

SESAME

Number 198: October 2015

The Ammerdown Invitation / GM hospitality: any offers? / Meeting for Sufferings (July & September) / News for Café-goers (and poetry lovers) / Statement on Refugees / Voltaire's View of Friends / AM August Minutes

Our Editor, Alan Davies, died on 26 September. At the memorial meeting on 5 October, this poem was read.

*How I grew to learn
That his furrowed brow
Was interest and affection

Silence filled with clouds of thought
Lies dormant until the next question
Broken by an occasional smile
That warmed words not to be wasted

A source of true comfort and inspiration
Until next time grandfather,
Farewell.*

Alice Dalkin

See also p. 3

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SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

Saturday 24 October 2015, 11 am
at Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace

Dear Friends,

Please find below a draft outline agenda for our next meeting. Various aspects of our social responsibility provide much of the substance of what promises to be an interesting and challenging meeting, and I hope many of you will be able to come.

Phil Lucas, for the clerking team

1. Worship
2. Introductions
3. Minutes of last meeting, 29 August 2015
4. Matters arising:
 - a) Militarisation in society
 - *any further reports from local meetings?*
 - *representation at the Woodbrooke course in February*(names still sought)
 - b) Representatives to National Outreach Conference in February
 - c) Terms of reference for our Social Responsibility Working Group
5. 'Living Our Values'

A session on money and pensions, led by Duncan Wallace of the Social Responsibility Working Group

Lunch
6. Our prison ministry - report from our Quaker Prison Minister
7. Membership matters
8. Review of the Area Meeting - an update on progress
9. Appointments
10. Our Quaker concern for housing - report from Alastair Cameron
11. The work of the Social Responsibility Working Group: report of the event they organised on 5 October

Alan Davies

Writing in *Sesame* in October 2010, in what was his first substantive article as editor, Alan Davies took as his starting point the fact that Frank Kermode, the then lately-deceased critic, had called his autobiography *Not Entitled* - the cry in the wartime Royal Navy when a sailor, parading to receive his pay, was to get nothing, his due amount having been completely swallowed by 'mulcts' (*i.e.* fines). Kermode felt the phrase summed up his own life; and Alan wrote:

"If so successful a man never lost his sense of his own unworthiness, it is not surprising that many of us labour under this weight of inadequacy, never accepting reassurances and certain that we are about to be exposed. This is not humility, it is not modesty; it is a cripplingly negative presumption, almost a self-loathing. How sad!

"The Advice on vocal ministry (No. 13) tells us:

When prompted to speak, wait patiently to know that the leading and the time are right; but do not let a sense of your own unworthiness hold you back.

"Except in that strict naval meaning we are all entitled: we may aim to be modest and generous but we should never regard ourselves as unworthy. We feel unworthy not because we lack skills, knowledge, experience, beauty: it is because we doubt our own selfhood. To that we are all entitled."

This seems to me typical: a positive and important thought, but emerging from what might seem a presumption of general bleakness. Until, through working with him on this newsletter, I got to know him better, I used to find his spoken ministry, which others valued highly, somewhat gloomy, or even—and I write as one who would bring back PMs and MMs, and un-mix the *Queries* from the *Advices*—in Quaker terms, reactionary. At times, I felt he could be; but I always looked forward to our *Sesame* sessions, when, having finished preparing the text (or even as we were working) we talked politics, discussed books, shared thoughts about Quaker history, and swapped favourite poems. (Not an equal exchange: he offered Emily Dickinson, and got back 'How I Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix (or Vice Versa)' by Yeatman & Sellar.) I will miss our meetings; and I will miss him.

Alan Frith

Sustainable Security: The Ammerdown Invitation

At its meeting in Perth in September, the Northern Friends Peace Board considered the following document, produced by a group that included Diana Francis, who delivered the 2015 Swarthmore Lecture, *Faith, Power and Peace*. (She mentioned it in the Lecture: see p. 75 of the printed version.) Friends are invited to consider the questions at the end and respond directly to the group.

Security for the future - In search of a new vision

We are a group of people involved in peace-building work who are increasingly concerned about the future of peace and security here in the UK and worldwide. We believe that our own government is not responding effectively to the challenges of the new century, but, with a marked change of course, it could be. We would like to begin a public conversation about this in the UK. We have outlined some initial thoughts on a vision for a more peaceful, less insecure world. A summary is below; the full text (8 pages) is at www.opendemocracy.net/ammerdown-invitation. These thoughts are just one contribution among many possible others; we would welcome your responses and your own ideas.

