

SESAME

Number 192: January 2015

Penn in France / C.O.s / 'Way Ahead' Questions / November AM



William Penn de l'Académie protestante de Saumur 2011 (see page 2)

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SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

**2.00 pm on Sunday 11 January 2015 at the Open Door,
420 Morningside Road Edinburgh EH10 5HY**

We invite all members and attenders to take part in our first Area Meeting of 2015. We will complete the work started in November to respond to consultation from Britain Yearly meeting on the long-term framework for Quaker work, and we will be appointing members to the group to carry out a review of how Area Meeting operates. There will be updates on how local councils have responded to our approaches expressing concern about militarisation in our society, as well as hearing from the December Meeting for Sufferings.

Alastair Cameron, Assistant Clerk

The commemorative plaque shown on the cover was erected in 2011 at Saumur – a town in the department of Maine et Loire, in western France, south of Le Mans, west of Tours, and about 95 km east of Nantes. Its Academy was the principal seminary for French protestants in the seventeenth century: from 1618-20 the professor of divinity was John Cameron of Glasgow, and Moses Amyraut (1596-1664) was one of his pupils. Amyraut's breadth and charity led to his being accused of heresy by more orthodox Calvinists but he was three times acquitted. It has been suggested that Penn's belief in tolerance was based on Amyraut's notions of religious freedom.

The text of the plaque reads:

William Penn studied for two years (1662-1663) at the Protestant Academy of Saumur under the direction of Moïse Amyraut.

To remove Quakers from the persecution to which they were subject in Europe William Penn founded in 1681 the province of Pennsylvania, of which the frame of government inspired the Constitution of the United States of America of 1787 and the Declaration of the Rights of Man of 1789.

A square in the town was renamed Place William Penn at the same time. The Academy buildings do not survive; when the Edict of Nantes, which had given limited freedom to protestants, was revoked by Louis XIV in 1683, the institution was closed and they were demolished.

C.O. Commemoration

We have been invited to nominate an Edinburgh-based Quaker to join an ecumenical group which hopes to place a permanent memorial to COs [conscientious objectors] in a public place in Edinburgh, to mark the centenary of the 1916 Military Service Act, which introduced conscription. I understand that Mary Alice Mansell is willing to represent General Meeting on the group but that they would very much welcome the presence of an Edinburgh Quaker. Two names have been put forward.

Phil Lucas AM Clerk

The 'Way Ahead' Questions

Sesame readers will remember that Quaker groups and individuals have been asked to participate in the work being done to shape the follow-on from the BYM Long Term Framework by discerning what we are led to do together and responding by 31 January 2015. 'We do not intend to list specific projects and programmes but to enable all the various groups that make up 'Quakers in Britain' to see how their leadings and activities can contribute to fulfilling our shared aspirations.' At Area Meeting on 29 November 2014 we discussed in small groups the questions offered as prompts to our discernment. These were:

What is distinctive about Quaker work and witness, to us and to others?

What is your vision of the ministry that your local meeting and Quakers in Britain are called to, now and in the future?

What are we led to do together?

How could Quaker structures and networks help Quakers in Britain to flourish?

In responding to the first two questions, Friends at Area Meeting rephrased them with a view to their also leading into our own Area Meeting review. Here are those rephrased questions with a summary

of group responses:

What are the key contributions Quakers are making or should be making to the communities in which our meetings are set and what is distinctively Quaker about these responses?

- 1) A common theme emerging from the groups was that **our distinctive style of worship** is a gift which empowers us to work as individuals or in groups through other organisations to translate our testimony into action. That worship is a positive energy in providing a **distinctively non-dogmatic religious space**.
- 2) **Our living out our faith is most often done through working with those of other faiths or none.**
- 3) **Our testimonies**, viewed separately, are not particularly special to us but their combination and the fact that they are rooted in our worship perhaps is. In particular, one group referred to **our peace testimony** as something that starts from a deep place within, leading to a **distinctive way of dealing with conflict**.
- 4) This **non-doctrinal religious approach** was mentioned by two groups, one referring in particular to *Advices & Queries*, which challenge without dictating.
- 5) **Our distinctive business method** was mentioned by three groups and was seen, together with **our understanding of corporate discernment**, as a gift we should be more ready to share.
- 6) Two groups mentioned **the gift of our Meeting Houses** and the potential they have for expressing our testimony in action as a community resource, especially for small and marginalized groups; others referred to **the expression of testimony that meetings without their own premises have**, through meetings with politicians or through organizing events that reflect our testimony.
- 7) One group mentioned **the distinctiveness of our work with children**: we do not teach but share experience in a spirit of equality.

