

SESAME

Number 243: September 2022

Area Meeting on 7 September / Fàilte Edinburgh – *our refugee family is here!* / Prison work / Living Witness / Meeting for Sufferings / Membership Workshop / The Future of Woodbrooke / BDRC / 'Destruction of a Father' / TPNW Meeting of States Parties / NPT Conference / Festival Reviews / Inspiration from the Diggers / Quaker poetry / Carnall Award Event / June minutes / &c.



Sunday Morning in front of the Arch Street Meeting House, Philadelphia [c.1813], watercolour attributed to John Lewis Krimmel (1786-1821), 'The American Hogarth' (see page 34).

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SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

The next Area Meeting will be held on Wednesday 7 September 2022 at 7.00 pm in person at the Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2JL, and by Zoom. All are welcome, though there will be no provision for children and young people at this meeting.

DRAFT AGENDA

1. Worship and introductions
2. Minutes of the meeting of Saturday 25 June 2022
3. Matters arising from previous minutes
 1. *Tweeddale: plans for meeting for worship*
4. Decisions by between-meeting procedure
 1. *Appointment of visitor to applicant for membership*
5. Membership matters:
 1. *Report on visit for membership applications*
 2. *Application for membership*
 3. *Transfers*
6. Matters from local meetings
 1. *Portobello & Musselburgh: hospice chaplaincy*
 2. *Central Edinburgh: plans for Quaker Week*
7. Local Development Worker for Scotland

– recommendations on priorities for 2022/23
8. Reports
 1. *Prison work [See page 4.]*
9. Appointments
 1. *From Nominations Committee*
10. Notices
11. Closing minute

Fàilte Edinburgh – September Update

[Against Friends' usual practice, but in accordance with the distancing deemed desirable, members of the Core Group and others are identified by forenames only.]

WE'RE VERY HAPPY TO REPORT that the Syrian family of five being sponsored with the backing of South East Scotland AM has arrived safely and is settling into the flat here in Edinburgh. Carol and I, with the aid of two interpreters, met them at Edinburgh Airport. They had flown from Cairo and were naturally very tired. A Syrian meal had been prepared in advance by Shireen and Gareth and a welcome banner with greeting cards from Quakers across Central Scotland was strung along the hall. This had been beautifully designed by Sarah.

The first days seem to have passed in a whirl. Many appointments have had to be arranged to meet our obligations to the Home Office and miraculously this has been achieved. Core Group volunteers and our volunteer interpreter have been on call twenty-four hours a day, Zoom catch-up calls have been held each afternoon and every visit to the family has been documented.

It all lies in the detail, of course! The first letter of introduction from the Council to the Bank was rejected on the grounds that it did not specify which branch, and was not addressed directly to the Manager. Rectification required battling through jolly throngs of Fringe-goers to the City Chambers for a second time in pursuit of a document in the correct format.

There have, inevitably been a few teething troubles – the mortice lock jammed within twelve hours of their arrival – but nothing that the combined expertise and determination of the group has been unable to remedy. A visit to the Central Mosque, open to all during the Festival, was a great success.

Several members of the group and family now have 'SayHi' on their phones. This is a wonderful app that lets you say something in English, hold your breath ... and then miraculously a voice repeats what you have just said in standard Arabic. (And vice versa, too.) Never did I imagine I would find myself on the bus with a very small person, discussing the relative merits of mashed and unmashed bananas by such means. The joys of Community Sponsorship!

Lynne



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

Chaplaincy at Saughton

[H.M.P. Edinburgh]

Over the past years, I have learned a lot from the people I visit or write to about the prison system; the prison staff and the very helpful network that is now flourishing in Scotland for Quakers interested in Criminal Justice. My journey started with very little knowledge but a lot of enthusiastic intention to be of help to those who appeared to be at the bottom of the pecking order of society. Of course naivety caused a few false moves on my part, but was probably fortunate because I didn't know how hard it was going to be to enter the prison system. It took several years of my being registered under the wrong role before I met with a new Chaplain who explained and sorted out my status so that I could continue with an acknowledged official visiting capacity.

Between us, we set up a group of interested men who meet for some silence, some sharing and some biscuits and fruit. I usually plan some readings from *Quaker Faith & Practice*, poetry and any other text based on a theme that seems relevant or topical, and the men have an active part in this. During lockdown the men continued to keep in touch by writing c/o Kelso Meeting House, and I wrote back with as much of a personal response as was possible. I have grown to know about their personal lives in a way that has increased my understanding and respect for them and when one of them wrote to tell me his mum had died very suddenly I was able to share my sadness with him. Since I have been able to return to in-person contact two other men have made themselves known to me, so my visit once a month has increased to a day-long attendance.