Anxiety about the future is growing. Violence is escalating in the Middle East and beyond. Financial worries and concerns about our changing society are widespread. Consumer economies are dangerously damaging the earth's ecology, rapidly depleting natural resources and driving rich and poor people further apart. These major drivers of insecurity are disrupting societies across the world, but governments have been unwilling or unable to respond, or have made matters worse. A number of governments, including our own, are investing heavily in their armed forces, expecting to control the global security environment by projecting power abroad.

Our political class has yet to adapt to these realities. The devastating failures of the US-led, UK-supported wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and

Libya have shown that sustainable security will not be achieved by strategies centred on military intervention. At home, “counter-terrorism’ policies have curtailed hard-won rights and liberties. The government’s approach to dealing with ‘radicalisation’ and ‘extremism’ is deepening alienation and mistrust between communities.

We believe that a more peaceful, less insecure future is possible. Although the challenges are severe, they are not beyond the imaginative, intellectual, and practical resources available. But for a change of course we need to begin from the recognition that we share a common humanity with fundamentally the same needs, desires, hopes and fears, and that we can only live as part of a planetary ecology which is now straining under our weight. Whether our world becomes more or less secure could well come to depend on the kind of future we choose to believe in.

We think that a strategy for sustainable security would take account of the following points:

- What does security mean? The government’s strategy views security mainly in terms of military responses to perceived threats. We believe that the true meaning of security is deeper and broader: freedom from fear, freedom from want, and freedom to live in dignity. This suggests societies in which everyone has access to decent work, food, health care and education, a safe place to call home, and communities of people who support each other.
- On what does this depend? Our future security lies not in rugged individualism and the survival of the strongest, but in recognising our common interdependence. We believe our better future will depend on greater social, economic and ecological responsibility. Instead of using power to control and dominate, it must be used more to achieve shared goals equitably through cooperation and negotiation. This involves us all, not only governments, in responsibilities that are local national and global.

- How could we move towards this now? Since the greatest drivers of insecurity include climate change, economic inequality, social and political marginalisation and loss of natural resources, a strategy for sustainable security would respond far more vigorously to these challenges. It would invest strongly in state and civic capacities for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. And it would work to convert the arms industry to socially useful production, draw back the UK's heavy defence spending, and decommission its nuclear weapons. Rather than follow the lead of the world's predominant superpower, the UK's foreign policy would seek progressive alliances with like-minded governments and people's movements.
- And in the longer term? Our future security can only grow from social, political and economic arrangements that are fairer and more ecologically responsible than those we have now. We have to ask: Who makes the decisions, how, and in whose interests? Power is increasingly concentrated in international institutions and corporations that are far from our democratic reach. Ordinary citizens are disenfranchised: democratic forums nationally and globally need urgent reform and renewal.
- Can it be done? We are not proposing a utopia, just a different direction of travel. Our multiple global crises gravely threaten our common security, but are also an unprecedented incentive to renew our democratic institutions and foster cooperation between peoples, leading towards a worldwide sense of humanity as a global community. From our experience of peacebuilding work, we believe that only a public conversation, to which people from all backgrounds contribute, is capable of ushering in the substantial changes in thinking that are needed.

We would like to begin this conversation now, and we hope you will join us to share your views.

Questions

1. What does 'security' mean to you? How does this compare with your understanding of the term 'national security'?
2. Should security begin at home, or does our security depend on security elsewhere in the world?
3. The UK is the sixth-largest military spender in the world. To what extent does this keep us safe? To what extent is it part of the problem?
4. The government's national security strategy is focused primarily on 'projecting power' abroad. We believe that security depends more on tackling the underlying causes of insecurity, such as economic inequality, social and political marginalisation, climate change, reckless exploitation of natural resources and global militarisation, among others. What do you think?
5. Who do you think is responsible for building security? What roles should the government play? What roles do you see for citizens?
6. Do you agree that a change of course is needed? If so, what can be done now, and how will it be achieved in the long term?

Contact: ammerdown.invitation@gmail.com

Residential General Meeting: Accommodation Still Sought

Residential General Meeting is being hosted by South East Scotland AM on 14-15 November this year. Sessions will be held at Edinburgh Meeting House (7 Victoria Terrace), and bed & breakfast accommodation is needed for Friends travelling from other parts of Scotland. If, for the nights of 13th and 14th November, you could provide a bed, and a simple continental-style breakfast next morning, please get in touch with Rachel Fitzgerald on (0131) 669 6166; email rachelfitzg@googlemail.com.

Meeting for Sufferings

Meeting for Sufferings has met twice since last reported in Sesame; Henry S. Thompson, our new rep., brings us up to date.

4 July 2015

Henry Thompson and Kate Arnot were present, representing South East Scotland AM on Sufferings for the first time. As many of those in the room were new, the morning's sessions were devoted to introducing Meeting for Sufferings: its history, its work, its procedures, and its place in the overall structure of Britain Yearly Meeting.