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

Minutes of Area Meeting held on Saturday 29 November 2014 at Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House

2014/11/01 Worship

During opening worship, extract 3.29 from the conclusion of the chapter on church affairs in *Quaker Faith & Practice* was read to us. This reminds us that our meetings for church affairs should be used imaginatively, should be times of enjoyment as well as of hard work, and should build us up in love and do us good.

We have remembered our Friend Alistair Milner of East Scotland Area Meeting, who died suddenly last night and uphold Beryl Milner in our prayers.

2014/11/02 Introductions

Kate Arnot has been asked to assist our clerk at the table this time in the absence of Alastair Cameron. We have ensured those present know each other's names and meetings. The attendance will be recorded in the concluding minute.

2014/11/03 The minutes of our last meeting, held on 25 October 2014 in Polmont have been signed and entered in the minute book.

2014/11/04 Matters arising

a) Militarisation in society (Minute 2014/10/06 refers)

Our minute was forwarded to General Meeting for Scotland and we are glad to note that General Meeting has adopted our concern. Our clerk has written to most of the education conveners (or equivalent, as different structures and titles are used) and directors of education in our area in accordance with our minute. No replies have been received as yet but any received will be reported to us at future meetings.

b) The future of our Area Meeting (Minute 2014/10/13 refers)

A remit for the suggested short term working group has been prepared as requested and shared with us. We ask the remit group to include a reference to the nurture of spirituality in the aims of the review and to harden up what it says about the hoped-for results of the review. We ask the review group to use methodology similar to the Appreciative Inquiry method used in our day conference last Saturday and to ensure the in-

volvevement in the review of those members and attenders who do not normally attend Area Meeting.

2014/11/05 Area Meeting's participation in the Fringe Festival

The managers of our Edinburgh Meeting House have raised with the Meeting House Management Committee their view that they and the Festival Committee cannot sustain the present level of Festival Fringe involvement beyond 2015. The same small group which prepared the remit for the review of our Area Meeting explored whether this should be part of that review but, because a clear decision is needed by July 2015 at latest and because the Venue 40 activity has quite distinctive features, agreed that its review should be treated separately.

The Festival Committee were asked and have agreed to undertake this review with the assistance of two Friends not directly involved in its work. Alison Chalmers and Rufus Reade have agreed to be the two independent Friends. We ask that the review should include consultation with members of the wider Area Meeting community.

2014/11/06 Sharing the life of Central Edinburgh Meeting

Three Central Edinburgh Friends read to us a description of the life of their Meeting. We were reminded that this is the largest Local Meeting in Scotland and we have heard in some detail about the complexities of sustaining its life and engagement with the world.

The meeting currently has a lively group of children, with numbers fluctuating as families come and go. All-age meeting takes place monthly, encouraging children and young people to be part of the Meeting in a spirit of equality. Elders seek to meet the spiritual needs of Friends, whose understanding of spirituality varies greatly. Elders and Overseers are currently conducting a 'reflection on the spiritual life of the meeting' and hoping to report back in January 2015.

The Meeting has missed a significant number of Friends who have moved away or died, unsettling the rootedness of the Meeting. Adequate 'oversight' – the pastoral care of each other – is challenging in a Meeting of this size. Engaging a significant proportion of Friends in meetings for worship for business is also challenging, and ways of addressing this have been explored.

The Meeting House is owned and managed by Area Meeting and is a busy place, making high demands of staff but the Local Meeting is privileged to be able to use it as its home.

2014/11/07 Membership matters

- a) A certificate of transfer of membership has been received for **Hilery Williams**, who has lived for some time at 3 Tenterfield House, Dunbar Road, Haddington. She is in touch with East Lothian Local Meeting and we ask Pat Lucas to welcome her to our Area Meeting.
 - b) [An application for membership was received and visitors appointed.]
 - c) **Emma Griffiths** (minute 2014/10/10 refers). Rachel Fitzgerald and Chris Booth have met with Emma and an account of their meeting has been shared with us.
- We accept Emma into membership and ask Marianne Ferguson Rice to welcome her on our behalf.
- d) West Wiltshire and East Somerset Area Meeting has accepted the transfer of Membership of **Jean Brydon** from this Area Meeting.

2014/11/08 Marriage matters

- a) Certificate of accomplishment – **Anna Mitchell & Brian Cleland**
The certificate of accomplishment for the marriage of Brian Cleland and Anna Mitchell on 28 August 2014 has been signed and returned.
- b) Request for appointment – **Tony Gross & Mark Bitel**
We appoint a meeting for worship for the marriage of Tony Gross and Mark Bitel at 2 pm on 14 February 2015 at Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House. We ask Area Meeting elders to bring to our next meeting the names of two elders to serve at that meeting for worship.