The restrictions of prison life are inevitably negating and yet the broad grins those men greet me with are so heart warming I have to work hard not to allow tears to appear. I am aware of their potential for violence, but at those times of contact they appear vulnerable and responsive to the space we have together, and I feel must be making contact with their souls. They are very used to the religious services provided in prison but the offer of space without form gives them a chance to be and express themselves. The prison system is all enveloping and crushing of the human spirit giving little chance for the individual to explore their own process and deficiencies that can be transformed into strengths and a positive future. One of the goals of the Quaker Network for Criminal Justice is to explore how society's thinking about retribution can be transformed into a more rehabilitative and creative approach. Two of us have consequently trained in the Restorative Justice approach enabling the person harmed and the person who caused the harm to explore together the possibility of being able to move forward. This requires acknowledgement of what has caused pain, a willingness to accept responsibility and the chance for

resolution. Only yesterday Patrick and I were talking with a friend who spoke like the majority of people who only see a “lock ‘em up and throw away the key” answer to those who break the law. Polarised thinking is depressing and dangerous at its least, and at times I am very disheartened, but fortunately there are many people and organizations who are offering alternatives.

I am leaving South East Scotland for the West, and need to hand over the opportunity to continue a Quaker presence in Saughton to someone else. Fortunately two people are taking my place: one to continue sending in small sums of money for remand prisoners with no access to finance, and one person from Kelso Meeting who wants to continue the visiting. I have been offered a chance to meet with another Chaplain at H.M.P. Low Moss (Bishopbriggs) in the hope of setting up group/individual visiting, and also a possibility of volunteering at the new women’s prison. (The Liliac Centre in Maryhill, housing 24 women, is due to open later this year as one of two ‘Community Custody Units’; the other, the Bella Centre, in Dundee, with 16 inmates, became operational in August.) If all this comes to fruition we will have moved forward in setting a new precedent of Quaker involvement in prisons, past Quaker chaplaincies having lapsed through age and infirmity. Unfortunately the Scottish prison system does not welcome ‘minority’ religious chaplaincy involvement, which apparently the English prison service does. I am very grateful to the full time Chaplain at Saughton who has given me that opportunity. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if our Quaker approach could be a long term and effective influence in all aspects of our criminal justice system.

Jenny Copsey

[see page 39]

An article by Mike Nellis of Glasgow LM on prison abolition – a topic raised at the last General Meeting – written in response to Isobel Thompson’s essay in The Guardian on the state of H.M.P. Nottingham, is at:

<http://www.qicj.org/doc/Nellis%20Thinking%20About%20Prison%20Abolition.pdf>

There is more on CCUs at the Scottish Prison Service website:

<https://www.sps.gov.uk/Corporate/Information/CommunityCustodyUnits.aspx>

“To see ourselves as others see us ...”

We all met at dinner at Mr. Lloyd’s [Sampson Lloyd, the banker (1699-1779)] where we were entertained with great hospitality. ...

I have always loved the simplicity of manners, and the spiritual-mindedness of the Quakers; and talking with Mr. Lloyd, I observed that the essential part of religion was piety, a devout intercourse with the Divinity; and that many a man was a Quaker without knowing it.

James Boswell (1740-95), in the *Life of Johnson*, Friday 22 March 1776

Living Witness Gathering at Woodbrooke, 26-29 August 2022

All Change! Making paths on shifting ground

Living Witness (Quakers for Sustainability) is a project that began some twenty years ago, "to support the development of spirit-led approaches to sustainable living, among Quakers and in the wider society". It sought to do this in three ways:

- 1) education on the many dimensions of the sustainability challenge;*
- 2) encouraging and informing practical action for sustainability; and*
- 3) deepening Quaker faith and practice as it relates to sustainable living.*

Initially funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (2002-05), Living Witness built up a network of 24 groups in that time, which in 2005-06 grew to 45, including the first in Scotland. Registered as a charitable trust in 2007, in 2008 it merged with Quaker Green Action, which had been maintaining a witness to sustainability since 1986. Living Witness has a coordinator, Laurie Michaelis, based at Oxford Quaker Meeting House; it issues a quarterly newsletter, earthQuaker, and has produced briefings, training materials and (in 2011, in association with QPSW) the Sustainability Toolkit, "to inspire and support meetings to respond to the Yearly Meeting call to action."

Over the long weekend at the end of August, members of Living Witness gathered at Woodbrooke. A paper based on Laurie Michaelis's presentation is at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QwOd5OAFXtPe4GiPvgahxo64uoyrNnrC/view>, and the following is the Gathering's Closing Minute (drafted by Lis Burch) which is being circulated as an epistle throughout the Yearly Meeting.

WE ARE 63 QUAKERS GATHERED FROM ACROSS BRITAIN, with a sense of urgency and under concern.

Addressing all Friends, as far as we can reach, we will outline our experience, own our own response, and issue a call to action.

