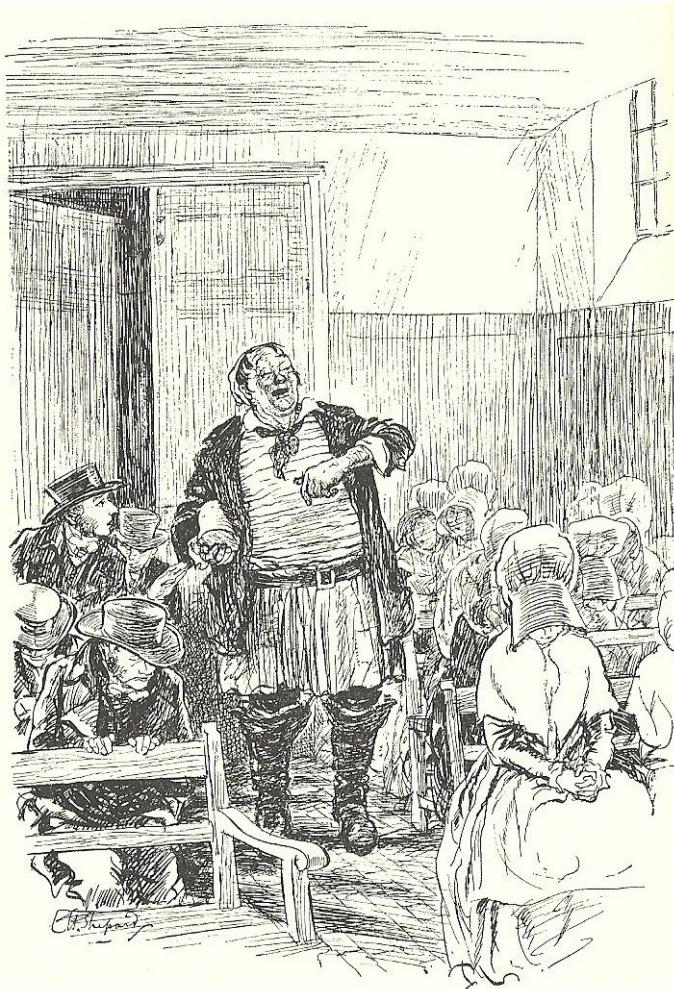


SESAME

Number 203: June 2016

Exploring the Early Quaker Vision / Friends remembered / Aid & Abet / Charles Lamb's first time in Meeting / STIR – *the final FINAL report* / Equipping for Ministry / Wiston Lodge / Meeting for Sufferings / Reading Q. F. & P. / NFPB at Edinburgh / April AM Minutes / Helen's Hoolie



A different “presence in the midst”:
A lamb amidst lambs - Ernest H. Shepard, 1933 (see page 7)

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SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

Our next Area Meeting will be at Kelso Meeting House, Abbey Row, Kelso TD5 7JF, on Saturday, 4 June. Please note that we will begin a little later than usual, at 11.30 am. Tea and coffee will be available from 11.00 am. Lunch will be at about 1.15 pm. Please bring your own.

The final report of the STIR group will be presented to the meeting and members of the group will facilitate our engagement with the report and its recommendations, to help our decision-making. Time will be spent on prayerful consideration of the recommendations for re-shaping our Area Meeting.

Callum Booth-Lewis of Portobello & Musselburgh Meeting will tell us about his experience of attending Junior Yearly Meeting, and those Friends who were at Britain Yearly Meeting at the end of May will share the highlights with us. Annie Miller will speak to the annual report of the John Wigham Enjoyment Trust.

We ask our Nominations Committee to find Friends to serve Area Meeting but if they can't be found, what then? We will be exploring opportunities for service and how we let Friends know about them.

This will be an interesting meeting. I hope to see you there.

Elizabeth Allen
Clerk, South East Scotland AM

DRAFT AGENDA

Worship

Introductions

Minutes of last meeting, 9 April 2016

STIR Group final report

Record of appointment made by between-meetings process

Report on Junior Yearly Meeting – *Callum Booth-Lewis*

AM Nominations Committee report

Membership matters

Minute from Edinburgh Central Meeting:

2016/05/06 Death of Sylvia Marshall:

We are sad to record that our dear Friend Sylvia Marshall died on March 16th, following a long period of illness. The funeral was held at the crematorium on Friday April 1st 2016, and was attended by about 50 people, Friends and non-Friends. The Meeting for Worship lasted about half an hour.

The Memorial Meeting for Worship that followed later that day at the Meeting House was attended by about 80 or 90 people and lasted about one hour, followed by tea. There were many appreciations of Sylvia's life and her witness for peace and justice; several Friends had travelled from York and Carlisle.

A collection held on behalf of Amnesty International, a particular passion of Sylvia's, raised £485, which has been sent to their office in Edinburgh.

We forward this minute to Area Meeting.

Margaret Mortimer, Clerk

John Wigham Enjoyment Trust report – Annie Miller

Appointment of Friends to attend General Meeting, 11 June 2016

Impressions of Yearly Meeting 2016

Receipt of written Reports: *Summer Shindig 2015; Clerk's Report and Accounts; QPSW Spring Conference*

Correspondence and notices

AOCB

Closing minute

4.30 pm Tea

Exploring the Early Quaker Vision

an online webinar series

I saw this course advertised in the Woodbrooke programme – a first venture into online learning – and thought I'd give it a go. The low cost (£50) was very appealing, as was the saving on travel costs. I wondered, though, how I would get on with 'distance learning': would I be able to cope with the format? Would I be distracted by my surroundings at home? Would I feel very isolated – just me and my pc?

In the event, none of my fears were justified. The mechanics of taking part in each webinar were very simple – you really do need to have only the most basic computer skills: though some people found that their com-

puters were not sufficiently up-to-date to handle the format. Following a simple link on Woodbrooke's website gave us entry into the 'room' in which the webinar took place, and I found each presentation so engrossing I almost forgot I was sitting at home in my own living room.

The optional enabling of my webcam meant that in addition to seeing and hearing Stuart's presentation, I could see some of my fellow-students, wave to them when they joined the 'room', and communicate with them as well as with Stuart – generally by typing, though there was also the possibility of live conversation, voice-to-voice. Stuart 'managed' us very well, welcoming people as they entered the 'room', making opportunities for conversation, answering questions, and bringing us together in a virtual community which, although not quite the same as a face-to-face seminar, was inclusive, welcoming, and invited participation and involvement.

One huge plus of the webinars was that the learning was spread out over six weeks, (with an additional test session beforehand for those who could make it), rather than being condensed into an intense weekend. Each presentation could be revisited during the week that followed, and questions that arose could be posed, answered, and discussed in an online forum, (which again was very easy to use), or raised at the beginning of the next week's webinar.

There was no pressure to do more than take part in each week's session, though there was plenty of opportunity for those who wanted to investigate further: questions were posed and supplementary material was given at the end of each webinar. Each presentation was recorded to be posted on Woodbrooke's Moodle platform: most useful for anyone who was prevented from taking part in a session. The sound quality wasn't always perfect, but I think this will be improved with the use of a better quality microphone. It was great fun for the first few weeks when a chorus of typing "RECORD!" was directed at Stuart as he began to speak ...

