

SESAME

Number 194: April 2015

Handling Conflict/ Planning for Old Age / AM STIR / Travelling
Sprinkler/ Sufferings Report/ Venue 40/ AM Minutes/ Afterwords



An early twentieth-century picture postcard of the Merion Friends Meetinghouse in Merion Station, Montgomery County, the second oldest Quaker meetinghouse in the United States.

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SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

2 pm on Saturday 18 April at Kinghorn Community Centre, Fife

Area Meeting is hosted by Central Fife Meeting, who will be sharing something of the life of their Meeting with us during the afternoon. The Community Centre is just a couple of minutes' walk from Kinghorn Railway Station. From the station, cross the footbridge and go up Station Brae. The Centre is in Rossland Place just across the road. If you travel by car, there is plenty of parking on site. Convenient trains leave Edinburgh Waverley at 12.40 and 13.08, the journey taking about 40 minutes.

We have an interesting agenda, which includes consideration of the ways Local Meetings provide appropriate pastoral care, a first report from the group reviewing our participation in the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, several membership applications and reports on the work of overseers, on Meeting for Sufferings and on the QPSW Spring Conference. Please come if you are able.

Phil Lucas, Area Meeting Clerk

Handling Conflict in our Meetings: a Woodbrooke Course

While I was serving as a Friend in Residence at Woodbrooke recently, I had the opportunity to participate in the weekend course *Handling Conflict in our Meetings*, ably facilitated by Julie Hanna and Roger Cullen. I greatly benefitted from the entire experience and will try to summarise the main points that stuck with me in a way that does them justice! I was interested in this topic not because I think we have a significant problem with conflict in our Meeting but out of general interest. I have seen a tendency within myself to avoid conflict over the years and have come to realise that this is not helpful!

First of all, it is important to acknowledge that conflict *can* sometimes arise in Quaker Meetings. The fact that this does not sit comfortably with our peaceful countenance can make it even harder to deal with. Handling conflict creatively and effectively can provide an opportunity for both Meetings and individual Friends to change and grow.

The main thought that I took away was the importance of dealing with difficult or sensitive situations with respect, tenderness and love. This may sound easy but when people are feeling bruised, it is all too easy to forget this.

If a problem or issue arises, it is important to consider carefully the appropriate method of dealing with it. Often a quiet informal word spoken between two people is all that is required, paying attention to timing and language. Confidentiality issues are critical and 'gossip' should be avoided. But sometimes, after careful consideration, persistent and serious issues need to

be brought to the attention of others in Meeting for action. Outside help may be sought: advice is available from Friends House and Quaker Life organise a 'Conflict Cluster' of Friends who can be consulted. Discerning the right time and place and people is key. Sometimes Meetings for Clearness or Threshing Meetings or Meetings for Healing should be considered, depending on the nature of the situation.

It is also important to define what the problem really is, as sometimes it is not what it first seems. Reframing situations without apportioning blame can shed new light. Identifying underlying causes and avoiding assumptions may lead to more meaningful solutions. Active listening skills can help people feel heard. Assertiveness as opposed to aggression or passivity can often help clarify issues.

When issues arise between two people, a four-step approach was advocated: *What is the problem? How do you feel about it? What would you like ideally to happen? What could actually happen?* Too often we concentrate on only the first and last stages without opening up possibilities afforded by the middle two.

Finally, it can prove helpful to acknowledge that there are some problems that cannot be solved. We can only hold and contain them and live through them as satisfactorily as possible for all concerned.

We need to be grounded in the Spirit and trust in God!

I brought home some useful handouts from this course. If anyone is interested in seeing them, or discussing any of these issues further, please get in touch with me! I would be happy to share!

Marilyn Higgins

Planning for old age and incapacity, a Quakerly duty?

The recent deaths of my elderly parents have helped me (currently a mere 66 year old) understand the importance of facing up to, and planning for, my own old age and death. What kind of housing or care arrangements might work for me? How would I cope with a diagnosis of a serious mental or physical disorder? Would I prefer to die in hospital or at home? These are some of the issues I may have to face. When I was young, I drew up a birth plan. In the same way I should now make a growing older and death plan. And no doubt it will have to be as subject to change as the birth plan was!

I have been asked to write one or two articles for *Sesame* on these matters, in the hope that they might help Friends facing similar issues. I would also be delighted to meet to talk through these matters if that was thought helpful: please contact me if you would be interested.

It might be thought that it would go without saying that we should all make a will. Yet research shows that less than half of Scottish people make wills. Wills are not just about money and possessions. For example, if you have young children you may want to make arrangements for their care.

In the same way that a will forces us to face up to our death, the Power of Attorney asks us to consider what should happen should we lose the mental capacity to manage our own affairs. This might be because of old age, dementia, or a stroke, but it could happen much sooner, following a car accident, for example. For this reason most solicitors would advise a person making a will to consider making a Power of Attorney as well.

This article looks at Powers of Attorney. It is just a brief outline. There is a great deal of very helpful advice on the internet. For me the first port of call is always Alzheimer Scotland's website, but Age Scotland has good information too, as does the Office of the Scottish Public Guardian (see below). Be sure to look at a Scottish site, as the rules in England and Wales are different.

What is a Power of Attorney?

