



Terrace Talk

Newsletter, Central Edinburgh Quaker Meeting December 2020

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DIARY DATES:

10 December: Epilogue: 9pm. 30 mins worship, followed by chat.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88245289431?pwd=Vm5NR0Znc3ZUT3NIMUw3c0pRa0wxQT09>

Meeting ID: 882 4528 9431; Passcode: Cocoa; by phone: 0131 460 1196.

Dates of local business meetings in 2021 (all Sundays): 10 January; 7 March; 2 May; 4 July; 5 September; 7 November

Meeting House Opening Dates/Times

Blended Meetings for Worship are now planned for 6 Dec (All Age), 20 Dec, 3 Jan, 17 Jan (All Age), 31 Jan. Other Sunday Meetings will be by Zoom only, including Meeting for Worship for Business on 10 Jan.

The Zoom link at 11 continues to be:

<https://zoom.us/j/121083985?pwd=emF6UWo0blpwUG1FUTN0SjIISDkwdz09> Password: george

BC: AD

*This was the moment when Before
Turned into After, and the future's
Uninvented timekeepers presented arms.*

*This was the moment when nothing
Happened. Only dull peace
Sprawled boringly over the earth.*

*This was the moment when even energetic Romans
Could find nothing better to do
Than counting heads in remote provinces.*

*And this was the moment
When a few farmworkers and three
Members of an obscure Persian sect*

*Walked haphazard by starlight straight
Into the kingdom of heaven.*

U.A Fanthorpe

Hello all, greetings for all you hold dear and sacred - each day and every day.

Both bad and good news this week. Hopeful news of vaccines. And £12 billion of government investment to create and support up to 250,000 highly-skilled green jobs in the UK, and spur over three times as much private sector investment by 2030. But £16.5 billion more on military spending. And about £4 billion cut from overseas aid. In the meantime, in all our different circumstances, we all plough on.

Here's an optimistic extract from *Tae a Virus* by Willie Sinclair

*...Yer spreading rate is quite intense,
yer feeding like a gannet.*

*Disruption caused is so immense,
ye've shaken oor wee planet....*

*Ye might be gallus noo, ma freen,
As ye jump fae cup tae cup
But when we get oor vaccine made
Yer number will be up.*

Meeting House news:

Our staff and staffing

Let's start with thoughts about, and the kindest of wishes to, our much-appreciated Area Meeting staff. They are now all on furlough: full furlough for the five members of staff on casual contracts who are receiving 80% of their past earnings based on HMRC's criteria, and flexible furlough for the four members on permanent contracts, including our two managers, Sue and Tony, who are receiving their full salaries. They work some hours each month when there is work for them to do.

Except for Meetings for Worship, the Meeting House will not be staffed 19 December - 4 January inclusive. As the present circumstances prevent us from opening for room hire, the building will normally only be staffed Tuesday-Thursday during the week - hours may vary. We have no lettings income and very few enquiries about future bookings.

New audio-visual equipment for Meeting Room

Area Meeting trustees agree this will be of real benefit both to us and hirers of the premises. They have agreed to underwrite the cost to a maximum of £20,000 (inc VAT). This covers consultation costs, the installation of equipment in the Meeting Room, and cabling which could be used later to install similar equipment in the Hall. AM has received £1,400 from the Francis Camfield Trust towards the costs.

On behalf of our own Meeting, the Sylvia Marshal Bequest Group (SMBG) are contributing £10,000. They say 'there is a strong feeling that we should continue to use the equipment for blended meetings after the Covid-19 crisis is over, as we have learned the value of Friends being able to participate in Meeting for Worship remotely. The equipment also offers the opportunity of reducing the need to travel'.

This leaves over £50,000 in the SMB fund. The group welcomes new applications, especially from Friends in Central Edinburgh who would like to improve their technology, or who would like to go on Woodbrooke or similar courses to deepen their spiritual development.

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Deepening our Spiritual Life

Ever had the experience of hearing at a funeral interesting and inspiring things about a person, and wishing, oh wishing, we had known about them when they were still alive? When death has been stalking so much of the world these past months, how is it that we don't give more thanks for the grace of God in living Friends' lives *now*, rather than just when they are dead? This question was asked during recent ministry following the death of our Friend, Jim Pym.

When someone dies, the practice of Friends is to prepare a memorial minute of about 300 words giving dates and place of birth, death and funeral, a taste of any roles carried out at local, area, or national level; and a few personal notes to revive memories.

For some people, Area Meeting may then ask for a longer *Testimony to the Grace of God* as shown in that life. These testimonies are not formal obituaries or eulogies. Instead they 'record in thankfulness the power of divine grace in human life' (Quaker Faith and Practice, 4.24).