We were reminded that Suffering is once again, harking back to its origins in the 1670s, responsible for recording the names and situations of any Friend in court or in prison for conscience's sake. The Recording Clerk, Paul Parker, offered the insight that Meeting for Sufferings is the only part of Britain Yearly Meeting which has, on a regular and ongoing basis, an overview of *all* the activities of and within BYM, centrally and locally, internally and externally.

Throughout the morning, the words "visionary" and "prophetic" recurred, from many different people, as the core role of Meeting for Sufferings.

Among the actual business of the day, we received minutes from Yearly Meeting 2015, in particular Minute 36, now being referred to as the "Call for Equality".

Paula Harvey at Friends House is contact point for information about an (invitation-only) threshing event at Woodbrooke in September, to explore actions in progress or contemplated with respect to BYM engagement with the problem of housing. It will be led by Quaker Housing Trust.

On the issue of refugees/migrants in the Mediterranean, the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) have an Alert Network, which you can join online to receive information about how you can help with actions they are recommending.

5 September 2015

Henry Thompson was present, representing our Area Meeting on Sufferings for the first time at a normal working meeting.

The paper "Our faith in the future" from the Long Term Framework Working Group was presented and discussed. This single-page draft, which focuses on how we go forward rather than on what we will do, has no dates associated, unlike the existing *A Framework for Action*, which it replaces. These changes are worth noting, and are to some extent in my view a recognition that the very idea of Long Term Frameworks has been effectively rethought. Some parts of *A Framework for Action* will continue to be useful/relevant, but we were not given sight of an additional document which is expected to detail these.

A minute from North Wales AM was received, urging a national Quaker initiative to facilitate the creation of AM-level Credit Unions. We endorsed this in principle, with NWAM encouraged to produce a detailed/costed proposal.

We learned from Southern Marches AM that a proposal to add a Memorial to *Innocent Victims of War* to the National Memorial Arboretum (close by the recently-erected one to the Friends Ambulance Unit/Friends Relief Service), has been well received by the curators there. Despite some continuing concerns about the phrase "innocent victims", we encouraged SMAM to take this forward.

Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relationships (QCCIR) presented a re-draft of our proposed response to the World Council of Churches consultation paper entitled *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*. In the spirit of *To Lima with Love* ([Quaker] Committee on Christian Relations, 1987), it is an excellent statement of our understanding of what it means to be a Church, and is accompanied by a study guide. I will let Friends know when these are available in their final form.

Under the heading "Vibrancy" we heard that Woodbrooke and YM

Trustees will shortly review, and most likely approve, a pilot scheme, involving new staff specifically hired and locally situated in four or five 'regions', to enable our meetings to become vibrant.

A draft public statement on the refugee crisis was presented, but judged to be insufficiently robust. By the time of this report, a revised version will presumably have been widely circulated. [See p. 12.]

As well as all this, reports from YM Trustees and QP&SW Central Committee were received and briefly reviewed, and various procedural/structural bits of official business were taken care of.

A Hidden Gem and a New Social Enterprise

The Old School Café, 6 Infirmarary Street, Edinburgh EH1 1LT

The Old School Café at the South Bridge Community Centre in Infirmarary Street was trialled as a Festival café in 2014. With the support and facilitation of Canongate Youth, and with People's Millions Lottery Funding gained through public votes providing sufficient capital funding for its proper fitting out, it re-opened at the end of June 2015: and hoorah! is staying open past the Festival.

It's a lovely space, and the food and drinks are great. Whether you just want a quick coffee and a tasty cake or prefer something more filling, there is something for you at an extremely reasonable price – the menu is excellent and varied, with daily hot specials and salads, hot rolls, baked potatoes, soup, superb coffee and an intriguing selection of teas. Produce is all sourced locally, either from social enterprises such as Breadshare, or businesses like Findlays of Portobello and Cuttea Sark (who have produced a bespoke coffee bean for the Old School Café).

The *really* good thing about it, though, which sets it apart, is that it provides experience, training and qualifications for young people who are looking to learn employability and life skills. Donna McArdle, superb cook and the mastermind behind the café, enthused about the successful outcomes of a project which "transforms young people who fall out of the school system and can then discover that they are really good at hos-

pitality", (sometimes in just one or two shifts), adding that working in hospitality services is the one place where, if you are good, you are told so on a daily basis by satisfied customers.

The other intriguing project run by Donna, Charlie Hanks and Aileass Pringle, is the Real Junk Food Project, which intercepts edible food that would otherwise end up as landfill and creates delicious healthy meals which are offered on a "pay as you feel able" basis to an ever-growing community. Donna's main local suppliers are Dig In, Edinburgh Community Food, Breadshare Community Bakery, Twelve Triangles and Fruitilicious.

