for Transformation course and agree to her request for financial support for this purpose.

**2013/04/09 The future of Swarthmoor Hall**

The Swarthmoor Hall Project Group, appointed by Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees, has requested that Area Meetings contribute to discernment regarding the future of Swarthmoor Hall.

Pat Lucas, who serves on Quaker Life's Swarthmoor Hall Committee, has described the current exciting and varied work of the Hall, the Quaker residential centre closest to Scotland. The work includes courses (presently in conjunction with Woodbrooke), retreats and holiday accommodation. There is a team of 103 volunteers who, together with staff, serve in the house, gardens, estate with farm, and woodland; the office and library; the tea-room; and as tour guides. Groups there include the History Group, the Archivists, the Furniture Group, and the Photography Group. There is an Education Project, Quakers in residence, music, and pilgrimages.

There is a suggestion from the Swarthmoor Hall Project Group that Britain Yearly Meeting and the National Trust could work in partnership to manage Swarthmoor Hall, to the benefit of both organisations. Questions about this suggestion were raised: about the capacity of Swarthmoor Hall to accommodate more visitors; about whether the Quaker values that underpin the Centre's work might be undermined; about the impact of parking spaces and access roads. Perhaps the problems that such a partnership might solve could be progressed in other ways?

We are concerned about the possibility of a partnership with a very large, national organisation. Whatever the solution for Swarthmoor Hall, we hope that it will safeguard and strengthen our Quaker Community there, and maintain the Quaker ethos that staff and volunteers currently offer to visitors.

We send this minute to the Swarthmoor Hall Project Group.

**2013/04/10 Economic Justice**

Further to discussion resulting from Tweeddale's concern at our meetings in June 2012 (Minute 6) and December 2012 (Minute 1) we have received details of two relevant courses being organised by Quakers:

**a) Economic Mythbusters – an online course**

This is a new online course in May-June 2013 organised by Quaker Peace and Social Witness with the New Economics Foundation. The course will enable Friends to understand and address some of the economic myths which hinder the possibility of creating a more just, equal and sustainable world. It consists of evening sessions on seven consecutive Tuesdays, starting on 14<sup>th</sup> May. Participants need to have access to a computer with webcam and microphone. The number of participants is limited and those interested are encouraged to apply as soon as possible.

**b) Europe and Economic Justice – QCEA conference in Brussels, 15-17 November 2013.**

We have also received information about this course organised by the Quaker Council for European Affairs, which addresses similar issues. It would be good if this Area Meeting is able to send a delegate and those interested in attending should contact our clerk for further details.

We have also received a minute from South Edinburgh Local Meeting regarding Tackling the Poverty Premium, a Church Action for Poverty project. Since no-one pres-

ent today was able to speak to this minute, we will consider it at our next meeting.

#### **2013/04/11 Membership matters**

a) We have received the following **Certificates of Acceptance of transfer**:

- for **Amanda Manouvier** from North Scotland Area Meeting
- for **Anne Barnes**, also from North Scotland Area Meeting
- for **Leti (Juliet) Hawthorn** from Teesdale and Cleveland AM
- for **Rachel Howell** from Mid Wales Area Meeting

b) John Eccles has reported on the membership application meeting he and Doreen Dodd have had with **John Galilee** of East Lothian Local Meeting.

We agree to accept John Galilee into membership; and we ask Phil Lucas to welcome him, and to inform the clerk of East Lothian Meeting.

#### **2013/04/12 Nominations Committee work**

In the absence of Alastair Cameron, convener of our Nominations Committee, we have concerned ourselves only with the roles for which the committee has found it difficult to bring names, namely Health and Safety Adviser and Area Meeting Treasurer.

Our Trustees have started work on guidance to enable the Health and Safety Adviser role to be manageable by an inexperienced Friend. We understand that the Treasurer's role has grown and become more difficult over recent years and that our Trustees are looking at ways to divide that role to make the work more manageable too.

New job descriptions and person specifications are being developed which it is hoped will make the various roles approachable and less daunting. Support roles need not be held by someone in membership.