These extracts from our Quaker guidance for writing a Testimony glimpse what a good life might be, both dead and living now...

'In today's fast moving world Friends face a double challenge, to concentrate on the Divine, and to write a short but rounded record. ...Friends can be long-winded. This puts some off from joining in our Business Meetings for Worship. A testimony should radiate the Grace of God as shown in the life of the Friend who has passed from this world. It differs from an obituary account of achievements, yet a few milestones in the life of the deceased will serve to illuminate the spiritual gifts bestowed...There is a temptation to link these to a career pattern or an extended voluntary body commitment, and hence border on an obituary. Rather, it is the spiritually inspired application of the talent for good that matters. Examples of the flowering of each talent in the life pattern of the departed Friend can then be quoted..

'Writing a testimony to the life of a departed Friend may not be easy. How far do we understand the familial and cultural background, the stresses and successes in that life? Did the light shine forth in life? Where we see glimpses of the inner spiritual life, how do these reflect in outward activity? Were outward concerns truly a reflection of inward Grace? How does economic comfort sit easily with God's Will?

'Then we come back to what to include, what to leave out and how to outwardly reflect a spiritually inspired life to future generations. Not far distant may be the expectations of relatives of the deceased. When a close relative died I had anticipated a prepared obituary in The Friend but instead I read a note from one who had only known her in her last years. I know a Friend now who feels hurt that no testimony was written around her partner who died some years ago. On another occasion a Friend who was to die shortly afterwards made plain that he did not want a testimony written to his life. ...Meetings need prayerful thought before committing the strengths of a life to a Quaker Testimony.'

John Melling, Assistant Clerk to General Meeting for Scotland, approved by Meeting for Sufferings 2006.

For the full doc, see

<https://quaker-prod.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/store/38633f83b4554885b4d087543ad29041bc8ee5d1f3cfb56163e30f6d2f4e>

Promoting Quaker values, beliefs, approaches ..

Doors Open Day video of Meeting House

As of 31 October, this has had 501 views, and was featured in *The Friend*.

Witnessing to our Faith in Action

This month's Good Cause: Campaign Against the Arms Trade

Emma Cockburn, the first Scotland Coordinator for CAAT, writes:

The last few months have given me a lot of hope for the future in Scotland. We've been empowering budding activists in universities, and speaking with dozens of people who took part in our *Stop Arming Saudi Arabia* event during the *Edinburgh World Justice Festival*. None of this would have been possible without your and others' contributions.

During this pandemic, global arms manufacturers like *Raytheon and Babcock* have quickly shifted their production lines from bombs and fighter jets to building life-saving ventilators for our NHS. A shift so drastic

we have always been told it was almost impossible. This was a glimpse into the future CAAT would like, one where every job within the arms industry pivots to one that is socially useful.

However, Boris Johnson's announcement of an additional £16 billion funding to 'modernise' our defence capabilities shattered that dream. Such capabilities will not, and have not, protected us from the climate catastrophe or future pandemics. With the Scottish elections coming in May, CAAT will be working tirelessly to ensure that the impact of arms manufacturing and the alternatives available are prominent in political campaigning. Our new report is due early next year.

The COP26 climate summit meets next November in Glasgow. With both military expenditure and emissions running out of control, we at CAAT hope to use this opportunity to support peace and faith groups to unite and demand better for our planet. Companies like *Leonardo and Thales* should never again be allowed to profit from arms sales that both tear our world apart and contribute to the climate emergency without being held accountable for the human consequences.

There are countless ways to get involved in our hopefully expanding local networks in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Ayrshire, and next year we'll be targeting the millions in pension investments tied up in companies like *BAE Systems*, the UK's arm jewel, to ensuring that Scotland's proposed spaceports won't be exploited for military gain.

So please consider donating to CAAT, there is so much work to do and we could not do it without you. <https://caat.org.uk/donate/> Bank details: Campaign Against Arms Trade; Sort Code: 08 90 33; Account: 50503544

The collection for the **Quaker Housing Trust** October raised £1216.10. .

Have you any ideas for further Good Causes?

Send to our treasurer, Hillary Patrick by 30 November..

People

Madaleine Moffat fell at home, so sadly is back in hospital, but is progressing well. We do not know, as yet, what arrangements are being put in place for when she is discharged. Ward 207. Direct line: 242 2071.

Very pleased to report that **John Fox** is now back home, after being admitted to the Western General hospital on 18 November for breathlessness. Here's to both feeling better and better each day.

Memorial Minute for Erna Webber

Erna Webber was born in Switzerland, the daughter of a prison governor, and was trained as a pharmacologist. She had polio as a teenager, which affected her throughout her life. With her beloved husband James (known as Jimmy), who was also Swiss, Erna had 2 children, and was a loving grandmother and great-grandmother. Her niece was autistic, and Erna was very involved in the Scottish Autism charity, at a time when there was far less awareness of autism.