The format made group discussion more difficult. Most of us preferred to type comments and questions rather than use our microphones, which can work against the slower typist but was fine for those of us who touch-type or were determined! A decent 'stretch break' in the middle of the session made concentration on the second half easier. The only real lack was the opportunity that a weekend course offers for conversations on, around, and nowhere near the course topic – and, of course, Woodbrooke food...

And then the content ... it was superb! Stuart's enthusiasm for his subject

and his depth and breadth of knowledge are a joy to experience, and the sessions' content was well-thought out and beautifully illustrated. Supplementary material and the texts of some of the Quaker publications referred to in the presentations were also posted on Moodle: one could read the texts in contemporary paraphrase and in the original language – the former helping to make the latter more comprehensible.

I had been on Stuart & Betty Hagglund's course on the early Quakers at Swarthmoor last autumn, and found that very helpful in giving me a good idea of the social, political, and religious background of the time, and making me familiar with the leading Quaker figures.

I was really interested to learn in the 'test' webinar that many of the ideas we think of as distinctively Quaker were current in Europe in the sixteenth century, though not all at the same time in the same group. It is highly likely that groups of seekers in England and Scotland in the seventeenth century were aware of these ideas, though there is no definite knowledge of any contact with the European groups.

After considering these sixteenth century dissenting sects, we moved to the early Quakers themselves and the extraordinary transformational experiences which prompted the 'explosion' outward as the Valiant Sixty took their message to the four corners of the then known world. To make sense of their inward transformation the first Quakers looked to scripture – the accounts of the early followers of Jesus [not yet termed 'Christians'] and their transformation at Pentecost, and the Old Testament prophecies which made sense of both groups' experience of the pouring-out of god's spirit upon them and the subsequent mission to tell the whole world the good news of the new life open to all.

I found some of the language early Friends used potentially offputting: 'inward crucifixion' was particularly hard to swallow – until I realised that the experience of transformation it referred to was not unlike the inward breaking-down and re-forming that I had undergone during my first term as a student at Pendle Hill. Other ideas chimed more closely with what I find in contemporary Quakerism – there is no need for intermediary between human and divine, all you have to do is wait in the Light for God to speak directly in your heart; god's spirit is poured out on all people, freely available to all, regardless of gender, age, status, education, race or creed.

In three subsequent sessions we looked at three of the testimonies which have evolved among Liberal Friends – equality, peace, and Creation – and

saw the texts in scripture on which they were based. Finally we looked at the diversity of belief and practice among Friends worldwide and the common mortar that binds us all together – not least that we all consider our beginnings to be among that ‘peculiar people’ who emerged from the extraordinary melting pot of the English civil war.

We also looked at the time of the restoration of the monarchy, and why Quakers managed to survive as a dissident religious group when so many of the other similar sects died out. Was this a ‘sell-out’ or a piece of pragmatism? Certainly the initial ecstatic, charismatic, ‘feeling’ fervour and the early equality of opportunity for women and men morphed into a more intellectual, patriarchal, ‘respectable’ movement: but was this the price that needed to be paid for survival?

I thoroughly enjoyed the whole course and would recommend this form of learning to anyone apart from the most technophobic. Online learning isn’t the same as being part of a group in a face-to-face situation, but it is very helpful for those of us who have to consider the cost of going away both in time and money. Some types of courses are better suited to this format than others, but for courses like Stuart’s it’s a wonderful opportunity to immerse oneself in a subject from the comfort of one’s own home!

Mary Woodward

AID & ABET

At Area Meeting in April, it was agreed that Aid & Abet should be added to the list of charities supported by the surplus from Venue 40 over the next three years. Alastair Cameron explains about this new charity.

Aid & Abet is a group of people, all of whom have been through the criminal justice system, and all of whom are in recovery from addiction to alcohol or drugs. Their work is to help people at the point of leaving prison, by being alongside them as they avoid homelessness, get the money they need to survive, and set out on a life after prison. The main point is to help them avoid returning to prison.

I have worked with this group in my role with Scottish Churches Housing Action (SCHA), bringing them together in June 2014, and helping them to design the project. From the outset, the plan was that it should become an independent charity in its own right – Aid & Abet achieved charity status in February 2016 (SC046322), and is currently setting up its own bank account.

The roots of the project lie in a talk given to SCHA by Andrew McLellan when he was HM Chief Inspector of Prisons. "Homeless nourishes prison," he said, "and prison nourishes homelessness."

I have been shocked that so many cross the threshold on release, having no idea where they will be staying that night. The first stop is the emergency homelessness department of the local council, and that's an intimidating place.

In May, one of the Aid & Abet mentors met a man leaving Addiewell prison. He has alcohol problems. First stop was the criminal justice social worker, then a visit to the West Lothian Council homelessness unit. "We'll get you temporary accommodation," he was told – "come back at the end of the afternoon and we'll tell you where." After phone calls to get his benefits sorted, they returned to the homelessness unit. There was nowhere available in West Lothian, so he had been found a place in Falkirk.

At this point, frustration boiled over – the man lost his temper and stomped out. He ended up in hospital that night, after a drinking bout: still homeless, but at least with a roof over his head. The mentor stuck with him, and he is now in temporary accommodation near to home.

Because the Aid & Abet mentors have been through the process themselves, the barriers between them and prisoner are lower than with professional relationships. They are active members of fellowships such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Cocaine Anonymous, and provide a gateway for those who are ready to think about tackling addiction.

Aid & Abet sees the first few days after release from prison as crucial. The mentors know from experience how hard it is once you're out, to maintain those resolutions for change that people make during a sentence. Their job is to build the strength to do that.

They work in partnership with professionals, referring onwards where appropriate, and helping people make the connections they need. Two mentors are seconded to work with Police Scotland, and are enjoying working alongside police officers – 'a cop and a con together', as they put it.

As well as providing the mentoring service, the Aid & Abet volunteers have set the project up, and the aim is to move from volunteering to earning a living from the work they do. After all, if the project keeps one person out of prison for a year, it will have saved the state around £45,000. That is worth paying for.

*In bereavement, give yourself time to grieve. When others mourn,
let your love embrace them – Advices & Queries 30*



Marjorie Farquharson (*left*) and **Sylvia Marshall**, photographed here in 2006, were both staunch members of our Area Meeting who will be much missed. The minute of Central Edinburgh concerning Sylvia is cited in the AM Agenda. She was the daughter of weighty Friends – Andrew White had been a C.O. in the First World War, and Sybil (*née* Hart) a suffragette in her youth who was still campaigning indefatigably in her nineties – and Sylvia herself, on returning to Scotland in her sixties, was immediately active in the life of Edinburgh Friends. Those who knew her best speak of her “passion” for peace and justice, expressed in demonstrations at Faslane, through the Women in Black movement, and by her participation in CND and Amnesty; her forthright plain-speaking was valued, if not always appreciated at the time.