The project also aims to raise awareness of the amount of food wasted in this country. Since April, the Real Junk Food Project has been putting on weekly events in a variety of places, some as fund-raisers (e.g. for Nepal), and in August offered food and conversation three nights a week at the Old School Café. (I was at a *Mrs Dalloway*-themed evening: see images on the Facebook page!) Themed nights are now once a week, alternating between mid-week and week-end – for details see <https://www.facebook.com/trjfpEdinburgh> .

Donna McArdle has just been appointed Scottish Coordinator of the Real Junk Food Project, and plans to start something up in other areas including East and West Lothian. Get in touch with her *via* email if you are interested in being involved : mcardledonna65@gmail.com.

Dinner with a purpose – feed bellies not bins! What's not to like? Enjoy!

Mary Woodward

The Old School Café is open weekdays, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. Meeting spaces are available for hire, and there is Wi-Fi. Tel. 0131 556 9389

MONDAY 16 NOVEMBER, 6.30 -8.30 AT 40 PILRIG ST. EDINBURGH EH6 5AL

An intimate telling of T.S. Eliot's FOUR QUARTETS

Bring a plate of simple food to share - suggested donation £5-£10

Limited space, so please contact me (0131 554 1078/susiereade@gmail.com) if you would like to come, or for more information. All welcome.

Susie Reade

The following is the text of the statement issued concerning the refugee crisis:

Quakers urgently call for safe paths for refugees

The unfolding crisis of refugees fleeing across Europe, has prompted Quakers in Britain to urge the UK Government and other European Governments to create secure paths to safety.

Meeting for Sufferings, Quakers' representative body meeting in London on Saturday, 5 September made this statement:

“That which is morally wrong cannot be politically right”

(A Quaker statement in 1822).

“Quakers in Britain urge the UK Government to welcome those desperately seeking a place of safety, in Europe, from the dangers in their own countries. In this urgent situation it cannot be right to harden hearts against people who are struggling and dying on European soil and in the seas around us.

“In Britain we have a tradition of sheltering those in danger, as we did with the Kindertransport, rescuing thousands of children from Nazi-occupied Europe so many years ago, and more recently, when we welcomed refugees from countries including Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, Iraq, Bosnia and Kosova. It is time to open our hearts and communities again.

“This exceptional time of need calls for a proportionate response from all the governments of Europe working together. We call for mechanisms to be created that will enable people to travel safely and to secure legal protection – including in Britain.

“Refugees are fleeing from fear. Further violent interventions in countries such as Syria will not provide a solution. Difficult but compassionate decisions need to be made to secure peace for people in these regions.

“Quakers assert that all human life is precious – each person is a child of God and the loss of one diminishes us all. In this severe crisis, we hear the Spirit calling us to throw ourselves into the fray with all the love and courage we can muster.”

Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network (QARN) and Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) have previously called for safe paths to legal protection, and protested against the cessation of funding for the Search and Rescue Operation in the Mediterranean.

Quaker Beginnings according to Voltaire

The first four of Voltaire’s Lettres philosophiques (originally published in English as Letters Concerning the English Nation in 1733) give a largely sympathetic account of Quaker origins and beliefs. In 1994, Oxford World Classics reissued the text of the first edition; it was believed the English was Voltaire’s own, but it has since been established that the letters were written in French and translated by John Lockman. This extract is from Letter III; spelling, punctuation and italicisation are as in the original.

*Fox thought himself inspir’d, and consequently was of opinion, that he must speak in a manner different from the rest of mankind. He therefore began to writhe his body, to screw up his face, to hold in his breath, and to exhale it in a forcible manner, insomuch that the priestess of the *Pythian* God at *Delphos* could not have acted her part to better advantage. Inspiration soon became so habitual to him, that he cou’d scarce deliver himself in any other manner. This was the first gift he communicated to his disciples. These ap’d very sincerely their master’s several grimaces, and shook in every limb the instant the fit of inspiration came upon them, whence they were called Quakers. The vulgar attempted to mimick them, they trembled, they spake thro’ the nose; they quak’d and fancied themselves inspir’d by the Holy Ghost. The only thing now wanting was a few miracles, and accordingly they wrought some.*

*Fox, this modern patriarch, spoke thus to a justice of peace, before a large assembly of people. Friend, take care what thou dost: God will soon punish thee for persecuting his saints. This magistrate being one who besotted himself every day with bad beer and brandy, died of an apoplexy two days after, the moment he had signed a *mittimus* for imprisoning some Quakers.*

The sudden death with which the justice was seiz'd, was not ascribed to his intemperance, but was universally looked upon as the effect of the holy man's predictions: so that this accident made more converts to Quakerism, than a thousand sermons and as many shaking fits cou'd have done. *Oliver* [Cromwell] finding them increase daily was desirous of bringing them over to his party, and for that purpose attempted to bribe them by money. However, they were incorruptible, which made him one day declare, that this religion was the only one he had ever met with that had resisted the charms of gold.