Erna attended midweek meeting regularly. She was a generous, warm-hearted and hospitable person and is remembered by members of Midweek meeting as a great baker. At the same time, she was also straightforward and direct, but never unpleasant. Erna died peacefully at home on April 7, 2020 at the age of 92 and had a private funeral.

Margaret Anderson, Evelyn Graham and Audrey Sinton contributed information for this minute.

Social/community building/arts/fun

To cheer you up, have a look at this audiovisual bird twitterstorm aria from *Mozart's Magic Flute*. Birds can DANCE, as well as sing. <http://volkerpannes.de/portfolio/bird-song-opera/>

On Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/95722990184?pwd=dWVJdVZvb2xTQUUpqK0lvWkVOVWt5Zz09>

By telephone +44 131 460 1196

Come and sing carols Tuesday 15 December 7.30 106 451 170 pw144309

Singing group Tuesday 1 December 7.30 106 451 170. pw144309

Coffee morning Thursdays 3 and 17 December 10.30. 957 2299 0184 pw110279

The December bookgroup is postponed to: Sunday 3 January at 12.15 after Meeting for Worship. 121 083 985 pwGeorge when we shall discuss R K Narayan *The English Teacher*

Edinburgh & Lothians Regional Equality Council reminds us:

Clothing repair service

Do you have any clothes needing to be repaired? We can fix it! Just drop in Mon-Friday 9.30am-5.30pm at ELREC, 14 Forth St, EH1 3LH. Shortening, lengthening, adjusting seams, altering darts, repairing zips or tears, etc. Special orders (dress making, pillows and cushions, chair cover). Their volunteer expert tailor has over 10 years of experience as a professional tailor. cfc@elrec.org.uk

Monday Sewing & Repairing Club

Mondays 11am- 1pm to repair, alter or upcycle your clothes. You will get access to equipment and experienced guidance. If interested, book your space via cfc@elrec.org.uk

E-bikes Elrec have a few e-bikes available for free three-week loans. Email cfc@elrec.org.uk

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Area Meeting

Trustees report

Trustees are recommending that AM should give BYM £30,000 for 2020. That's additional to amounts earmarked for BYM by Friends in their 2020 donations to AM and sums sent directly by Friends in the area.

News from our Black Lives Matter groups

Since our Area Meeting discussion in June, four study groups have been meeting, each choosing their own path, and with about 6 Friends. They include Friends from Central Edinburgh. Rici Marshall Cross is from S. Edinburgh Meeting. Her group identified two themes to explore: black history, especially British black history, and what racism looks like today, white privilege and how to be anti-racist:

In learning about black history, I've found it shocking how little detail I have known about important topics such as British roots in slavery, and the British civil rights movements. Alongside the study groups, I've learned more by listening to podcasts and watching programmes such as David Olusoga's Black and British: A forgotten history and Britain's forgotten slave owners.

Talking with one another about white privilege helps to open our eyes to the many ways we navigate our lives without the burden of being judged by the colour of our skin. Stories and accounts by people of colour lead us to ask ourselves what we can do. Perhaps it is in the small but challenging conversations with friends and family that we can help others to see systemic racism around us. We hope to arrange a learning session for all Friends in the Area Meeting about what to do if we witness a racist incident, from very obvious hate crimes to smaller everyday racism and microaggressions.

Reflecting with others in other groups, there is a strong feeling that this is the beginning of a journey that will not reach a neat conclusion within our lifetimes. All of the groups have one or two more sessions. In the New Year, we hope to explore how to take this forward.

If you too would like to set up a group, Rici recommends the following podcasts:

1. David Olusoga's Black and British: A forgotten history

(<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b082w9p9/black-and-british-a-forgotten-history-1-first-encounters>)

2. Britain's forgotten slave owners:

(<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b062nqpd/britains-forgotten-slave-owners-1-profit-and-loss>).

3. Arts and Ideas: *What does a black history curriculum look like?*

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p08k4ymn>

4. Radio 3 *The Essay: Thinking Black* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000n8xb/episodes/player> (5 15min episodes)

5. *About Race* with Reni Eddo-Lodge: <https://www.aboutracepodcast.com/>

E-mail Rici for further resources: marshall.rici@googlemail.com Another list of BLM resources, among much else, is in the November edition of the AM newsletter, *Sesame*.

<https://www.quakerscotland.org/south-east>

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General Meeting

Green Light - stories of what individual Friends are doing about climate change

Last month, our GM clerk, Elizabeth Allen, asked Friends to share stories of interesting and significant things being done by Scottish Quakers to combat the climate emergency. Stories to be sent to tteditors@gmail.com. More stories needed!