Marjorie served the Area Meeting as clerk, as registering officer, and on the Festival Committee; she was one of those involved in setting up the North Edinburgh meeting. She had encountered Friends as a student at St Andrews, where her studies in Soviet politics led on to her working for Amnesty International, first as a researcher, and then as head of the new Moscow office after the break-up of the USSR, after which she moved to monitoring human rights violations in Bosnia Herzegovina for the UN in 1993-4, back to Moscow to run an NGO Support Unit, and then, from 1996 -2001, she worked for the Human Rights Directorate at the Council of Europe. Her death at only 63 is a blow to all who valued her friendship and particularly to her family and her partner Irina.

Not a member of our AM but known to many, **Helen Steven** died at the age of 73 on 12 April. As a peace activist, she was jailed (for 5 days) in 1987; helped set up the Scottish Centre for Nonviolence, in 1999; and received the Gandhi International Peace Prize in 2004. She gave the 2005 Swarthmore Lecture, *No Extraordinary Power: Prayer, Stillness and Activism*. A celebration in her memory is planned for Sunday 5 June: *see page 31*.

A First Impression

In The Essays of Elia (1823), Charles Lamb gives a well-known (and gushing) account of Friends, which concludes: “The very garments of a Quaker seem incapable of receiving a soil; and cleanliness in them to be something more than the absence of its contrary. Every Quakeress is a lily; and when they come up in bands to their Whitsun-conferences [i.e. Yearly Meeting] whitening the eastern streets of the metropolis, from all parts of the United Kingdom, they show like troops of the Shining Ones.” His first view of Friends, however, written more than twenty years earlier, was rather less glowing:

To S.T. Coleridge

February 13, 1797

... I have had thoughts of turning Quaker, and have been reading, or am rather just beginning to read, a most capital book, good thoughts in good language, William Penn’s “No Cross, no Crown”. I like it immensely. Unluckily I went to one of his meetings, tell him, in St. John’s-street, yesterday, and saw a man under all the agitations and workings of a fanatic, who believed himself under the influence of some “inevitable presence”. This cured me of Quakerism; I love it in the books of Penn and Woolman, but I detest the vanity of a man thinking he speaks by the Spirit, when what he says an ordinary man might say without all that quaking and trembling. In the midst of his inspiration, and the effects of it were most noisy, was handed into the midst of the meeting a most terrible black-guard Wapping sailor; the poor man, I believe, had rather have been in the hottest part of an engagement, for the congregation of broad-brims, together with the ravings of the prophet, were too much for his gravity, though I saw even he had delicacy enough not to laugh out [loud]. And the inspired gentleman, though his manner was so supernatural, yet neither talked nor professed to talk anything more than good sober sense, common morality, with now and then a declaration of not speaking from himself. Among other things, looking back to his childhood and early youth, he told the meeting what a graceless young dog he had been, that in his youth he had a good share of wit: reader, if thou hadst seen the gentleman, thou wouldest have sworn that it must indeed have been many years ago, for his rueful physiognomy would have scared away the playful goddess from the meeting, where he presided, for ever ...

In the 1940s, Thomas Merton was also put off Quakers by the ministry he heard ('I went out of the meeting house saying to myself: “[...] In other churches it is the minister who hands out the commonplaces, and her it is liable to be just anybody.”'); unlike Lamb, he did not care for the works of Penn (see The Seven Storey Mountain, p. 116).

STIR GROUP REPORT

Nurturing the Spirit in South East Scotland

1. Background STIR (the Short-Term Review Group) was established in October 2014, with its remit agreed the following month, and the membership set up in January 2015. The process was stimulated by concerns over difficulty in finding people to accept nomination for roles, and over financial challenges. It was agreed that a wider review was needed.

2. Remit The remit was two-fold:

2.1 To explore and record what is being done well in Area Meeting (AM) and local meetings in relation to: individual and collective spirituality; Quaker testimonies in action; meeting the needs of members and attenders; and service in the community; and

2.2 To develop a vision of how AM can work with local meetings to do these things more effectively through: new ways of working with a focus on 'what matters most'; laying down ineffective ways of working; changing existing patterns of structures and meetings, 'radically if necessary' to match this vision.

3. Membership The STIR group originally comprised Deirdre Armstrong; Alastair Cameron; Rachel Fitzgerald; Justin Kenrick; Jane Pearn; Don Stublings. Jane Pearn asked to be released from participation in January, due to other commitments.

4. Initial conclusions The group met with eight of the nine local meetings within the AM; with two worshipping groups; and with seven committees. We heard much that encourages us, but also some frustration. For most, it is the local Quaker group from which we draw spiritual nourishment, and gives us enthusiasm for the Quaker way. We have heard that for some, AM feels remote and not closely connected with this local experience. Others feel burdened with carrying the administrative load on behalf of the whole.

Our aim has been to find new ways of working which provide a less burdensome structure. We want to encourage participation in the life of Area Meeting which reflects the enthusiasm and creativity people bring to and gain from the local meeting. Above all, we aim to encourage a sense of a positive and guilt-free Area Meeting.

We conceptualised this as a trefoil, made up of three leaves: *Quaker 'house-keeping'*; *building community*; and *encouraging witness*; with *spiritual practice*

– worship – at the heart, where the three intersect.

Without these four elements, Quakers are not recognisable as the body we seek to be. We see this reflected in the Our Faith in the Future statement from Britain Yearly Meeting in 2015: www.quaker.org.uk/future.

We presented to AM in February the image of an ‘unbalanced trefoil’ – one in which the housekeeping wing was much larger than the other two. This was felt to over-state the position, though the need for balance was recognised. The perception of imbalance reflects what we were hearing from our consultation meetings, which had included many people with little or no experience of attending AM.

Our recommendation concentrates on establishing a structure within which each AM event includes a balance of all three elements.

5. Key recommendation The STIR group proposes a new set of arrangements for Area Meeting the event:

5.1 AM should meet four times a year, instead of the present eight;

5.2 Each of these four meetings should be preceded by an agenda-setting meeting, probably 4-6 weeks ahead. This will be constituted and publicised, and open to all. Its core membership will include:

- The clerking team
- Representative of Trustees
- Representative/s of Elders
- Representative/s of Overseers
- Representative of Nominations Committee
- Representative of the Local Meeting which is to host the forthcoming AM.

5.3 Each AM:

- Will have an agenda including each trefoil element – housekeeping, community-building and witness.
- Will involve the host Local Meeting in its organisation, and have a member of the LM serving as assistant clerk on the day.
- Will be organised as an event for all ages.

Ideally each of the three elements will be discrete, bounded events with Friends easily able to attend any or all as they are able. Crucially, there should be no expectation that Friends will participate in all three elements and participation at any of the events should be welcomed and encouraged.

5.4 The agenda-setting meeting and the AM Clerks will be authorised to make decisions in the light of a codified 'between-meetings procedure', to be reported to AM as appropriate.

5.5 We believe consideration should be given to holding occasional residential Area Meetings – possibly every two years.

6. Key issues In the course of our work, we did not find that our life as an Area Meeting is dysfunctional; and it is good to have carried out a review before things get to that point. However, we recognise that issues to do with our finances and difficulties in nominations have not improved in the 18 months since STIR was established. They have not been the main focus of our work. We trust that strengthening AM the event, and enhancing the sense of ownership of AM on the part of local meetings, will improve the situation.