A person signs a document appointing one or more people to act for her in certain matters should she be unable to do this in the future. These might be financial, but they could also include health, welfare and social care matters.

You should only do this if there is someone you trust. Attorneys have wide powers and there is little supervision or regulation of them. No one should pressurise someone to appoint an attorney and no one should sign the documents unless they really want to.

How is it prepared?

You can get forms from the Internet, or you can go to a solicitor. You can decide which from a list of powers you want to give.

You may just want to delegate financial matters, but you should strongly consider granting health and welfare powers. For example, it can be really difficult to make arrangements for residential or other care for someone if there is no one with the legal authority to take those decisions. And if you want to make sure that your views are taken into account over any medical treatment you may need, a welfare attorney can speak on your behalf if you are unable to do so.

Who can sign?

You can sign even if you are getting frail and no longer really able to cope, as long as it is quite clear that you understand what you are signing and want to sign it. Once you have lost this ability you will no longer be able to sign a power of attorney and if people do need to deal with your business or other affairs they may have to seek an (expensive) order from the court.

What are the formalities?

Even if you use your own forms, you will have to sign in front of a solicitor, an advocate or a doctor. There is an important safeguard requiring a certificate confirming that you understand what you are signing and that there is no undue influence. The deed is then registered at the Office of the Scottish Public Guardian and various interested parties are notified.

When can it be used?

The power cannot be used until it has been registered. A financial power of attorney (called a 'continuing power') can be used before you lose capacity. This can be useful for someone who can no longer cope (or be bothered) with financial matters but has not technically lost the ability to manage her affairs.

Decisions about medical, health or welfare matters can be taken only once the person has lost the ability to take those decisions herself.

What if I change my mind?

You can cancel ('revoke') your power of attorney at any time, so long as you retain the mental ability to do so.

Becoming an attorney

Being an attorney can be a burdensome task, particularly if the granter's affairs are complex. For this reason some people appoint a solicitor or accountant alongside a family member. They will, of course, charge for this service. A private individual cannot charge for acting, but she can of course recoup expenses.

There is a great deal of advice to attorneys on their duties to keep records, take account of the granter's wishes and feelings etc. An attorney will need to familiarise herself with this.

What if I have concerns about an attorney?

You could contact the local social work department or the Office of the Public Guardian. The Mental Welfare Commission (an independent watchdog) may be able to give advice. If there is cause for concern, the sheriff court can restrict or remove an attorney's powers or can insist that she is supervised by the social work department.

None of us wants to contemplate a time when we might be unable to manage our own affairs. But it could happen to any of us, young or old. Considering whether a Power of Attorney might be appropriate could be seen as responsible planning for the future. It could certainly make life easier for those who are charged with caring for us in those circumstances.

(Future articles will look at healthcare matters in more detail, including living wills.)

Hilary Patrick

Stirrings within Area Meeting

Area Meeting (AM) set up a new group in October last year: the 'Short-term Review Group', which we are calling STIR (insert a word of your own choice for the 'I' in the acronym). We are now asking local meetings and AM committees to extend an invitation to members of the STIR group to come for a talking and listening process. Our task is to find out what people feel works well about the Area Meeting structure, what isn't so good, and what ideas people have for change.

The group comprises Deirdre Armstrong, Rachel Fitzgerald, Justin Kenrick, Jane Pearn, Don Stubbings and myself; we plan to give an interim report to AM in the autumn, and a final one in early 2016. Our remit is to offer ideas for changing patterns of structures and meetings – 'radically if necessary'.

Our starting point is that Area Meeting is encountering some problems, particularly in relation to finding people to fill posts, and in bringing in less money each year than we are spending. However, this is the opportunity for a much more broad-brush look at how members and meetings relate to AM, and for suggesting changes that might help in lots of ways.

The group has so far had three meetings, which have included consideration of Ben Pink Dandelion's 2014 Swarthmore Lecture, *Open for Transformation* (on which we have mixed views...). We see Area Meeting as both an event, which takes place eight times a year, but, more importantly, a community of Quakers and those associated with us in South East Scotland. It is how each of us relates to that community - and how significant those relationships are - that is important to us.

You should hear more about this process via your local meeting and through any committees you may serve on. I shall be writing to all clerks and conveners with more details. But we are interested in gathering views in all ways possible. So if you want to have a say, please get in touch – email me at mandolin.alastair@gmail.com, or phone me on 07900 044577 if you'd prefer to chat.

Alastair Cameron
On behalf of the STIR Group

Travelling Sprinkler

With the permission of the publishers, Serpent's Tail/Profile Books Ltd., the following four extracts are taken from the 2013 novel Travelling Sprinkler by the American, Nicholson Baker. The narrator of the novel is not a Quaker but does occasionally attend Meeting, because, he writes, "I like the goodness in these people and I always feel better after I've gone" (p. 93). He is a sympathetic observer of our Meetings for Worship, and in the third extract he tells us that his favourite part of Meeting is the 'almost messages' which is another term for the Afterwords discussed by Kim Smith and Mary Woodward – see p. 20

1.