The Quakers were several times persecuted under *Charles* the second, not upon a religious account, but for refusing to pay the tythes, for *Thee-ing* and *Thou-ing* the magistrates, and for refusing to take the oaths enacted by the laws.

At last *Robert Barclay*, a native of *Scotland*, presented to the king in 1675, his apology for the Quakers, a work as well drawn as the subject cou'd possibly admit. The dedication to *Charles* the second is not fill'd with mean, flattering enconiums; but abounds with bold touches in favour of truth, and with the wisest counsels. 'Thou hast tasted,' says he to the king at the close of his epistle dedicatory, 'of prosperity and adversity; thou knowest what it is to be banished thy native country; to be over-rul'd as well as to rule, and sit upon the throne; and being oppressed, thou hast reason to know how hateful the oppressor is both to God and man: If after all these warnings and advertisements, thou dost not turn unto the Lord with all thy heart; but forget him who remembered thee in thy distress, and give up thy self to follow lust and vanity, surely great will be thy condemnation.'

Against which snare, as well as the temptation of those, that may or do feed thee, and prompt thee to evil, the most excellent and prevalent remedy will be, to apply thy self to that light of *Christ*, which shineth in thy conscience, which neither can nor will flatter thee, nor suffer thee to be at ease in thy sins; but doth and will deal plainly and faithfully with thee, as those, that are followers thereof have plainly done—*Thy faithful friend and subject*, ROBERT BARCLAY.'

A more surprizing circumstance is, that this epistle, written by a private man of no figure, was so happy in its effects as to put a stop to the persecution.

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

Minutes of Area Meeting held on Saturday 29 August 2015 in Belhaven Church Hall, Dunbar

2015/08/01 Worship

During opening worship *Quaker Faith & Practice* 23.48 has been read to us. Written by Parker J. Palmer in 1977, it reminds us of the importance to us of community as we respond to the needs of the world.

2015/08/02 Introductions

We have ensured those present know each other's names and meetings. The attendance will be recorded in the concluding minute.

2015/08/03 The minutes of our last meeting, held on 30 May 2015 in Kelso Meeting House, have been signed and entered in the minute book.

2015/08/04 Matters arising

a) Militarisation in society (Minutes 2014/10/06, 2014/11/04a, 2015/01/4a, 2015/02/06, 2015/04/04 and 2015/05/04a refer)

Local Meetings were asked to pursue this matter with their local authorities.

Laurie Naumann of Central Fife meeting has received a response from the Area Education Officer of Levenmouth & North East Fife, which was read out. It states that no form of recruitment by the Armed Forces takes place in Fife schools, but they run certified leadership skills programmes in partnership with the Combined Cadet Force. The course includes Duke of Edinburgh Awards, First Aid, Emergency Services (SQA) Awards and out-of-school Summer and Easter Camps. Other activities in schools include Memorial Services in November, building trim trails or outdoor play areas and a possible future plan to supplement pipe and drum training in primaries using Scots Dragoon pipe and drum Instructors.

Central Edinburgh Meeting has had a response from the Education Chair of the City of Edinburgh Council, assuring them that a member of staff is always present when members of the armed forces are in the classroom, to ensure balance. The clerks of Central Edinburgh Meeting are pursuing this with the Education Committee.

We are deeply concerned about these responses. We recognize that if we wish the military's work in schools to stop, we need to consider that the effect of their work on individuals can be very positive. We should look at the alternatives. We welcome the peace work being done by the Educational Institute of Scotland, and the challenging programme offered by the Campaign Against Arms Trade to help young people look at the arms trade.

We also need to look beyond the military's presence in schools. Young people need positive role models, which the military as well as celebrities are providing.

This is a complex issue and there is no simple answer.

We send the responses of the two Councils, plus that of Bryan Poole, Fife Council's Convenor of Education, to the Quaker Scottish Parliamentary Engagement Officer, Mairi Campbell Jack. We agree that Laurie Naumann may send the response from Fife Council to St Andrews Local Meeting.

We arranged a peace witness at Edinburgh Armed Forces Day on Saturday 27 June as planned and were joined by the Scottish Peace Network. About two dozen F/friends took part. Stick banners and a leaflet were produced to state why Friends were present. Jane Pearn has shared her reflections on the day. The reception was mixed: appreciation by some and rejection by others. Our presence was perceived to be confrontational by some people who came to celebrate the contribution of the Armed Forces.