We want to use the opportunity to make explicit some aspects of AM which deserve consideration.

6.1 AM the event and AM the community One of the key things we recognised was the dual nature of Area Meeting: it is both an event – currently 8 meetings a year – and a community. It embodies the links between the local meetings. Its committees and appointments encourage people to think beyond simply local. When we join Quakers, it is through the Area Meeting. When an elder or overseer is appointed, it is not 'just' for the local meeting. For some, this dual role was seen as creating tension between area and local: we strongly view the two as complementary.

We encountered strong support for the concept of Area Meeting. It is the first of a series of concentric circles radiating out from the local meeting, and gives appreciation of being part of a wider Quaker world. However, we also found two sets of criticism: some found it mysterious and impenetrable, particularly if they had never attended or did so rarely; some, with perhaps more direct experience, tended to view it as a necessity about which it is hard to get enthusiastic.

The proposal to cut the number of meetings in a year is not making this necessity less frequent for the sake of it; it is aimed at renewing the sense of enthusiasm we read about in early Friends' experience of meeting together across wide distances. With easier travel, and particularly with many people having many more commitments of

work, family and social witness, Area Meeting plays a less significant part in the social life of the average Quaker. But if we can generate a sense that ‘there will be something I should not miss about AM, even if everything there is not going to thrill me’, then it should create a vitality that it currently seems to lack.

In particular, we have a strong view that not everything in AM the event needs to happen with people sitting in rows with clerks at the top table. We are keen to encourage different ways of meeting, and the meetings in February and April 2016 were good precedents.

6.2 Worship

Worship is core to everything we do. Enough said.

6.3 ‘Housekeeping’ We found it difficult to adopt the term ‘housekeeping’, as some felt it diminished a necessary part of our life. This is perhaps reinforced by the story of Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-41), where Jesus tells Mary she has ‘chosen the better way’ by leaving housekeeping duties to Martha.

The term ‘business’ was clearly not right, as everything we do is business, just as everything is done in a spirit of worship. ‘Administration’ implies something dry and lacking in the spirit. By ‘housekeeping’, we mean much that is essential to Quaker work: membership applications and transfers; nominations and appointments; reports from other parts of Britain Yearly Meeting, and the like. These are much of the bread and butter of AM the event, and we value them highly.

However, we did sense – and know from our own experience – that AM the event can be over-full of such matters, leaving less space for nurturing community between Friends, or exploring and stimulating Quaker witness in the world.

We have given much thought as to how to ensure housekeeping is not perceived as a burden. We believe a report is only needed at AM if the presenter is particularly enthused by the topic, and/or if a specific decision is needed. Reports that are purely for information should be submitted to *Sesame* or be put on the website.

Discernment is needed in deciding what is routine and what needs an active and informed decision at AM. We believe the underlying principle guiding this should be: only those things are brought to full AM on which a significant number of participants are likely to have a strong interest in the outcome; otherwise, they can be dealt

with by the agenda-setting meeting, by between-meetings procedure, or by draft minute.

6.4 Witness Witness means many different things – for some it is social and political engagement, expressed in campaigning, in creative endeavour, in adherence to a party. For others, it is more personal, in caring for others, or in their work or volunteering. When Quakers act, that is our Quaker witness – it does not have to be sanctioned by the Quaker meeting, local or area.

Meeting is a place of renewal and mutual support. The role of AM in this is to create awareness of the variety of Quakers' engagement, and where appropriate, to add a corporate voice to the work that we do. When a concern is brought to AM, it is important to consider it carefully and with sympathy for what prompted it; however, the process of discernment means that it may be decided that action by or support from AM is not appropriate.

We think sessions specifically on witness are an ideal opportunity to explore different styles of holding AM – a traditional speaker with questions and answers may be appropriate but a workshop-style session may give more people the opportunity to get their teeth into the issues. Considering a concern may require a formal threshing meeting. There could be mileage in giving a range of Friends or organisations space to hold a stall for information dissemination as part of the AM event.

6.5 Community AM represents a great opportunity for building community between constituent meetings and their members. Knowledge and understanding of our fellow-Quakers strengthens our witness and our worship, and builds us as an influential body. The STIR group feels our present practice does not make the most of this opportunity: the main feature, the Quaker tea, is often rushed as people seek to travel home after what can be a tiring business meeting.

We would like to see a meal or other opportunity for social interaction built in as a central part of each AM occasion – and that it need not be expected that people coming for the meal will necessarily stay for the meeting for worship for business part of the day. We need to recognise that in busy lives, not everyone can commit to every part of an occasion. A meal also provides an opportunity for

interaction between people of all ages. The meal might be at the beginning, during or at the end of the business meeting.

Host Local Meetings may also wish to expand the community-building element of AM. An afternoon of board games? A ceilidh? An opportunity to watch a film together? A human library event? The possibilities are endless! Each LM can tailor the event to their own resources and imagination, asking for support from larger LMs as and when appropriate.

6.6 Children and young people There is a catch-22 about children and AM. AM is held at the weekend to allow participation of as many as possible, but to families with children and working parents, weekends can be particularly precious as catch-up time together. This is compounded for single parent families. So parents may avoid AM because of the lack of childcare; and yet in the past when childcare has been arranged, there has been limited take-up. To be genuinely useful to parents, childcare needs to be provided by non-parents.

On the other hand, for children and young people's programmes to be most effective, those providing the programme need to know they will have young people to deliver it to! We suggest an advance booking system for CYP activities with a cut-off date at least a week in advance. If there is demand then a host LM would be responsible for providing the programme – crucially, with support and PVG-checked volunteers from other LMs when needed.

6.7 Education within and about Area Meeting We believe that mutual learning and education deserves more attention at AM level. Our structures set up in the 17th century have helped to hold us together and are intrinsically a part of our practice but not everyone is familiar with this. We need them to be appreciated by all friends in order for everyone to feel involved.

The *Becoming Friends* and *Being Friends Together* programmes are useful, but practice is sporadic; likewise the process of communal reading of *Quaker Faith & Practice*. From introducing newcomers to our core testimonies, through the process of application for membership, to the regular holding of meetings for learning at a local level, we feel more should be done.

In particular, we would like to see guidance given to visitors to ap-

plicants for membership, which would include exploration of the learning the applicant has done and would still value.

Our structures and language contain much that is unique to Quakers, and yet we tend to assume that newcomers will imbibe them through osmosis rather than instruction or explanation. We believe AM has a role in supporting and directing local meetings in their practice in these matters. Short meetings for learning could take place after meeting/over lunch or coffee in order to give newcomers (and oldcomers in pursuit of a refresher!) a quick run-down of why we do things the way we do and what our organisational structure looks like.

6.8 Committees, structures and nominations We do not propose a major change of the structures within Area Meeting. During our working time, Nominations Committee (whose Convener is a member of the STIR team) has conducted a rigorous review of the posts currently required, and reported to AM. The conclusion was that the majority of posts are either required by *Quaker Faith & Practice* or essential to the working of AM. Those that don't fall into these categories are posts that focus on our witness in the world – prison ministry, Northern Friends Peace Board *etc*. It is important Friends realise it is this witness that would be reduced if we were to strip back to the bare essentials.