We have heard clearly, with hope and excitement as well as fear and grief, an acute sense that this is an extraordinary time – a time of enormous challenge which can change us profoundly in ways we need to change. It is the great, holy work of our time, it is our privilege to be part of it and we must prepare our spirit for what is coming.

The climate and ecological crisis changes everything.

We value the work which is being done by Yearly Meeting staff and Woodbrooke on climate justice and encourage Friends to participate. We also see clearly that there is a need for grassroots action/response to the climate and ecological crisis in addition to that currently embodied in YM and Woodbrooke structures.

Local and area meetings are aware of the urgency and much is happening, both within Quakerism and beyond. Meeting for Worship isn't just a place to feel comfortable, but a crucible in which we scrutinize our lives and see how they can be aligned more closely to our faith.

Arising from this gathering we know that there isn't one right thing to do, the important thing is to do our best, and not give up. We each commit to listen to each other, love and support each other, work and worship together. We will find ways to ground ourselves and heal ourselves, and build resilience and inclusion wherever we can.

We carry forward from this gathering many strands of work, both large and small. We recognise that injustice in the ownership and control of resources raises questions about our entire political and economic system. We commit to work with children and young people; we have a concern to address the current cost-of-living crisis, including offering our meeting houses as warm refuges; we make a commitment to support those taking direct action; we will respond to promptings to work more on food and biodiversity; and we are led to support local communities in becoming carbon neutral, alongside many other ideas and actions.

We believe Faith groups can take a lead which will help the nation listen, and Quakers must play our part in this. We would like to see an Interfaith commitment to climate justice leading up to the next general election so that incoming government is clearly focused on this issue.

The last time Quakerism renewed itself was the 1895 conference which became the basis of 20th century liberal Quakerism. Quakers had to reorientate their faith.

Today, we are a similar position. Rather than evolutionary science tearing up our sense of the past, we hear the prophetic voice of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that is tearing up our sense of the future and ending the notion of the inevitability of growth.

The science and the events it chronicles, together with our increasing awareness of the legacy of extractive colonialism, are once again calling on us to renew our faith. This is the context of our gathering. We open ourselves to this pregnant sense of the present. Quakers and Living Witness can be midwives of the spirit.

The universe is participatory, there are no bystanders. Our commitment to climate justice encourages us to see everything we do as something which is of god or against god. We are called to be whole with creation and act on the Truth which we find.

See also:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/climate-economic-justice/the-spiritual-basis-for-quaker-climate-action>

Taizé Singing at Crichton Collegiate Church

The next session will be on Sunday 2 October at 3.00 pm. New singers are welcome – please contact Rachel Frith if you are interested.

Meeting for Sufferings, 2 July 2022

A blended Meeting for Suffering took place on 2 July, and it was lovely to see everyone, both in person and online. The papers for the meeting are at:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/mfs-2022-07-agenda--papers-package>

and the minutes are at:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/mfs-2022-07-follow-up-package>

The morning's focus was on Faith in Action starting with Truth, integrity, and democracy in Britain. Concerns were raised on the slow erosion of democratic rights and norms that we have witnessed in the UK in recent years. Following the introduction of the Lobbying Act in 2014, which restricted campaigning ahead of general elections, Quakers in Britain convened the Civil Society Voice network. It has developed into a vital space for organisations to discuss and take joint action on a range of threats to civic space, for example the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act, and criticism of charities who are exploring racism, colonialism and white privilege. Democracy matters, and when it is weakened equality, peace and truth all suffer; signs of the divine order to which Quakers testify on the basis of our perception of the Light available to all to which we are called to attend.

While individual restrictions upon participation in the democratic process may seem insignificant, the cumulative effect may be catastrophic and have disproportionate impact on those who are already marginalised.

Quakers reject the idea that only powerful voices should be heard. Where we disagree, can we keep the argument going, listening to one another, and with mutual respect and love for as long as it takes to discern a way forward?

We have a tradition of speaking truth to power and exercising quiet diplomacy. Sometimes our role may be to minister in compassion to the oppressor as well as to the oppressed. This may be a moment when we can make significant contributions to the public realm in collaboration with other faith groups and secular organisations.

We heard expressions of frustration and helplessness, along with anger and fear, and also of hope from Friends. We also heard a call for assistance for local Friends to articulate and campaign on their concerns around this issue.

We then heard a presentation from David Loxton, Head of Communications & Fundraising, together with Elizabeth Payne, Communications Officer, and Cato Pedder, Media Officer. This was very interesting, and you can see the slides in the follow-up package with the minutes. Their framework for Speaking Out enables our work to reach a wider audience gave us a greater understanding of the communications strategy and its workings.