If we wish to repeat this witness, we need to do more preparation beforehand.

2015/08/05 Sharing the life of East Lothian Local Quaker Meeting

East Lothian Meeting is growing in size and vitality. Pat Lucas has recalled a time when numbers at the meeting were down to four. Over time, Meeting for Worship has taken place in several locations. At present it is held twice a month in the comfortable surroundings of the Crossreach premises in Dunbar. Our meeting is us. We are its life and we range in age from one to ninety plus years.

Meg Gustaves, Diana Simcock and Mark Huxham come regularly to East Lothian Meeting and each of them has shared why they come. Coming to meeting has been a challenge. It has also brought a feeling

of non-intrusive caring, which brings a deep peace. It has been a place of refuge from our worries and has reminded us that all we can do is our best. Recalling the recent witness at the peace pole in Dunbar, side by side with friends from the Scottish Episcopal Church, Diana quoted Martin Luther, "Here I stand. I can do no other."

During the winter months, the study group is at the centre of the life of the meeting. Through the reflections of Ros Robertson we have been given a glimpse of what happens at the group, which meets in our homes, including that of Nan Stewart, our oldest member.

How might this wee meeting continue to grow in strength and vitality? Elizabeth Allen has shared her hopes for the future, which include the Meeting exploring how it might engage more with the local community and churches. It is not just about doing more but about discerning what is ours to do and getting on with it. By working together and with others, Friends in our meeting will get to 'know one another in that which is eternal'.

2015/08/06 Treasurer's report on accounts for 2014

Mark Hutcheson, our treasurer, has reported on the Area Meeting's annual accounts for 2014. Our finances are in a relatively healthy state, with income for the year slightly exceeding expenditure. This has enabled us to increase our reserves, with the help of two legacies, bringing them nearer to the target of six months' running costs. Accessible reserves currently stand at approximately £84,000.

Planned work on the Edinburgh Meeting House has been completed and paid for, with the help of grant aid, donations and interest-free loans. Unplanned repairs with an estimated cost of over £25k are now needed on the flat roof section over the Meeting Room and it is hoped grant aid for this will be forthcoming in 2015. We note that the work done has not increased the market value of the buildings but it has made them much more comfortable and suitable for us.

Our donation to Britain Yearly Meeting increased to over £20k and we also gave substantial sums to General Meeting for Scotland, to the Northern Friends Peace Board and the Northern Friends Youth Events Trust. Our donation to GM for Scotland will increase in 2015 by over £2100 to help cover the costs of GM's newly appointed Parliamentary Officer. We agree that we should support this increase.

Lettings income rose by over £9000 and we are grateful for the efforts of our Meeting House staff, especially the managers and assistant manager, which have made this possible. The Edinburgh Fringe activities make a significant contribution not only to AM funds but also to the charities nominated each year. Gift aid is, of course, reclaimed.

We were reminded that the Area Meeting provides bursaries and financial assistance to enable members, attenders and, where appropriate, their families to attend Quaker and other conferences and events. These totalled about £5000 in 2014. Applications for this sort of assistance are encouraged.

We thank our treasurer for this clear account, and him and all the members of his team for their work during the year.

2015/08/07 Update on the work of our trustees

John Phillips, clerk of Area Meeting Trustees, has asked us to accept the Annual Report and Accounts for 2014. We do this and authorize our clerk to sign them on our behalf.

Trustees ask us to consider the appointment of an assistant clerk for trustees to shadow the clerk and ensure smooth succession. We agree to this and ask our nominations committee to bring a name for appointment to a future meeting.

We note that we have recently received a legacy of £32,000 from the estate of Marion Fiske, a long-time attender at Central Edinburgh Meeting, and are most grateful for her generosity.

We thank our trustees for all the work they have done on our behalf, which involves keeping an eye on many issues affecting the life of our area meeting and its nine local meetings. We thank John Phillips in particular for his careful work and for this report.