In the 2014 Swarthmore Lecture, Ben Pink Dandelion pointed out we are not a do-it-yourself society but a do-it-together society – a society that is run by its members. In our STIR conversations with committees, we were repeatedly told that, although Friends had a slight anxiety about being appointed to a new committee, they greatly enjoyed working with other Friends and found the experience rewarding.

We need to find new ways to inspire people to give service to their LM and to the AM. Friends who don't attend AM may not be aware of all the roles available to them, or that they are welcome to get involved. Equally, it is impossible for nominations committee to know each Friend and their strengths individually. Can we be more public in our requests for service? A nominations 'fair', held after meeting, might give local Friends (particularly those that don't attend AM) an idea of the scope of roles needing filled. Even a list of avail-

able roles on a notice board at each LM could help to disseminate the need amongst LMs more effectively.

6.9 Finance We did not feel able to carry out a review of the finances of AM: this is rightly the responsibility of the Trustees and the Treasurer's team.

However, we found a general lack of awareness on the part of the 'Quaker in the pew' as to where the money comes from that enables our Quaker work. Just as it takes time for the newcomer to work out that meeting doesn't 'just happen', so the recognition that there are no funds other than what we put in, is one that takes time.

As with so much else in the STIR process, there is a balance to be found. We don't want to be telling someone about the need to put their hand in their pocket the first time they come to a meeting; but we should be much more explicit that part of a commitment to the Society is to contribute financially.

Thus we need to find ways of reinforcing the annual message about giving that comes from the Treasurer. This could be most effective if done through local meetings, perhaps as part of the notices/special collections – if we only talk about finances at our business meetings, we are omitting a large number of Friends who are unable to (or simply do not) attend these meetings.

6.10 Communications, formal and informal We believe there needs to be a thorough review of the formal communications within AM – of our magazine *Sesame*, of our web presence, our use of email distribution lists, of opportunities offered by social networking. In principle, these should mesh with one another much more effectively than they currently do, and should be delivered in a way that is more lively and engaging.

There is a need to improve the communications from AM to/from LMs, between LMs. Two examples:

- Often LMs have local events and other LMs are unaware of this. It would be good for them to let AM/LMs know it is happening and whether it was open for Friends out-with the LM to come. In some cases this may be appropriate and others not. And then tell AM how it went. An example would be the weekend at Wiston Lodge.
- *Sesame*, *Terrace Talk*, South Edinburgh calendar should

have links to each other's newsletters and to the GM and BYM websites.

7. Recommended actions

We ask that the STIR report and recommendations be taken as a whole, rather than as a menu to select from. Our specific recommendations are:

- 7.1 That as of January 2017, the proposal to hold four meetings a year be adopted;
- 7.2 That the first open agenda-setting meeting be held in advance of the January 2017 meeting
- 7.3 That the Clerks be asked to prepare a between-meetings procedure for approval by AM
- 7.4 That a group be established to devise a communications strategy for AM
- 7.5 That Elders be asked to prepare a guidance note for visitors to applicants for membership.

It might be appropriate for Local Meetings to consider what impact these changes might have on their ways of working before taking the decision.

Equipping for Ministry – Part Two

Residential Week 18-25 March 2016

Some ten weeks after the induction weekend, I was back at Woodbrooke, raring to go at the start of this year's residential week.

In the intervening weeks I had been busy with a number of other things, but had tried to keep my resolution that Friday would be 'EfM day'. This took many forms – sorting out practical arrangements for courses; preparing for tutorials; getting my books sorted and rearranged; meeting up with fellow-students for mutual support and encouragement; reading, thinking, journalling; attempting some of the suggestions from the 'on-line retreat' for EfM students; making new discoveries and re-finding old 'stuff' – most particularly the rediscovery of Linda Wilson's end-of-term presentation at Pendle Hill, the basis of her recent Pendle Hill pamphlet, which spoke directly to my condition and gave me a framework on which to hang many of the ideas which have been tumbling round in my head as I try to work out just what "taking better care of myself" entails.

The residential week began gently on the Friday evening with a joint session for first and second year students, after which we separated into our year groups and got down to business. Each of the next six days had its own theme, with sessions all together, in small groups, and by ourselves, looking at Spirit/Ministry; Tradition/Theology; Quiet Day; Testimony; Community; on our last full day discovering our gifts and Quaker vision, sharing our learnings and reflections, and enjoying a bonfire in the grounds. The final day brought a closing session and Meeting for Worship with the second years before we set off home again.

How to describe that week? I felt I had been given a huge bowl into which, each day, our tutors threw handfuls of Interesting Things. Someone else suggested it was like “Ready, Steady, Cook!” – we’d been given a bagful of ingredients to make into something new and interesting. The former is a reservoir or treasure chest for leisurely investigation, the latter implies that an end product needs to be created: and thereby hangs the challenge for me – it’s far too easy for me to focus on Producing Something rather than simply sitting with all the material and letting what will emerge. So many things, both previously known and unknown, were remembered and re-minded: how could I possibly take in, digest, and produce ‘A Creation’ in a few days or weeks? I remembered wisdom from Pendle Hill’s Tom Jenik - “one thing at a time, remember?” And “it takes as long as it takes...”

What things stand out? The joy of deep, caring community – a reminder of Pendle Hill – and of getting to know fellow-students in the things that are eternal; learning about them and being gifted knowings and reminders about myself; sudden ‘aha!’ moments and slow bubblings-up of wisdom; challenges that brought me greater awareness both of my ‘buttons’ but also of my ability not to knee-jerk respond but to face up to and work through the challenges – and to realise and celebrate/affirm myself in this; the joy of feeling connected both to staff and students but most particularly being aware of the presence of god in my life in a way that has been rare in recent years.

One major knowing was re-discovered when we were asked at the beginning of the week “what has happened in your life since the induction weekend in January? Where are you now with EfM? Looking at the week ahead – how are you feeling? What are your expectations? Fears?

Uncertainties?" It is all too easy for me to hear these questions and instantly sink into the Slough of Despond - "I have done nothing, and am a hopeless failure" - but the reality, discovered in small group conversations, is that I have done a lot more than I think I have. My tendency is to belittle my achievements or consider them unimportant: what I need to learn to do is acknowledge and celebrate them! I was also reminded [yet again!] that it is good for me to spend time in conversation with friends and Friends: it builds me up and energises me.

Another that kept coming back: am I doing too much? Is it greedy to want to do so many things? If I try to discern what I am being called to do, is it always the 'worthy things'? Consider it possible that I might be mistaken – I may be being asked to do something I love doing, like writing ... Sometimes the YES is meant to be YES to the things that build me up, that are part of taking care of myself, and the NO is NO to all the Dutiful/Important/Challenging/Worthy things that "need to be done" or "would be good for me".