In Quaker meeting a woman was knitting something brown and red as the clock ticked. She was a very quiet knitter, but I could hear her needles click and slide against each other. Out of the corner of my eye I watched her fingers form quick loops of yarn and do things with them. Across the room, Chase stood and said that he'd read something adapted from Proverbs. 'Once our eyes are opened we can't pretend we don't know what to do.' He sat down. I thought of the misery hat, which is something you knit for yourself and all of a sudden you're wearing it. I'm sorry ... I can't keep from wearing the misery hat sometimes. I remembered Roya, the girl in Afghanistan ..(who) ... lived through something inconceivable. She survived, but barely. And my job was to think of her, right then, because we were responsible. We did this to Roya – with our missiles, our taxes, our Air Force, our targeters, our elected government. We exported a war into her young life. I thought, What can I possibly do to help Roya and her father. And the answer was: Nothing. There was nothing I could do. I considered standing in Meeting and saying this, but it didn't feel right. I shook hands and told Chase that I was grateful to him for his message, and I went outside, and then I drove home. I took off the misery hat and gently put it away in a box.

[pp. 286-7]

2.

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'

[p.237]

3.

Here's what happened at Quaker meeting. I listened to the clock as I always do. Very few people spoke. A man I didn't know stood almost at the end of meeting and said his wife had died. He was quite an old man, with strong cheek-bones, thin, and he held his hands out for a moment before he spoke. He said. 'My wife died in my arms last week. I was lucky enough to know her for almost ten years. We met in a drawing class and I remember being impressed by how intensely she concentrated while she was drawing. She drew a pear. We were all drawing pears, but her pear made sense. It sat on the plate. I told her how much I liked her drawing, and we became friends and it turned out we were both ready to love and we got married very soon after that. One of the last things she said to me before she stopped talking was – ' and then he stopped. He said nothing for a long time. Then he said, "She said, "I'll miss you."

This is the kind of thing that happens at meeting sometimes. In the silence that followed I thought of the man's wife dying in his arms. At the end of meeting, the clerk, Donna, said: 'Do we have any visitors?' Someone from North Carolina said he was visiting from North Carolina. And then Donna said, 'Okay, are there any almost messages?'

This is often my favorite part of meeting. An almost message is something somebody was on the verge of saying during silent meeting but for one reason or another, didn't say, but the pressure to say it is still there.

This time a woman in a brown short-sleeved dress said. 'I sat down here an hour ago and there was nothing in my mind. I'd rushed to get here and there was just a jumble of stuff in my head that I'm supposed to be doing, a little to-do list for Sunday. And then in the silence a word came to me, and the word was 'unprepared'. I turned it over in my mind. I wasn't prepared for meeting. I had nothing to say. And then I thought, But isn't this the essence of Quakerism? We're not supposed to be prepared. We're supposed to sit here and wait for what's true to come.'

She said some more things I don't remember, and then she sat down, and I thought, She's right, the key sometimes is not to be prepared. Wait and see. Don't prepare for war by having huge military bases all over the world, four hundred bases. Don't prepare for terrorists by creating a homeland bureaucracy. Don't expect people to hate one other, Wait and see what happens.

[pp.66/7]

4.

After fifteen minutes, Donna the clerk said. 'We want to thank the children for worshipping with us. Can they shake hands round the room? The children pushed themselves off their pews with serious faces and shook hands with the people who sat in the first row of pews that faced the center of the room.

Then again the clock and the silence. I looked down for a long time, and bent over, leaning my elbows on my knees. Many minutes went by. I wondered who would speak. Nobody did. I looked at the clock. ... I wanted someone to speak. Surely someone would offer testimony about something. But I noticed that the woman who sometimes talked about her birdbath wasn't there. She was often the first to speak, and once she spoke others did. Silence was all very well, but in order to feel the silence you need a few words.

I didn't think that I should say anything. Because I'd said something about chickens that last time I went. On the other hand, someone should speak. I checked the clock. There were only ten minutes of meeting left. A woman got up and I thought she was going to say something, but she just left to arrange the after-meeting food in the other room. Please someone say something!

[pp. 95-6]

Meeting for Sufferings, 7 February 2015

At this meeting we covered a variety of topics. Firstly we heard from Chris Skidmore, Yearly Meeting Clerk, about plans for this year's meeting which will take place 1-4 May, the first to be held in the newly refurbished Large Meeting House. The theme is *Living out our faith in the world*. We were reminded that YM would take place towards the end of the election campaign when our minds might well be focused on issues such as housing justice. We were encouraged to attend and to use the spiritual preparation document which has been distributed to all Local Meetings.

We then returned to a concern about state education in England that had been brought to Sufferings in late 2013. We heard about some of the work that had been done since then including a threshing conference at Wood-broke which had produced a statement on the issue. An online forum, Quaker Values in Education, has been set up. While we welcomed these develop-

ments it was recognised that the concerns was still at an early stage and that there were many other aspects which might be included.

The next item concerned membership, which had been referred to us by Yearly Meeting. We were reminded of the flexibility Area Meetings are already allowed around membership processes, and were asked to share any experiences that might be helpful, for discussion at a future meeting. We also considered how we could respond to the question of a more flexible approach to membership for those whose journeys may preclude their committing to a local or area meeting. We felt it would be useful to consider how Friends and Meetings support those who are not able to attend regularly. We passed this minute to Quaker Life for advice.