As both posts are now vacant, there is some urgency in taking these matters forward. If a process and names emerge between our meetings, we authorise our clerk to make appointments, in consultation with the clerk of Trustees and the convener of Nominations Committee, for ratification at a subsequent Area Meeting.

#### **2013/04/13 Festival Charities 2013**

Our Festival Committee recommends to us that the three charities to receive donations from the profits of the Venue 40 operation this year should be, as they were last year:

- Quaker Bolivia Link (3rd year )
- Refugee Survival Trust (2nd year) and
- Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House (2nd year) Windows appeal

We agree with this recommendation and wish them well with their arrangements.

#### **2013/04/14 Correspondence**

##### **a) Invitations from other faith groups**

- (i) **The Taoist Tai Chi Society of Great Britain** will be hosting the Grand Opening of their new Scottish Regional Centre premises at lunchtime on Friday 19 April 2013, near Meadowbank and have invited us to be represented.
- (ii) **The Leith Sikh community** has invited us to join them for celebrations, including a procession and a meal, on Sunday 21 April 2013 from 12 noon at their gurdwara.

Friends interested in representing us were invited to speak to our clerk.

#### **2013/04/16 AOCB**

##### **a) General meeting dates 2013-14**

It is proposed that General Meeting for Scotland will meet as follows:

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 agree the suitability of these dates.

#### b) Visit of Thomas Swain to Edinburgh and Kelso

Thomas Swain of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting has been invited to lead a Learning Saturday on 1 June, 2013 (10.00 for 10.30 am) as part of the series of Learning Saturdays at Kelso Meeting House. He will also be leading a session entitled “The guidance of the Spirit – seeking and finding” in Edinburgh Meeting House on Friday 31 May (6.30 for 7.00 pm). All are invited to either or both of these events and further details may be obtained from Jane Pearn, who would also like to know if Friends hope to attend.

#### 2013/04/16 Concluding minute

23 Friends, including 1 attender, from four Local Meetings have attended all or part of this Area Meeting, as indicated below

Central Edinburgh 11	Central Fife 2	East Lothian 8	Kelso
Penicuik	Polmont	South Edinburgh 2	Tweeddale

We next meet at 2 pm on **Saturday 18 May** in Central Fife.

**Phil Lucas**  
Area Meeting Clerk

#### Library Committee

Rachel Frith on behalf of the Library Committee would like to get in touch with the following: **Joan Tallet-Schofield; Marie McGraw; and C. Taylor.**

#### Quaker Meetings for Worship in South East Scotland

##### Every Sunday

Central Edinburgh: 7 Victoria Terrace 9.30am& 11.00am  
 South Edinburgh: Open Door, 420 Morningside Road, 10.30am  
 Polmont: Greenpark Community Centre 1 0.45am  
 Kelso: Quaker Meeting House, Kelso 10.30am

##### Every Wednesday

Mid Week Meeting: 7 Victoria Terrace 12.30pm- 1pm

##### First Sunday in the Month

Penicuik & Peeble Valleyfield House, 17 High St., Penicuik 11.00am

*Children welcome, bring and share lunch.*

Portobello: Old Parish Church Hall, Bellfield Street

##### First Tuesday in the Month

Edinburgh University Common Room, Muslim Prayer Rooms 1pm- 1.30pm

(opposite the Weir Buildings) at Kings Buildings: contact

Sarah Martin 07818050853 or [sarah.martin@ed.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.martin@ed.ac.uk) for more details

##### Second Sunday in the Month

Tweeddale Tweedbridge Court, Margaret Blackwood House,

Dukehaugh, Peebles All welcome but please phone tconfirm.

01721 721 050 or 01896 850 389. 10.30am

Central Fife: Hunter Halls, Kirkcaldy 10.30am

(in Kirk Wynd opposite the Old Kirk)

East Lothian: East Linton Community Hall 11.00am

##### Third Tuesday in the Month

Edinburgh University Common Room, Muslim Prayer Rooms 1pm- 1.30pm

##### Fourth Sunday in the Month

Tweeddale: Tweedbridge Court, Margaret Blackwood House,

*Details as Second Sunday above* 10.30am

Central Fife Hunter Halls, Kirkcaldy as above 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 Hal 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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