A new metaphor, to add to 'tending my spiritual home' emerged – that of 'tending my spiritual garden'. I had feared that, after my major breaking apart and re-making at Pendle Hill, I had somehow 'lost it all' in the busyness of everyday life, the need to earn a living, attend to mundane chores and 'life-support work'. It was suggested to me that maybe I haven't: what I learned has always been there, even if it's not been very vigorous, and is the strong, firm foundation for everything that's happened since. The garden has continued to grow: EfM is the opportunity to weed and prune, train and restrain, feed and water, and then watch it grow, develop, flower, fruit... There are Quaker plants, and Mary bushes, strangling vines, new seedlings, and shoots just emerging: the garden needs digging and hoeing, trimming and pruning, and above all LETTING ALONE TO GROW while I sit and enjoy the sunshine. There are times to work on a particular plant and times to leave it alone; some plants just do it all by themselves, others need careful protection and nurturing; some need feeding, some don't; some need pruning – at the right season; some just get on and do it 'all by self', while some APPEAR 'all by self'; some simply won't grow, and need to have this acknowledged; and IT ALL BRINGS GREAT JOY IF I LET IT !

Things to remember and work on:

When getting frustrated about my lack of ‘progress’: TURN MY HEAD AROUND and see that all the ‘interruptions’ are part of my ministry, part of EfM, part of the pattern of the fabric, part of the threads of the weaving of my life. I need to learn to accept not being in control, and remember that, if a thing matters that much, I will find or make time to do something about it.

I need to cultivate BEING IN NOW – give the ‘spaces between’ room to appear – and OPEN UP TO THE LIGHT – there are windows through, and sometimes a window is, or can be, a door ...

It’s easy to conquer the world while at Woodbrooke! Back at home, the dragons get in the way – work, life, family, health, fear... Sometimes the enormity of the task is a dragon in itself, and a Friend offered this ministry: “get to know your dragon, scratch it between the ears, make friends with it and use its fire to help you forward ... Allow others to see your weakness and respond to it with their strength”.

What is my own Quaker vision? Being part of a community rooted in Spirit, encircled in LOVE, upheld in god’s arms, enfolded in god’s wings, loving and caring for one another, encouraging and helping each other up with a tender hand, growing towards god in growing towards each other – bringing about god’s kingdom here on earth. I find this community among staff and students on the EfM week at Woodbrooke. How do I realise that vision in the wider Quaker community? How are my gifts going to be put to best use in the service of that vision? What help do I need along the way?

Watch this space...

Mary Woodward

As well as looking for *a second NFPB rep.* (see page 25) Area Meeting is short of a *Quaker Prison Minister* since Margaret Mortimer completed her term of service. See Q.F. & P. 13.47-52 for a formal outline of the role; Margaret’s final report was in *Sesame* 201 (at <http://www.quakerscotland.org/south-east>; click on “Older newsletters”); or you could contact her directly for further details if you are interested.

The charity *Edinburgh Cares* has plans to set up a refugee support team and is looking for people with *website development, event organisation, and accounting* skills – **Lynne Barty** has more information.

Thanks to **Andrew Farrar** for the photograph on page 8.

Wiston Weekend – 9-11 September 2016

A Community-building weekend for S.E. Scotland Quakers

For many years, Quakers from various meetings in South East Scotland have enjoyed an autumn weekend away together at Wiston Lodge near Biggar. It is growing every year ... There are outdoor activities, walks, and an interesting programme which has included slide shows, creative writing and art. There is a creche available for much of the time, a campfire and a ceilidh!

This year we are exploring notions of peace: Quaker responses to violence in history and in the present, and the peaceful resolution of conflict.

Why not join us this September? (*Bursaries are available*)

Please fill in a booking form as soon as possible and email back to Jessica Paterson: poetrypaterson@gmail.com.

No money needed yet, but we would like to know numbers so we can finalise our booking. For questions, or to get a booking form, email or ring Jessica on

01324 877 220

Meeting for Sufferings, 2 April 2016

This was my first Meeting for Sufferings since the initial meeting in July 2015, as I am the alternate for South East Scotland AM and attend when Henry Thompson, our representative, is unable so to do.

I found this meeting quite inspirational, as several Friends quoted from the Bible, with one saying our role is to bring about the Kingdom of Heaven. At many Quaker meetings, I have little sense that we are a *Religious* Society of Friends; it was encouraging to feel that Sufferings retains that.

We had two reports: from Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) Trustees; and from the Quaker World Relations Committee. Ingrid Greenhow, Clerk to Trustees, followed by Peter Ullathorne, Treasurer, presented the first. Significant work by the Trustees recently has been around managing risk. From the Treasurer's part, I focused on three points: (a) BYM has free reserves at the end of 2015 of £11 million; (b) there was a deficit in 2015 of £4 million, as £5.9 million was paid as a one-off payment by BYM as its share of the deficit in the Pension Trust Growth Plan; and (c) contributions by individual Friends and Meetings were on target at £2 million, but the Treasurer would like to see this increase to £3 million. My personal opinion is

that is unlikely and too optimistic as it is an increase of 50 % and many Friends are already very generous.

Anne Bennett, Clerk to Quaker World Relations Committee, focused on the FWCC World Plenary Meeting in Pisac, Peru, earlier this year. It asked all Yearly Meetings to commit to carrying out sustainability actions. Under-used is the energy and passion of younger Friends. Although there are many different forms of Quakerism, we can meet God in one another.

However, the substantive element of Sufferings was “Living out our faith (call for equality)” and we were asked in small groups to respond to three questions, helped by examples of work being carried out by Friends, around economic justice, housing and homelessness, asylum seekers and refugees, criminal justice, sustainability, peace and other activity linked to our faith in action. An ambitious task with a focus on Sufferings being asked to “co-ordinate the work of local and area meetings...”. Friends felt that it is more apt for Sufferings to encourage and enable networking rather than co-ordination. Friends are encouraged to share stories of work being carried out. “Listening to the Spirit in Meeting for Worship is our starting point.”

As well as routine business of appointments, requests for release, and noting a letter of greeting to Ireland Yearly Meeting, (to which our Friend Marilyn Higgins was the BYM representative), Sufferings received four concerns from Area Meetings, all of which were forwarded to other Quaker bodies. Two of these – *Decriminalisation of the possession, for personal use, of all drugs* (from Cornwall Area Meeting) and *Vision for a Criminal Justice System* from Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) Central Committee, drafted by its Crime, Community & Justice subcommittee, are to be considered by Area Meetings, with feedback to Sufferings.

We finished in good time, with cake and cream scones for those who had time so to indulge.

Kate Arnot

[The full minutes may be read online at <http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/meeting-for-sufferings/papers-and-minutes>.]

A FIRST

Congratulations to **Alex Cole-Hamilton**, who by winning the Edinburgh Western constituency at the recent election became the first member of the Religious Society of Friends to sit in the Scottish Parliament (although attenders **Mark Ballard** and **Christopher Harvie** had been there before him!)