2014/11/09 Meeting for Sufferings held on 4 October 2014

Janet Grimwade has reported on this meeting, much of which was given to reflection in groups and in plenary on how Meeting for Sufferings is working. Devon Area Meeting has asked Friends to support their minute 'Courage to save the Planet' focussing on the hard decisions required of world leaders at the International Climate Conference next year by upholding them for one minute at 9 pm each evening.

We note that giving to Britain Yearly Meeting has dipped considerably although the shortfall has been made good by legacies.

We thank Janet for her report, which has been printed in full in *Sesame*.

2014/11/10 What future for Scotland? - Earth People and Planet

Annie Miller has reported on the day conference organised by our Social Responsibility Working Group on Saturday 22 November 2014. The con-

ference, which was attended by nearly sixty Quakers, was facilitated by Tim Slack, a member of the Quaker Life Network from Liverpool, who used Appreciative Inquiry principles involving paired conversations followed by small group discussions.

Jonathan Dale was the guest speaker, reminding us that being a Quaker must be a way of life, not just an optional extra for Sundays and enlarging on how Quaker testimony must transform our lifestyles and take us away from 'the ways of the world'. He quoted John Woolman and referred to the 'Eight Foundations of a true social order' that had been drawn up by London Yearly Meeting in 1918 (Q.F.&P., 23.16).

The participants were encouraged to think positively throughout the day, and to create entertaining and imaginative ways of putting forward the picture of the Scotland we would like to help create, and this was certainly borne out when those ideas were shared at the final plenary, amid much laughter. These ideas reflected many of those that had been put forward during the referendum campaign, and included ridding Scotland of nuclear weapons, land reform, investment in renewable energy supplies and banning of fracking, investment in social housing with good insulation, hybrid vehicles, banning of certain pesticides, reform of the social security system, reform of monetary policy, and greater regulation of advertising and the press, leading to responsible media. The picture presented was remarkably consistent over the different groups, perhaps unsurprisingly.

The many contributions that evolved during the day have been noted by the planning group, ready for further consideration. A follow-up event has been planned to be held on Saturday, 31 January, at 7 Victoria Terrace, to start at 12.30 with packed lunches in the hall, then starting at 13.30 and finishing at 16.30 and we were asked to watch out for further details.

We thank Annie for her report.

2014/11/11 Discernment on the Yearly Meeting Long Term Framework and the way forward for our Area Meeting

Meeting for Sufferings has invited Area and Local Meetings to contribute towards its discernment on the renewal of our Yearly Meeting's long term framework. We are asked to address the following questions and to respond by the end of January 2015.

- o *What is distinctive about Quaker work and witness, to us and to others?*
- o *What is your vision of the ministry that your local meeting and Quakers in Britain are called to, now and in the future?*
- o *What are we led to do together?*

- *How could Quaker structures and networks help Quakers in Britain to flourish?*

At the same time we are starting on the process of a radical review of the working of our Area Meeting and our clerk suggests that addressing the same questions may be a helpful start to our review process.

We have worked in pairs and small groups by seeking answers to the following two questions:

1. What are the key contributions Quakers are making or should be making to the life of the communities in which our Meetings are set?
2. What is distinctly Quaker about these contributions?

We will take the answers we found forward to our next meeting in January, when we shall continue with this work and prepare a response for the Meeting for Sufferings working group.

2014/11/12 Appointments

Our nominations committee has brought us the following names for release or appointment:

1. Release from service:

Kate Arnot has asked to be released from service as Staffing Link. We release her and thank her for her service

2. For appointment:

a) Assistant Clerks to Area Meeting:

Elizabeth Allen (East Lothian LM) to serve from January 2015 to the end of March 2016.

Alastair Cameron (Portobello & Musselburgh LM) to serve from January 2015 to the end of December 2017.

We appoint them accordingly.

b) Trustees

John Phillips (Central Edinburgh LM); and **Rufus Reade** (South Edinburgh LM) both to serve a second triennium from January 2015 to the end of December 2017.

Liz Law (Central Edinburgh LM) to serve from January 2015 to the end of December 2017.

We appoint them accordingly.

c) Our representative on Quaker Life Representative Council

Katrina McCrea (Portobello and Musselburgh LM) to serve from January 2015 to the end of December 2017.

We appoint her accordingly.

d) Overseers

Stasa Morgan-Appel (South Edinburgh LM) to serve from January 2015 to the end of December 2017.

Hilary Davies (South Edinburgh LM) to serve a second year from January to December 2015.