2015/08/08 Membership matters

a) Gerard Walmesley

We record that a certificate of acceptance has been received for the transfer of Gerard Walmesley's membership from this Area Meeting to Sussex West Area Meeting.

b) Elisabeth Wilson

Elisabeth Wilson has recently moved from East Scotland to Innerwick, Dunbar, and is attending East Lothian Local Meeting. She has

asked for her membership to be transferred to this AM. We ask our assistant clerk (membership) to send a certificate of acceptance to East Scotland AM.

c) Barbara-Jean Borthwick

Barbara-Jean Borthwick has moved from New Earswick, York to northern Northumbria, is now attending Kelso Meeting and has asked for her membership to be transferred from York Area Meeting to South East Scotland. This has been confirmed by an email from the assistant clerk (membership) of York AM. We accept Barbara-Jean into membership and send this minute to York AM.

d) Max Marnau

Maureen Anderson has reported on the meeting she and John Harris had with Max Marnau at Max's home in Edinburgh. Max, the daughter of refugees from Nazi Germany, was brought up as a Roman Catholic and spent 13 years as a member of a silent order of nuns, and a subsequent five years as a hermit, but gradually moved away from Catholicism, finding it too rigid and with an over-emphasis on beliefs rather than lifestyle. She works as a person-centred counsellor.

Max felt immediately at home among Friends when she first encountered Quaker worship in the late 90s. This led eventually to her regular attendance, first at South Edinburgh meeting, then at Central Edinburgh and more recently at Kelso. She is familiar with basic Quaker literature, understands and appreciates Quaker organization and structures, has attended both local and area business meetings and understands and embraces Quaker testimony.

As Max is with us today, we take this opportunity to welcome her into membership, in person.

e) [Visitors have been appointed for a previous application]

f) [A new application has been received]

g) Alison Wylie

Alison (Ali) Wylie has recently been attending Tweeddale Meeting after a period of moving around the country. She believes she is in membership and was at one time listed as such under Central Edinburgh.

We ask our assistant clerk (membership) to check our membership records to confirm this.

2015/08/09 A concern of Polmont Local Quaker Meeting

Anna Levin has brought to us a concern of Polmont Meeting as to the adverse effect on the health of a minority of people of energy-saving lighting. This prevents those affected from using many public and other buildings, and therefore has serious implications for their life-style. Anna has shared with us her personal experience of this and her concerns about the medical, as well as environmental, issues involved.

We wish to support Anna and Polmont Meeting in their continuing research into this matter and ask if there are others in the Area Meeting who are willing to form a support group or groups to a) develop greater scientific and medical knowledge of this problem and b) address the practical issues associated with it.

2015/08/10 Proposed memorial to 'the innocent victims of war'

Southern Marches Area Meeting told Meeting for Sufferings last year about their hope to create a memorial to 'the innocent victims of war' at the National Memorial Arboretum. Jane Pearn has reported that further support from other Area Meetings would be helpful before the September 2015 Meeting for Sufferings, when this matter will again be on the agenda.

We support in principle the proposal of Southern Marches Area Meeting, acknowledging that further work is needed before it is taken forward. We send this minute to Southern Marches Area Meeting and to Meeting for Sufferings.

2015/08/11 Our Social Responsibility Working Group

After running a very successful and well-attended conference on 'What future for Scotland?' in November last, this group ran into some difficulties regarding its aims and objectives, which resulted in a breakdown in the working of the group. A remit for the group has now been drawn up and shared with us today but it is very wide and the remaining members of the group still feel they need to find their focus and to clarify where the Area Meeting wishes to take work in this area.

The group has planned a second event, to take place as part of the Edinburgh World Justice Festival on Monday 5 October 2015 at 5.30 pm

in Edinburgh Meeting House. It will be a further conversation, following on from the November event, on 'Imagining our world in 2040'.

To help clarify our vision for this work, we ask our clerks to work with the group and to report back to Area Meeting in October.

2015/08/12 Reading *Quaker Faith & Practice* - a request

Following the proposal, which this Area Meeting supported, that our Book of Discipline should be revised, the Yearly Meeting group given the responsibility for preparing for this revision have discerned that there is first a need for all of us to ensure that we know well the current *Quaker Faith & Practice*.

The Revision Preparation Group has accordingly published a calendar to guide our private reading and our study groups in this exercise, which will be supported by Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre through materials published online and in Quaker journals. In following this calendar, we are asked to bear these questions in mind:

- how do I react to this material?
- what does this material, and my reaction to it, tell me about the history and development of Quakerism?
- what authority do I give to this text?
- how does this speak to me today?
- what spiritual benefits do I gain from reading and reflecting on this?

The calendar has been shared with us and we are encouraged to take it to our local meetings, for use.