Reading Quaker Faith & Practice

Over the weekend 22 -24 April, I was lucky enough to take part in a conference at Woodbrooke for Area Meeting representatives on the 'Reading Quaker Faith & Practice' programme that started in October last year. It had been organised and was led by members of the Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group, and was attended by 44 people representing about half of the AMs. We started by getting to know each other a bit and sharing how involved our AMs were in the programme. Some, rather alarmingly, were not really aware of it, while others were very involved. I felt our AM was doing fairly well, with group or individuals in most local meetings following the programme. We also shared what we hoped to get out of the weekend which included getting to know the book better, understanding the process of revision, and getting some tips on how to start/maintain enthusiasm for the programme which continues until next April. One way might be the quiz that we had to see how well we knew the book and could find our way around it.

The next morning we had an interesting session on the history of how we got to our current book. A lot of this is actually *in* the current book, in a section called Notes on the History of the Text, which I didn't know.

After coffee we divided into smaller groups to discuss our experiences of using the programme: the obstacles, what were we learning and what additional support would be helpful. We fed back some of what we had discussed. There seemed to be a feeling that the launch of the programme was unclear and that there were communication problems that had affected a number of AMs. However there was enthusiasm for what was being learnt, particularly less well-known passages. New members and attenders were finding it particularly helpful, and it was helping build connections between people in meetings. If people haven't started they were encouraged to start now and to follow the programme in whatever way suited their Meeting or situation.

After lunch and some free time we had a session on how to access and use the Being Friends Together material which supports the programme. This is free and has different resources for every month to be used by groups or by individuals. It can be accessed on qfp.quaker.org.uk/reading/. We tried out a couple of the exercises suggested and it did seem helpful in looking a parts of the text in different ways.

In the evening we had a number of options. First I chose a group that

shared favourite passages. This was enjoyable, as I heard some very well-known passages but also some I had never heard before. I then went to a group which considered “thorny questions”. There has been some concern that the possible process of revision will emphasise differences, particularly the theist/non-theist issue. We carried out an exercise that might help with this.

After Meeting for Worship on Sunday, we considered how we would take things back to our Meetings. We were reminded that the purpose of the programme is to familiarise us with our *present* book with a view to aiding discernment when/if the question of revision comes back to Yearly Meeting – which will not happen until 2018 at the earliest. The Revision Preparation Group is happy to have comments, and they can be contacted by email at qfp@quaker.org.uk. Groups and individuals who are following the programme are asked to keep notes of any issues and comments as they go along.

I very much enjoyed the weekend and the sharing that went on over meals as well as in the more formal sessions. I feel enthusiastic about the programme and hope I can share that with others in AM, so if you want to talk about it, please get in touch.

Janet Grimwade

Northern Friends Peace Board

Area Meeting is currently looking for a second (“alternate”) rep. to attend the four-times-yearly meetings of the NFPB, and participate in its activities, which are directed towards “the active promotion of peace in all its height and breadth”, as its founding minute put it in 1913.

Anyone interested in this role has a chance to experience a meeting at first hand, and so hear more about the Board’s current doings, when, on *Saturday 18 June*, its members gather at Edinburgh Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, for their second meeting of 2016: it starts at 10.45 and is expected to end by 4.15, with a break for – a bring-your-own – lunch. (Sometimes at our meetings there is soup – and even, occasionally, cake – but you cannot bank on it. Coffee and tea it is safe to anticipate.)

No doubt we will hear something about Trident – feedback from the Board’s lunchtime session about it at YM; also, since the next day sees a ‘meeting for witness’ at Faslane which some Board members will stay on to attend. I do not know what else is in store, but hope and expect it will be informative – energising – even inspiring.

Alan Frith

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

Minutes of Area Meeting held on Saturday 9 April 2016 at Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House

2016/04/01 Worship

During opening worship *Quaker Faith and Practice* 12:18 has been read to us. We have been reminded of the importance of sharing pastoral care in our meetings and of our role as lively stones in the spiritual building our faith requires of us.

We have remembered the life of our dear Friend Sylvia Marshall, who died on 16 March, 2016.

2016/04/02 Introductions

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

2016/04/03 The minutes of our last meeting, held on 27 February 2016 at Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House, have been signed and entered in the minute book.

2016/04/04 Matters arising

- a) **BYM Sustainability Gathering** (Minutes 2015/ 11/13 (b) and 2016/ 02/09 refer)

We record that **Eoin Rutter** (attender at South Edinburgh LM) was appointed by between-meetings procedure to attend this event, in place of Philip Revell.

- b) **Area Meeting Representative on the Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre Management Committee** (Minute 2015/11/14 refers)

We note that **Hilary Patrick** has been appointed *via* between-meetings procedure to serve as our representative on the management committee of Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre.

2016/04/05 Report on Meeting for Sufferings

Kate Arnot has reported on the Meeting for Sufferings of Saturday, 2 April. A full report of this meeting will be submitted for publication in *Sesame*.

We have heard that, although BYM reserves are healthy this year, if we want more to be done in our name, members of the Society need to contribute more, if they can.

Kate was inspired by the item on 'Living out our Faith', especially the ministry of one Friend who said, "Our work as Quakers is to bring

about God's kingdom on earth."

We note that there were two items of particular interest to Area Meetings. We have been asked to consider and respond to:

- Cornwall Area Meeting's minute on the decriminalization of the possession for personal use of all drugs.
- 'Vision of a criminal justice system', a paper prepared by Quaker Peace and Social Witness Crime Community and Justice Sub-group and circulated by QPSW Central Committee.

We will return to these matters at a future Area Meeting.

We thank Kate for her report.

2016/04/06 BYM Sustainability Gathering, 18 – 20 March in Swanwick, Derbyshire

Don Stubbings and Eoin Rutter attended this event, which focused on 'Our Sustainability Commitment – being a transformational community'. Rachel Howell was also there as a panel member and a leader. A full report will be submitted to *Sesame*. Don has shared the key learning points of the Gathering with us today.

He reminded us of our journeys so far towards sustainability, emphasizing that sustainability permeates every aspect of our life and embraces all our testimonies. By working together to support each other's witness we strengthen our Quaker communities. We are encouraged to do what we can, as small steps matter. Each of us needs to focus on our gifts to get away from guilt and to love the age we have been born into.

We were asked to clarify what we mean by 'sustainability'. The way we are living at the moment is depleting the earth's resources. We are eating into the reserves and ultimately we will reach what is referred to as 'the tipping point' – a point of no return. Living sustainably is like living within our budget. The impact of our current lifestyle affects the poor most. They are suffering now. We need to curb the exploitative tendency that is being pushed through by many governments at present.

Don's presentation today was brought to life by his telling of stories. In doing this he reminded us of the need for, and power of, story telling as a tool for social change. At the end, we had a short period of worship sharing focused on:

- Should not sustainability be core to what we are about?
- How can we be enabled to tell our story?
- How can we better support one another in doing this?

We thank Don for his presentation.

We will return to this issue at a future meeting.

2016/04/07 Tabular Statement for the year ending December, 2015

Richard Williams, our Assistant Clerk (membership), has presented the Tabular statement for 2015 to this meeting. We have heard that copies have already been sent to the Recording Clerk's Office in Friends House and to the General Meeting for Scotland Administrator. We understand that an adjustment had to be made to the figures submitted to Richard by our Local Meetings, as General Meeting records showed that in 26 instances the membership of a Friend had been recorded by more than one local meeting.