So far, *Green Light* has focussed on Farming and Food; Land and Biodiversity; and building an eco-house. This month:

Quakers Talk Rubbish



Here's a quiz to start:

- What percentage of UK overall waste comes from households?
- What percentage of that gets recycled?
- In 2016, how many tonnes of clothing was purchased in the UK? And how much has that increased since 18 years ago?
- How much clothing is sent to landfill every year?
- What percentage of a car's life is it not used?
- How many tonnes of electronic waste were produced by the UK in 2019?

Answers (source: UK climate assembly material and UK Parliament's Environmental Audit Committee)

a. about 12%; b. about half.; c. over 1 million tonnes, 60% more; d. 300,000 tonnes; e. 95%; f. Over 1.5million tonnes. That's 130 times heavier than *The Shard's* structural steel.

The Polmont Commitment

In May 2019, Polmont Meeting committed itself to becoming a low-carbon community. It encouraged each Friend to:

- commit to an action plan with three aspirations they wished to achieve.
- share progress with, and support, others
- become active and speak out
- consider how they will speak truth to power
- be a lifelong learner about sustainability and our wonderful planet.

Marriot Dallas, clerk of Polmont Meeting, tells how in March 2019, eight of them set up a meeting with a waste minimisation officer from Falkirk Council:

The officer spent about 90 minutes with us, sharing a video presentation, and encouraging us to think of waste as a possible resource with a value. The video included pictures of a recently upgraded recycling centre and also before-and-after aerial shots of land reclaimed from landfill sites. Kinneil site is now grassing over, with a good diversity of wild plants, birds, rabbits etc

He talked in some detail about how local councils can make income from properly recycled items, for example paper and card. We talked about our kerbside bins (we have collections for paper and card, plastic, garden waste, electrical and batteries and general waste) and got a glimpse into the challenge local councils face when communicating with us about what goes where. No dog poo in the food bins, for example.

The big topic of the evening was plastic. We are instructed to place our food waste in plastic bags before putting in the bin, but were puzzled that the council doesn't ask us to use compostable bags. We touched on the complexity of the different types of plastic and the meaning of the recycling symbols and numbers printed on packaging. There was a sense of the power of multi-national companies who produce plastic packaging. One of our members used to remove all packaging from her purchases and leave it at the supermarket checkout. The encouraging news is that Morrisons has now introduced bring-your-own-container schemes. Both Morrison's and Tesco will recycle used plastic carrier bags, also bread wrappers.

I went home with a better understanding of some of the recycling processes and a sense of hope about reclaiming land from landfill, but still bewildered about plastic packaging.

So, where are we now as we approach 2021?

Our Meeting has grown. We now have about 30 members and attenders, with several young families joining us. One of our new attenders started a *Zero Waste Falkirk* group on Facebook, because she was frustrated that most online groups were based in England, rather than locally. Zero waste shops sell goods without packaging, so you take your own empty bottle and fill it in the shop. The group posts encourage us to visit a zero waste shop in Larbert, enjoy a litter pick on a sunny day, support a new local zero waste grocer and deli, give away items rather dispose of them and sew tote bags out of scrap fabric, and much more.

Many of us continue to try to reduce our plastic use, for instance by collecting plastic for eco-bricks. These are plastic bottles, stuffed with non recyclable plastic, till they are very hard, then used to construct garden furniture, for example. We haven't yet found a destination for the bottles. Some people are active in Friends of the Earth. We have two electric car drivers in our Meeting, with other drivers seriously thinking about making the change. Many of us are keen composters. These all feel small, but important, steps.

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Britain Yearly Meeting

96% of Quaker meetings still open for worship Quake! Reports a September survey showing that around 73% were meeting online and around 66% in person – that includes indoor and outdoor worship. It seems that slightly fewer people attended Quaker worship in September than in May. About 23% of

Meetings were holding blended worship (34% of all those meeting online in any form). Overall, the picture of Quaker worship in Britain in September is that Zoom worked well for many local meetings.

Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) in Brussels is recruiting a new director, the lead staff position in the organisation. Find out more on the [QCEA website](#).

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Other...

Scotland is first UK country to ban smacking

The Parliamentary Engagement Working Group and officer gave evidence to the government supporting this on our behalf. In January, Wales was the second part of the UK to pass a law banning people from smacking their children. It will begin in 2022.

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Terrace Talk is published normally on the last Sunday of each month. But next edition will be on 3 January. Please provide copy for the next issue by **end of Tuesday 29 December**. Please include complete and accurate information, and contact name and phone number. Send copy in plain text form to teditors@gmail.com. We appreciate Quaker simplicity. To unsubscribe, e-mail editors. We also welcome comments and feedback.