During lunch there was an opportunity to meet the Trustees, or the Friends involved in Quaker Values in Education, or to hear about the work of QCCIR (the Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations).

In the afternoon, after dealing with appointments we had a report on the work of QCCIR, which helps facilitate communication between Quakers and other churches and faith groups. They are also responsible for responding on behalf of BYM to significant church/faith initiatives. They are currently considering a World Council of Churches paper "The Church, Towards a Common Vision" and their draft response was brought to Sufferings for discernment. It became clear during discussion that while most of us had read the briefing paper on this subject, few had read the actual response. Some of those who had felt that more open and inclusive language should be used. QCCIR was encouraged to revise the response and bring it back to Sufferings in the autumn.

There were no Area Meeting minutes to be considered at this meeting but two from QPSW dealt with climate policy and energy justice. They are preparing briefing papers on these topics ahead of the general election.

We heard a brief report from the clerk of Trustees. BYM has now registered under the Lobbying Act. So far no issues have arisen but it is causing some extra work for staff. We were also told that Friends House is experiencing an employment dispute concerning zero hours contracts. Attempts are being made to resolve this in as supportive a way as possible. We referred to the statement on the website at www.quaker.org.uk/new-working-contracts

Finally we considered the proposed redraft of Chapter 16 of *Quaker Faith & Practice* to reflect the legislation on same sex marriage in both England and Scotland. We approved the text, which includes a gender neutral declaration, and forwarded the minute to Yearly Meeting.

As often happens at Sufferings there were various other papers and information available. One, on the Structure of Britain Yearly Meeting, was found to

have forgotten about General Meeting for Scotland or Meeting of Friends in Wales, so after a minor revolt it will be revised.

As usual there are reports of this meeting in *The Friend* of 13 February and papers and other information available on the website.

Janet Grimwade

Strategic review of Venue 40

For over 25 years, Area Meeting volunteers have helped to run an Edinburgh Fringe venue at Central Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House. This year, Area Meeting are conducting a review of this work, in response to concerns about whether we have the capacity to go on operating the venue on a voluntary basis.

Venue 40 committee and a small group of Friends from Area Meeting have been reviewing why we do this work, and how it could operate in future. We would like Friends from around Area Meeting to send us their views.

We have given some consideration to the purpose of Venue 40 – why are we doing this work? Themes which have emerged so far include: having a distinctively Quaker presence at the Fringe, outreach, making a financial contribution to Area Meeting, and creating a friendly community of volunteers. Please let us know what your thoughts are on the purpose of Venue 40.

You can contact the group by emailing john@johnfitzgerald.me.uk, or speak to John Fitzgerald on 0131 669 6166. We are also asking local Friends who have volunteered at Venue 40 to tell us about their experiences. We would be very grateful if you could complete an online survey at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/XY9VN5Z>. (Alternatively, contact John to receive a paper copy of the survey.)

The review group plans to bring recommendations for the future of Venue 40 to Area Meeting by early summer 2015, in time to implement any changes in 2016.

John Fitzgerald
Convenor, Venue 40 committee

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

Draft Minutes of Area Meeting held at 11 am on Saturday 28 February 2015 at Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House

2015/02/01 Opening worship

During our opening worship, we remembered **Geoffrey Carnall**, of Central Edinburgh Meeting, whose funeral took place yesterday, and **Christine Davis**, of Dunblane Meeting, whose funeral and memorial meeting are taking place today, and we upheld the families of both.

2015/02/02 Scottish Land Reform as a Spiritual Imperative of Economic Justice

Our morning session has been led by Alastair McIntosh of Glasgow Meeting. Alastair distributed a paper listing the principal changes in the proposals of the Scottish Parliament's Land Reform Review Group. The public consultation period has finished but pressure still needs to be applied to ensure the changes go through during the current parliamentary term (*i.e.* by May 2016). We were told that vested interests will use powerful propaganda to resist the proposed reforms.

Our input to this debate must come from a spiritual perspective, focusing on our testimonies. We were reminded of Gerard Winstanley, and the Levellers, who worked with the early Quakers to spread the message that the Earth is a treasury for all its people. Our task is to bring the moral compass to bear upon our economic and land ownership systems. The implications of doing this go further than we can see.

Alastair reminded us of the biblical Jubilee tradition, whereby the balance was restored by a debt forgiveness process every seven and every fifty years. Other faith traditions also maintain this principle of restitution and reject usury as an economic practice with built-in failure. The land is not ours, it is everyone's. It belongs to the community and this sanctifies it – 'Take off your shoes, for the land on which you stand is holy'.

Rural Scotland has become a place in which, increasingly, only the wealthy can afford to live. In order to prevent this happening, we need mechanisms which moderate and challenge market forces. Another problem is that urbanization has led to people losing their sense of rootedness in the land. The land is the essence of our lives and we, whether rural or urban dwellers, are utterly dependent upon it. We are encouraged to consider our homes as personal financial assets, but do we not hold them in stewardship? Even beneficent land ownership has been understood in terms of patronage, with owners bestowing charity upon their tenants. We need to move from charity to solidarity, from a vertical, hierarchical model to one that is horizontal.

We record our thanks to Alastair McIntosh, who had to leave us before the end of the session to attend Christine Davis's memorial meeting, for his challenging talk and guidance of our discussion.