2015/08/13 Appointments and release from service

a) Appointments

Our Nominations Committee has brought the following nominations for our consideration (*Meetings indicated in brackets*):

To serve from July 2015 to end of June 2016:

1. Assistant Chaplain (Edinburgh University) – **Andrew Williams** (CE)

To serve from October 2015 to end of September 2018:

2. Registering Officer – **Marjorie Farquharson** (CE)
3. Deputy Registering Officer – **Rufus Reade** (SE)
4. Festival Committee member (*2nd triennium*) – **Susan Robertson** (SE)
5. Assistant Treasurer (income and donations) – **Morag Ferguson** (CE)

These names being acceptable, we appoint them accordingly.

b) Release from service

1. **Phil Noble** (overseer, South Edinburgh), who was appointed at our last meeting, has asked to be released from service. We release him accordingly.
2. **Jane Lewis** (attender, Portobello & Musselburgh) has asked to be released as a representative on the Northern Friends Peace Board. We release her, with thanks for her service, and ask our nominations committee to bring us the name of a replacement.

We note that **Alastair Cameron** (*P&M*) as Registering Officer will have completed his term of appointment at the end of September and thank him for his service.

c) Conference representatives

1. **Medact Two-Day Forum, *Health through Peace*, November 2015.** **Madeline Patterson**, whose work in Pakistan we have supported in the past, has asked if she can attend this conference as our representative. We ask her to do so.
2. **Quaker Peace & Social Witness Autumn Conference, 30 Oct-1 Nov 2015.** This conference at Swanwick, entitled '*A changing world: changing the way we work*' is for those familiar with the work of QP&SW. **Sue Buxton** has offered to represent us and we appoint her to do so.
3. **Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations with QP&SW: Day Conference in September 2015.** **Lynne Barty** has agreed to represent us and we appoint her to do so.
4. ***Militarisation in our Society* (Woodbrooke course) 12 - 14 Feb 2016**
In view of our ongoing work on militarization we agree it would be helpful if we could be represented at this conference and ask any interested in attending to contact our clerk as soon as possible.
5. ***Catching Light - National Outreach Conference, 12 - 14 Feb 2016***, at High Leigh Conference Centre, Hertfordshire. It would be good to be represented by two people at this conference. Those interested are invited to contact our clerk.

2015/08/14 Quaker Life Representative Council, October 2015

We note that the theme of the next QLRC Meeting, to be held on 9-11 Oct 2015, is *What is the ground and foundation of a gathered meeting?* We support our representative, **Katrina McCrea**, as she attends this event and look forward to hearing about it from her after her return. The

subject may be an interesting one for local meetings for learning this autumn/spring.

2015/08/15 Correspondence

The following correspondence has been received:

- Appeal for work on Ifield Meeting House, West Weald AM
- Northern Friends Peace Board - 2014 summary report
- Ackworth School General Meeting minutes
- *Geneva Reporter* (Quaker United Nations Office)

2015/08/16 Closing minute

28 members and four attenders representing seven Local Meetings have attended all or part of this Area Meeting, as indicated below:

Central Edinburgh 9	Central Fife 2 + 1A	East Lothian 6 + 3As	Kelso 4	Penicuik 2
Polmont 3	Portobello & Musselburgh -	South Edinburgh 2	Tweeddale -	

We next meet in Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House at 11 am on Saturday 24 October 2015.

(Signed)
Phil Lucas, Clerk

Did you notice the appeal at the foot of p. 7? Look at it **NOW**.

Does it strike you that this issue of *Sesame* has not nearly enough in it that you (and others, you suspect) actually want to read? Then please: write something! Do it **SOON** (and send it to us by 3 November).

The acting editor would like to thank those other than contributors who have assisted with the preparation of this issue: Kim Smith, David Sterratt, Don Stubbings, and, particularly, Meg and Sara Davies.

Quaker Meetings for Worship in South East Scotland

Every Sunday

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

Every Wednesday

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

Penicuik: Valleyfield House, 17 High St., Penicuik <i>Children welcome, bring and share lunch</i>	11.00 am
Portobello & Musselburgh: Old Parish Church, Bellfield St. EH15	7.30 pm

First and Third Tuesdays in the Month

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

East Lothian: St Andrew's Centre, Dunbar	11.00 am
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Second and Fourth Sundays in the Month

Portobello & Musselburgh: Old Parish Church, Bellfield St. Portobello	11.00 am
Tweeddale: Nomad Beat, 10-11 Cavalry Park, Peebles <i>All welcome, but please phone to confirm 01721 721 050 or 01896 850 389</i>	10.30 am
Central Fife: Hunter Halls, Kirkcaldy (Kirk Wynd, opposite Old Kirk)	10.30 am

Fourth Sunday in the Month

N. Edinburgh Meeting: Broughton St Mary's Church, Edinburgh	7.00 pm
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Fifth Sunday in the Month

Central Fife: Hunter Halls, Kirkcaldy (Kirk Wynd, opposite Old Kirk)	10.30 am
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Last Sunday in the Month

East Lothian: St Andrew's Centre, Dunbar	11.00 am
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Distribution of *Sesame* and *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 can be available on request. Published by the 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