We accept the Tabular Statement for 2015 and note the following:

- The overall number of members is 254, a rise of 18 since 2014
- The total number of adult attenders is 310, a rise of 43 since 2014
- The number of children not in membership is 71, compared with 83 in 2014
- Central Edinburgh Meeting has 40% of Area Meeting members and 50% of recorded attenders
- Kelso had the largest proportional increase in both members (22 from 15) and attenders (31 from 26)

We thank Richard for his work in preparing the tabular Statement.

2016/04/08 Membership Matters

a) Transfer of membership (out)

The following transfers of membership have been accepted:

- **Jennifer Wilson** by Notts and Derby Area Meeting
- **Sue Buxton** by North of Scotland Area Meeting
- **Anthony Buxton** by North of Scotland Area Meeting

b) Transfer of membership (in)

We have received certificates of transfer for:

- **Sue Proudlove** from South Wales Area Meeting.
- **Tony Wilkes** from South Wales Area Meeting
- **Audrey Fessler** from Notts and Derby Area Meeting

We accept these membership transfers and ask our Assistant Clerk (Membership) to send certificates of acceptance.

c) James Garry

Further to minute 2016/02/08 (a), the Membership Clerk of West Scotland Area Meeting has notified us that a record of James Garry's membership cannot be found. To rectify this situation, we recognize

James as a member of South East Scotland Area Meeting and we ask our Assistant Clerk (membership) to record this.

d) Record of death

We record the death of Sylvia Marshall of Central Edinburgh Meeting, on 16 March, 2016. At the time of her death Sylvia was 87 years old. Her funeral was held on 1 April, after the manner of Friends, and was followed by a Memorial Meeting for Worship in Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House.

2016/04/09 Area Meeting Nominations Committee Report

1. Nominations Committee has brought forward the names of the following Friends, to serve from April 2016 to end of March 2019:
 - Pastoral Care & Oversight – **Alison Moore**, Tweeddale
 - Pastoral Care & Oversight – **John Cassie**, Tweeddale
 - Pastoral Care & Oversight – **Peter Moore**, *attender*, Tweeddale
 - Pastoral Care & Oversight – **Susan Rigg**, *attender*, S. Edinburgh

We appoint these Friends accordingly.

2. We note that the following Friends have completed their terms of appointment:

Maeve Starrs-Cunningham (East Lothian, Pastoral Care & Oversight),

Phil Lucas (East Lothian, Clerk of Area Meeting),

Elizabeth Allen (East Lothian, Area Meeting Assistant Clerk),

Margaret Mortimer (Central Edinburgh, Quaker Prison Minister),

Mary Jane Elton (P. & M., Deputy Safeguarding Co-ordinator),

John Fox (Central Edinburgh, Quaker Life Rep. Council)

We thank these Friends for their service.

3. Training Courses

Exploring Eldership and Oversight Together, September 2016

We appoint **Sarah Martin** (Portobello & Musselburgh) to attend this course and ask our Treasurer to pay the full cost involved.

2016/04/10 Eldership & Oversight Conference, Woodbrooke, 4-6 March

Mary Woodward attended this conference on 'Abundant Life – resourcing our Meetings' and a full report is published in *Sesame*. Today she shared some of her experience and learning from what proved to be a challenging weekend. The weekend was based on IDEA – Inspiration; Deepening; Empowering; Activity.

Mary also invited us to pair up with a Friend we didn't know well to consider the following questions:

- *What got you through the door of your first Quaker Meeting?*
- *What brought you back for a second time?*
- *What keeps you coming back?*

It was suggested that we consider introducing this exercise to Friends in our local meeting, as a way of having a conversation at a deeper level.

We thank Mary for her report.

2016/04/11 Financial Donations from Venue 40 surplus

Don Stubbings has introduced this item.

It is customary for three charities to receive donations from any Venue 40 surplus, after Area Meeting has been reimbursed for the costs connected to use of 7 Victoria Terrace. These three charities are supported for three years. Mines Advisory Group and Quaker Central work are currently in their final year as beneficiaries. Last year Nepal earthquake relief was adopted as an emergency cause. At this meeting, we need to decide on one beneficiary to be supported in 2016, 2017 and 2018.

Our Festival Committee recommends 'Aid & Abet' – a new organisation working with recently released prisoners with addiction issues who are at risk of homelessness. Housing and homelessness are important issues at the moment, and this is a small local organisation at a stage where even a small amount of support would make a big difference.

We accept the suggestion of our Festival Committee and are pleased to support Aid & Abet for three years.

We thank the Festival Committee for its work and Don for presenting this report.

2016/04/12 General Meeting for Scotland: proposed dates for 2017 and March 2018

General Meeting for Scotland has asked us to check that the following proposed venues and dates for its meetings in 2017/18 are suitable:

South East – 11 March, 2017 (already agreed)

West – 10 June, 2017

East – 9 September, 2017

North – 18/19 November, 2017

South East – 10 March, 2018

We are content with these suggestions.

2016/04/13 Correspondence and notices

Correspondence has been received on the following:::

- a) Quaker Concern Over Population – This group now has a website, which can be seen atf qcop.org.uk, or by searching for ‘Quaker Concern Over Population’.
- b) We have received copies of a book on assisted dying produced by Leeds Area Meeting, for distribution to our local meetings. We ask our clerks to arrange this.

2016/04/14 Closing minute

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

Central Edinburgh 15 + 1A	Central Fife 1	East Lothian 1	Kelso 2	Penicuik -
Polmont 1	Portobello & Musselburgh 3	South Edinburgh 6 + 1A	Tweeddale -	<i>Other Area Mtg</i> -

(Signed)
Elizabeth Allen, Clerk

HELEN'S HOOLIE

No Extraordinary Power: a gathering at Faslane in defiance of Trident and in memory of Helen Steven.

We will be having a gathering for peace and in memory of the wonderful Helen Steven at Faslane on Sunday 5 June from 12.00 until 16.00.

Please bring sandwiches and songs. Bring colourful things to decorate the fence with and if you have an instrument or a creative something for us to share, please bring that as well. There will be dancing.

We will be gathering as well in solidarity with our friends and colleagues resisting the Burghfield end of the UK nuclear weapons system, who are running a month of direct action at Burghfield during June. If you want to get involved in that, more information here:

<http://tridentploughshares.org/june-2016-a-month-of-daily-direct-action-against-trident-renewal-please-join-us/>

Penny Stone

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
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Portobello & Musselburgh: Old Parish Church, Bellfield St. EH15	7.30 pm
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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
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Tweeddale: Nomad Beat, 10-11 Cavalry Park, Peebles	10.30 am
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All welcome, but please phone to confirm 01721 721 050 or 01896 850 389

Central Fife: Hunter Halls, Kirkcaldy (Kirk Wynd, opposite Old Kirk)	10.30 am
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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; if you would prefer to receive it this way, or to change the address to which a paper copy is sent, or if you would like to get one by post and currently do not, please contact Kim Smith at kimdsmit@yahoo.com. A large print version is also 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. Printed by Footprint UK, Riverside Works, Edinburgh Road, Jedburgh TD8 6EE.