2015/02/03 Introductions

At the beginning of the afternoon session, we have ensured those present know each other's names and meetings. The attendance will be recorded in the concluding minute.

2015/02/04 Worship

During a period of worship, *Quaker Faith and Practice* 23.04 has been read to us. Written by Eva Pinthus in 1987, this reminds us that we live with compromise, struggling to keep our lives in balance, seeking to reach out to the oppressed while we ourselves share in the oppression. We must live with this awareness.

2015/02/05 The minutes of our last meeting, held on 11 January 2015 at the Open Door, South Edinburgh, have been signed and will be entered in the minute book.

2015/02/06 Matters arising

a) Militarisation in society (Minutes 2014/10/06, 2014/11/04a and 2015/01/04a refer)

No further replies from Local Authorities have been received but our clerk has written further to the City of Edinburgh council offering to provide Quaker speakers for schools wishing to learn about peace education and conscientious objection to war.

We note that Mairi Campbell Jack, General Meeting for Scotland's Parliamentary Engagement Officer, has been asked to put this issue as one of her top priorities and that ways of taking it forward have been discussed by the GM Parliamentary Liaison Function Group. They suggest that raising the issue with Local Authorities may most effectively be done by Local Meetings within each Authority's area.

We agree to ask our Local Meetings to do this, writing to both elected committee chairs and chief officers, and ask our clerk to copy his original letter to LM clerks to ensure Meetings take a similar approach. We ask Local Meeting clerks to keep the Area Meeting clerk and the General Meeting Parliamentary Engagement Officer informed of any responses received.

b) Marriage of Tony Gross & Mark Bitel (Minutes 2014/11/08b and 2015/01/04b refer)

We record that this, the first Quaker same-sex marriage in Scotland, took place as planned on 14 February 2015 in a packed Meeting Room at 7 Vic-

toria Terrace and that the Certificate of Accomplishment of marriage has been received.

2015/02/07 Sharing the life of Penicuik Meeting

Lucy Zawadska and Belle Claudi have shared something of the life of their Meeting, reminding us of its origins and early days. Lucy emphasised that it was and is a meeting of people who listen and exchange views, an excellent place for children to learn experientially about Quakers.

This is a small Meeting and at the moment there are no children. It meets once a month but this enables Friends to worship with other Meetings, allowing the sharing of activities and ideas. The Meeting is held in a home and we recognise this as an example of good stewardship.

Belle and Lucy spoke of the community of the Meeting and the much appreciated shared lunches. This community also attracts visitors to Meeting from Helpex volunteers.

We thank Lucy and Belle for their report.

2015/02/08 Report of Meeting for Sufferings held 7 February 2015

Janet Grimwade has spoken about the February meeting of Sufferings and her written report will appear in *Sesame*.

We note that the work done to date on 'Quaker Values in Education' refers to the state sector in England. However, Friends from Scotland and Wales are encouraged to get involved in the on-line forum on this issue, as are Friends with experience of other sectors of education.

We thank Janet for her report.

2015/02/09 Equality Week

We have been invited by Manchester & Warrington Area Meeting to join in a week of witness to our testimony to equality in the face of the increasing inequalities in British society. The week is planned for 6-15 March 2015, the week before the Chancellor of the Exchequer's 2015 Budget is declared, and has the encouragement of Quaker Peace and Social Witness. We are invited to join in a silent vigil for equality during that week and support materials are available from Manchester & Warrington AM.

We have heard that Portobello & Musselburgh Meeting is planning a vigil in Portobello High Street from 11 am to 1 pm on Saturday 14 March and would welcome support from all in the Area Meeting.

2015/02/10 Membership matters

a) Record of deaths

We record the deaths of two members of this Area Meeting, both of whom attended Central Edinburgh Local Meeting:

Jeanne Walmesley, who had recently moved to West Sussex with her husband Gerard Walmesley, died at home in Littlehampton on 16 December 2014. We understand that Bob and Bronwyn Harwood, until recently members of this Area Meeting, attended Jeanne's funeral and the family hope to arrange a memorial meeting for worship in Edinburgh later in the year.

Geoffrey Carnall, husband of Elisabeth Seale Carnall, died in Edinburgh Royal Infirmary on 20 February 2015. Geoffrey's funeral took place at Mortonhall yesterday and a memorial meeting for worship has been arranged for 2.30 pm on Saturday 25 April 2015 in Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House.

We ask Central Edinburgh Local Meeting to prepare memorial minutes for these Friends and to bring them to a future Area Meeting.

b) Transfers in

The following Friends have asked for their membership to be transferred to this Area Meeting:

Tim Hather from West Somerset AM. Tim now attends Central Edinburgh Local Meeting and we ask Cathy Bell to welcome him to membership of our Area Meeting.

Alyson Lomas from Ipswich & Diss AM. Alyson has been living for some time in East Broomlands. We ask Jane Pearn to welcome her to membership of our Area Meeting.

Alex Cole Hamilton from East Scotland AM. Alex has been living in Edinburgh for quite a long time and is well known to many Friends. We ask Alastair Cameron to welcome him to membership of our Area Meeting.

c) Transfer out

We have received a request that we transfer the membership of **Gerard Walmesley** to Sussex West AM. We agree to this and ask our Assistant Clerk (Membership Records) to send the necessary transfer form.

d) Applications for membership:

(i) [We have received an application for membership.]