We appoint them accordingly.

e) Staffing Link

Madeleine Harding (Central Edinburgh LM) to serve a further year from January to December 2015.

We appoint her accordingly.

3. Completion of service

We note that David Somervell (Overseer), Martin Burnell (Trustee) and Neil Turner (Elder) have completed their periods of appointment and we thank them for their service.

4. Quaker Peace and Social Witness Spring Conference

This conference, to be held at Swanwick, Derbyshire on 13-15 March 2015, is an excellent way for both new and more experienced Friends to learn about the work of QPSW and our Area Meeting likes to appoint two representatives. Local Meetings have been asked to suggest names.

5. Junior Yearly Meeting 2015

This event for 15-18 year olds, born between 1.9.1996 and 31.8.1999, will be held at Lee Valley Youth Hostel from 1-4 May. Mary Jane Elton has been asked to suggest names of possible representatives and none immediately occurred to her. Local Meetings are asked to consider whether they know of young people who might be interested and to pass names to Mary Jane.

2014/11/13 Correspondence and notices

a) 'Being Friends Together'

We were told briefly at our last meeting about this new and extensive online learning project now available from Quaker Life and Woodbrooke. Local Meetings are encouraged to explore the possibilities of this for their learning together. It is available for an annual subscription of £35.00 from <http://together.woodbrooke.org.uk>

b) Scrap Trident event, Sunday 30 Nov, 11 am, Faslane

We are reminded that what is hoped to be the largest anti Trident event for ten years will take place tomorrow.

c) Event on conscientious objection

We have been invited to contribute a session on Quakers and conscientious objection to war in a series of events being arranged by Edinburgh Central Library to mark the centenary of World War I. A provisional arrangement has been made for a panel discussion, perhaps involving COs, on Saturday 16 May 2015 from 11 am to 12 noon. Friends willing to participate in the planning or delivery of this event are asked to contact the AM clerk. Any with knowledge of Quaker COs in WWI would be particularly welcome.

2014/11/14 Concluding minute

26 members and one attender representing all nine Local Meetings have attended all or part of this Area Meeting, as indicated below:

Central Edinburgh	Central Fife	East Lothian	Kelso	Penicuik
14	1	3	1	1
Polmont	Portobello & Musselburgh	South Edinburgh	Tweeddale	
2	1	2	1 + 1A	

We next meet at the Open Door, South Edinburgh, on Sunday 11 January 2015 at 2 pm. Alastair Cameron and Elizabeth Allen have been asked to clerk this meeting in the absence of our clerk.

(Signed)
Phil Lucas, Clerk

You never applaud or say 'Amen' after someone's spoken in a Quaker meeting. You're not supposed to compliment someone after meeting is over, either. You're not supposed to say: 'I liked your message' although it's a very human urge and people do it. I did it myself after a woman talked about seeing two sparrows frolicking in her birdbath. She said she looked away and then looked back and there in place of the sparrows was a huge wild turkey. She talked about surprise and wild turkeys. Afterward, I said to her. 'I liked your message'

from Travelling Sprinkler, Nicolson Baker

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	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 & Musselburgh: 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: contact	1pm-1.30pm	
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Sarah Martin 07818050853 or sarah.martin@ed.ac.uk for more details

Second Sunday in the Month

Portobello & Musselburgh CHANGES Community Health Project		
108 Market St, Musselburgh, East Lothian EH21 6QA	10.30am	

Tweeddale Nomad Beat, 10-11 Cavalry Park, Peebles

All welcome but please phone to confirm.

01721 721 050 or 01896 850 389.	10.30am	
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Central Fife: Hunter Halls, Kirkcaldy (in Kirk Wynd opposite the Old Kirk)	10.30am	
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East Lothian: St Andrew's Centre, Dunbar	11.00am	
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Third Tuesday in the Month

Edinburgh Uni Common Room, Muslim Prayer Rooms	1.00- 1.30pm	
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Fourth Sunday in the Month

Portobello & Musselburgh CHANGES Community Health Project		
108 Market St, Musselburgh, East Lothian EH21 6QA	10.30am	

Tweeddale: Nomad Beat, 10-11 Cavalry Park, Peebles

Details as Second Sunday above

Central Fife Hunter Halls, Kirkcaldy as above	10.30am	
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Barony St Meeting, Broughton St Mary's Church Edinburgh	7.00 pm	
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Last Sunday in the Month .

East Lothian: St Andrew's Centre, Dunbar	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, Mark Hutcheson. An email version of *Sesame* is more ecological and is free! A large print version is available on request. Published by Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain: South East Scotland Area Meeting, Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2JL. Scottish Charity No. SC019165