(ii) **Marianne Butler**, who lives in Hutton, Berwickshire and attends Kelso meeting, applied for membership just after our last meeting. Jane Pearn and David Hume were appointed by our between-meetings procedure to meet with Marianne and Jane Pearn has read us the account of their meeting.

Marianne has lived in Hutton with her husband for about ten years. Her spiritual journey has led her away from the church she belonged to and she now feels completely at home with Quakers and our testimonies and is offer-

ing service to her Local Meeting. Committing to membership she sees to be the termination of a long process and Marianne will be glad to be able to say, 'I am a Quaker'.

We accept Marianne into membership and welcome her.

2015/02/11 Pastoral care and oversight

Chapter 12 of *Quaker Faith & Practice* sets out clearly our responsibility for caring for one another, including the specific responsibilities traditionally carried by those appointed as Elders and Overseers. *QF&P* 12.06 concludes: "Area meetings shall keep under regular review the provision of pastoral care in their constituent meetings (see 4.13.d & 12.16). Area meetings should seek the forms of eldership and oversight in each constituent meeting that best meet needs (12.15)."

It has been normal practice to appoint only those in membership to serve as elders and overseers but changes in patterns of attendance and membership have in recent years led to Meetings experimenting with other ways of providing pastoral care and, in particular, involving those not in membership in participating in this task. We are aware of Local Meetings in our Area experimenting in this way.

QF&P 12.15 gives the following guidance: "If a local meeting wishes to adopt an alternative method of providing pastoral care, it should take time to work out how the responsibilities would be shared and who would represent the group in meetings for eldership and oversight within the area meeting. It should undertake a periodic review of the effectiveness of any procedure adopted." and "Any proposals for changes in the way pastoral care is exercised in a meeting or meetings should be taken to the area meeting for guidance, support and decision."

We shall return to this matter at a future meeting.

2015/02/12 Britain Yearly Meeting 2015

Yearly Meeting will be held in London from 1 to 4 May 2015. The theme this year is *Living out our faith in the world*.

We have received the Spiritual Preparation document, which is also available on the BYM website. We agree to set up a preparation meeting and accept the offer of David Somervell (South Edinburgh) to facilitate one such meeting, open to all Friends in South East Scotland Area Meeting. We ask Local Meeting clerks to inform Friends intending to attend Yearly Meeting of this opportunity for preparation.

We have been reminded that there is value in considering the questions posed in the Spiritual Preparation document, whether or not Friends are attending Yearly Meeting.

2015/02/13 Appointments

Our Nominations Committee has brought the following nominations for our consideration:

To serve a second triennium from April 2015 to end of March 2018:

- a. as an Area Meeting Trustee – **Ann Forsyth** (Central Edinburgh LM)
- b. as a member of Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House Management Committee – **Evelyn Graham** (Central Edinburgh LM)
- c. as an Elder – **Cathy Bell** (Central Edinburgh LM)
- d. as an Overseer – **Madeleine Harding** (Central Edinburgh LM).

These names being acceptable, we appoint them accordingly.

To serve from April 2015 to end of March 2018:

- e. as an Elder – **Kate Arnot** (Polmont LM)
- f. on the Pastoral Care Team at Polmont LM – **Mariot Dallas, Anna Levin** and **Cath Dyer** (attender applying for membership)
- g. as an Overseer – **Dorothy Buglass** (South Edinburgh LM)
- h. as Assistant Clerk (Membership Records) - **Richard Williams** (Central Edinburgh LM)

To serve on the Area Meeting Review Group:

- i. **Dierdre Armstrong** (South Edinburgh LM)
- j. **Justin Kenrick** (Portobello & Musselburgh LM)

These names being acceptable, we appoint them accordingly.

We note that David Hume (Quaker Social Responsibility and Witness Working Group), Jimmy Smith (Elder) and Hilary Davies (Overseer) have asked to be released from service and we release them as requested, with thanks for their service.

We note that Maureen Anderson (overseer) and Sue Sierra (Assistant Clerk, Membership Records) have completed their terms of service and thank them also.

We appoint Elizabeth Allen, Marianne Butler, Pat Lucas, Phil Lucas and Jane Pearn to represent us at General Meeting for Scotland to be held in St Andrews on Saturday 7 March.

2015/02/14 Parliamentary engagement

Elizabeth Allen has reported on the appointment of Mairi Campbell Jack as General Meeting for Scotland's Parliamentary Engagement Officer. Mairi started work in early January and has four current priorities for her work:

- Militarisation in society.

- The 2015 General Election. Mairi is planning Scottish Quaker engagement with this and is encouraging Meetings to organize hustings or other related events.
- Trident. Mairi is preparing a leaflet, which will be ready soon for distribution.
- Economic justice, sustainability and peace; a big issue, where Mairi is currently taking soundings.

In addition, Mairi has sent a briefing to all our Area Meetings on issues before the Scottish Parliament and is keeping Britain Yearly Meeting advocacy staff informed. She is busy developing networks and exploring the best ways of communicating with Scottish Friends. We suggest she has a regular slot in the Scottish Friend and we have been told of Local Meeting groups working on related issues. Mairi needs to be kept informed about these.

2015/02/15 General Election

The General Meeting Parliamentary Liaison Function Group is encouraging Area Meetings to organize hustings or other events which enable Quakers, perhaps working with others, to explore issues with representatives of political parties. We ask our clerk to explore with Friends in the Area Meeting whether there are any who wish to take the planning of such an event forward.

2015/02/16 Correspondence

Correspondence had been received and was made available on:

- Ackworth School General Meeting
- Quaker Voluntary Action's work camp programme
- Exeter Meeting's CO₂ concern

2015/02/17 Closing minute

27 members and 6 attenders representing 8 Local Meetings have attended all or part of this Area Meeting, as indicated below:

| Central Edinburgh | Central Fife | East Lothian | Kelso | Penicuik |
|-------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------|----------|
| 12 + 2A | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 + 2A |
| Polmont | Portobello & Musselburgh | South Edinburgh | Tweeddale | |
| 1 + 1A | 1 | 2 + 1A | - | |

We next meet in Central Fife, on Saturday 18 April 2015 at 2 pm.

Signed
Phil Lucas, Clerk

An Urgent Appeal

Dear Friends

Mairi Campbell Jack, our GM Parliamentary Engagement Officer, and the Parliamentary Liaison Function Group are encouraging us to organise hustings or information events with political party representatives in the lead up to the 7 May UK General Election. Area Meeting in February agreed the following minute:

2015/02/15 General Election

The General Meeting Parliamentary Liaison Function Group is encouraging Area Meetings to organize hustings or other events which enable Quakers, perhaps working with others, to explore issues with representatives of political parties. We ask our clerk to explore with Friends in the Area Meeting whether there are any who wish to take the planning of such an event forward.

We would like to arrange such an event (probably a meeting to explore issues with party representatives rather than a hustings) but can only do so if there are those willing to organise it. PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF THAT MAY INCLUDE YOU.

Phil Lucas
AM Clerk

A Few Words on Afterwords . . .

Area Meeting Elders have been discussing the practice of Afterwords and sharing experiences. Kim Smith and Mary Woodward produced this paper to help Friends consider the use of Afterwords. It is up to Local Meetings to decide whether they adopt this practice and if so, how it is carried out. This paper offers some food for thought.

“And now we have a few moments for Afterwords. This is a time to share anything that didn’t quite make it to ministry or mention anyone we’d like to have held in the Light.”

Many Quaker meetings within Britain Yearly Meeting now include a brief space after the close of Meeting for Worship, introduced with a similar form of words from the Clerk.

The origin of “Afterwords” (sometimes called “Afterthoughts”) is unclear, but the practice appears to have arisen during the past decade. It is not mentioned in *Quaker Faith & Practice* and does not appear in any guidance from Britain Yearly Meeting.

It does appear, however, in many leaflets and websites of Local Meetings, explaining the practice in a variety of ways.

Our worship at Abingdon continues in the period we call Afterwords. It is an opportunity to share with the meeting thoughts or insights which come to us during the silence or other matters we have on our minds which may not have led to spoken ministry.

At Bideford, unlike many other Quaker meetings, the hour is followed by a few minutes of “Afterwords” during which anyone present can talk about what might have been in their mind during the meeting, even though they did not feel prompted to speak during the hour’s worship. This is a sharing exercise, not a discussion, and can sometimes be inspiring, or heartwarming.

And one Friend describes Afterwords as:

Distinct from Meeting for Worship and spoken ministry, allowing time/space for conversation/discussion/exploration of ideas/insights/issues. It is not a comment on ministry or an opportunity to debate ministry. There is no imperative to speak.

The adoption of Afterwords in local meetings around Britain Yearly Meeting indicates that many do find the practice beneficial. Some describe it as a “transition phase” between the depth of a gathered Meeting and the more practically-orientated notices and fellowship time. Others find it a

positive space for nurturing vocal ministry amongst those initially shy of speaking in Meeting for Worship.

But, the practice of Afterwords is not without critics. Simon Western, writing in *The Friend* in January 2014 cites an unsettling experience when he felt his ministry was “attacked” and refuted during a period of Afterwords. Others describe unease that Afterwords can veer into a lengthy discussion which doesn't feel right for the time and place.

One of the challenges, in the absence of clear guidance from Britain Yearly Meeting, is defining exactly what Afterwords should entail, so it can be a safe, positive space that enhances the spiritual life and experience of the meeting. Descriptions used by some Meetings may, inadvertently, contribute to some of the confusion. For example:

“. . . thoughts about what has happened during the Meeting for Worship, but which members did not feel appropriate to air during the Meeting.”

“. . . an opportunity to comment on the ministry given during Meeting, share personal news or talk about local, national and international events.”

Because the practice has arisen largely on an “ad hoc” basis, it is not surprising that it comes in many different forms. Difficulties can arise when experiences and expectations of Afterwords are so varied. But, can these be overcome? Is it possible for Meetings to benefit from Afterwords while avoiding possible pitfalls?

It would seem the best approach is to bring Afterwords fully “into the Light” for discussion and discernment to consider the value of introducing it, or clarifying the parameters of Afterwords where it is already practiced.

The following are a few suggestions for achieving this outcome:

Find out how other meetings practice Afterwords. Talk to Friends there about their experience and what they feel makes it work well and not so well.

Convene a meeting to discuss Afterwords in your Meeting. If you currently practice this, ask Friends to reflect on what it adds to the local Meeting and why, where it may present challenges and what can be done to address these. If you are thinking about adopting the practice, ask Friends to share their hopes, fears and suggestions for making it work well.

Draw up basic guidelines or a form of words that encapsulates what your Meeting has discerned that Afterwords will be. This could be in the form of a minute or longer guidance. Timing might be discussed.

Ensure Afterwords is explained to visitors and new attenders, for example through your Meeting website, in an introductory leaflet and/or a brief

explanation given by the Clerk or another Friend at the close of Meeting for Worship. The Afterword should be introduced clearly each Sunday, setting boundaries and expectations.

Give some thought to what should happen if Afterwords “does not go well.” Even outside Meeting for Worship, Elders have a role in addressing things offered in a way not in keeping with Quaker witness and discipline. However, the whole Meeting is responsible for a shared approach to “right ordering” as well as sensitively caring for one another.

It may be beneficial to review how Afterwords is working either in the context of a Meeting's Spiritual Review, through pastoral care processes or another means that feels right for that Meeting. This can be useful for reminding Friends of the agreed purpose of Afterwords, making any changes and ensuring there is a shared understanding and commitment to the practice within the context of our Quaker faith and practice.

Practising Afterwords may or may not be the “right thing” for our Meetings. However, sharing experiences, ideas and insights can only help deepen our understanding and encourage renewal and growth within our living faith community.

Rufus Jones was considerably upset by (Barclay's) Apology and by its lack of the revelatory experiences of early Friends. He argues that Barclay was attempting to fit Quakerism to the doctrines of the Reformation, but ignored the experiences of the mystics. Jones writes that Barclay altered the entire character of the Quaker movement ... Friends became concerned with the minutiae of dress, furnishings of their houses, rules about 'disownment', marriage procedure and other internal behavior, and lost the outgoing mission to the whole world. Instead of feeling that Quakerism was a vision for all, they shrank into a small group, perhaps showing an example, but only for the elect few.

(Anne Adams 2012 : p. 32 *Is There Not a New Creation? The Experiences of Early Friends.* Luston. Applegarth Press)

Forgiveness

The American, **John Greenleaf Whittier** (1809-1894), known as The Quaker Poet, The Slave Poet and The Fireside Poet, wrote from the time he was a child until he died at 85. A Quaker devoted to social causes and reform, Whittier worked for years as an editor and writer at a series of abolitionist newspapers and magazines. Additionally, he was a politician and abolitionist, opposing slavery before it became the divisive subject that resulted in civil war. Most famous for lengthy works, such as the oft-referred-to poem, ***Snowbound***, Whittier occasionally wrote shorter pieces like ***Forgiveness***, below.

Forgiveness

*My heart was heavy, for its trust had been
Abused, its kindness answered with foul wrong;
So, turning gloomily from my fellow-men,
One summer Sabbath day I strolled among
The green mounds of the village burial-place;
Where, pondering how all human love and hate
Find one sad level; and how, soon or late,
Wronged and wrongdoer, each with meekened face,
And cold hands folded over a still heart,
Pass the green threshold of our common grave,
Whither all footsteps tend, whence none depart,
Awed for myself, and pitying my race,
Our common sorrow, like a mighty wave,
Swept all my pride away, and trembling I forgave!*

(John Greenleaf Whittier)

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 |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|

First Sunday in the Month

| | |
|---|---------|
| Penicuik & Peebles Valleyfield House, 17 High St., Penicuik | 11.00am |
|---|---------|

Children welcome, bring and share lunch.

| | |
|--|--------|
| Portobello & Musselburgh: Old Parish Church Hall, Bellfield Street | 7.30pm |
|--|--------|

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 for more details

Second Sunday in the Month

| | |
|--|---------|
| Portobello & Musselburgh St James Church Hall, Rosefield Place | 11.00am |
|--|---------|

Portobello EH15 1AZ

Tweeddale Nomad Beat, 10-11 Cavalry Park, Peebles

All welcome but please phone to confirm.

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| 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: St Andrew's Centre, Dunbar | 11.00am |
|--|---------|

Third Tuesday in the Month

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Edinburgh Uni Common Room, Muslim Prayer Rooms | 1.00- 1.30pm |
|--|--------------|

Fourth Sunday in the Month

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|
| Portobello & Musselburgh as above | 11.00am |
|-----------------------------------|---------|

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

| | |
|---|---------|
| Central Fife Hunter Halls, Kirkcaldy as above | 10.30am |
|---|---------|

| | |
|---|---------|
| Barony St Meeting, Broughton St Mary's Church Edinburgh | 7.00 pm |
|---|---------|

Fifth Sunday in the Month

| | |
|---|---------|
| Central Fife Hunter Halls, Kirkcaldy as above | 10.30am |
|---|---------|

Last Sunday in the Month .

| | |
|--|---------|
| East Lothian: St Andrew's Centre, Dunbar | 11.00am |
|--|---------|

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