Emerging alternative forms for area meetings was next on the agenda. It was interesting to reflect on the work on emerging patterns for area meetings in London and Wales & the Marches. We were asked to answer the following questions:

- *Is Meeting for Sufferings content to see significant amalgamations of area meetings (and other bodies) take place?*
- *Are there implications that may need the attention of other Yearly Meeting level bodies, such as the Book of Discipline Revision Committee, Church Government Advisory Group, Meeting for Sufferings Review Group (regarding how larger bodies should be represented on Sufferings), or Quaker Life Central Committee (regarding the provision of appropriate support)?*

Lesley Richards, from Wales & the Marches, and Helen Drewery, from London, are happy to speak to any area meeting about the processes they are following. If you email sufferings@quaker.org.uk about this, your emails will be forwarded to them.

After the routine business of nominations we reflected on Yearly Meeting and the implications of its minutes for Sufferings. The theme of Yearly Meeting at Friends House in May was 'Faith, community and action'.

- *Faith: How do we experience worship, community, and witness?*
- *Community: How can we build Quaker communities that respond to challenges and put faith into action?*
- *Action: How can we transform thinking and action in Quaker communities and wider society?*

The Arrangements Group will be looking at ways to foster our learning about the important issues raised.

The report from BYM Trustees showed us quite how much work they do on our behalf, described by their clerk, Caroline Nurse, as 'nuts and bolts'. Of particular interest was the developing relationship with Woodbrooke.

After renewing the registration of eight Quaker Recognised Bodies we concluded with an update from Oliver Robertson on our response to the war in Ukraine. The link, if you wish to know more, is

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/peace/ukraine>.

Katrina McCrea

Emily Provance: Workshop on Membership

South East Scotland Area Meeting was privileged to have a visit on 4 July from Emily Provance, a Friend travelling in the Ministry from New York Yearly Meeting. Seventeen Friends from four different local meetings attended her very helpful workshop. Following on from our discussion at the May Area Meeting, we asked Emily to lead a discussion about membership.

It was enlightening to hear Emily speak about the role of membership in Quaker history. Initially, formal membership was not an issue; the emphasis was on that crucial internal spiritual moment of conviction. More formal membership records came into play as Quakers were persecuted and imprisoned, forcing them to look after one another. During the period of Quietism, when Quakers were looking increasingly internally, there was a minute in New York that Emily found when a woman was 'read out' for not wearing enough underwear! There are Quaker communities in the world today where set classes are required for membership.

Because Emily has travelled the world of Quaker communities so extensively, it was interesting to hear about how practices vary significantly, given historical and cultural differences. If we consider the worldwide community of Friends today, "there is no such thing as the Quaker way of doing things." We heard stories from around the world of meetings that vary in size from three to 300, where meetings have only silence or no silence, where some never speak of money and others dance to the front to put money in the bowl, where some place a strong emphasis on Christianity and others are non-theist, where some are liberal and some conservative, where some are inward-looking and some outward.

Where are we on this spectrum? Emily emphasised the value of communal discernment which lies at the heart of our Quaker communities everywhere. We can learn from each other. We also heard stories from around the world about how Quakers support each other, often in very difficult circumstances.

Emily prompted discussion with a series of questions that are relevant for us all, no matter how long we have been attending meeting. These are useful prompts to continue our discussion of what membership of meeting means to us:

1. *When was the moment when you realised that Quakers were for you? When did the penny drop?*
2. *When have I needed people in my meeting?*
3. *What do you do when you struggle with someone in meeting? (Emily stressed that there are moments when you need to set boundaries for the good of the community).*
4. *What should you know before you become a member?*
5. *What responsibilities do we have to our Quaker community?*
6. *What role does your Quaker community have in your major life decisions?*
7. *Do you have a sense of the meeting's responsibility to the people in it?*
8. *Do you feel connected with Friends around the world? (Zoom has opened up new opportunities for this.)*

Emily's workshop followed our Central Edinburgh local meeting for business where another question that prompted lively responses was: *what is the difference between members and attenders?* All of these questions are useful

in exploring what membership means to us and helping us get to know one another.

These discussions are especially helpful as we regroup in the shadow of the pandemic. Let's keep the flow going please! Thank you, Emily, for helping us on our way.

Marilyn Higgins
Co-clerk, Central Edinburgh LM

SHAPING WOODBROOKE'S FUTURE

The pandemic has changed Woodbrooke irrevocably. New challenges have brought long-standing issues of financial sustainability into sharp focus. Woodbrooke has responded to a changing world by expanding its online learning and providing online worship to thousands. Meanwhile the Woodbrooke Centre (our Birmingham site) has been host to new local groups and activities.

Over the last two years, Woodbrooke trustees have sought to discern – *what, in this changing world, is the best way for Woodbrooke to continue fulfilling its purpose to 'foster a vital Friends' ministry' now and in the future?* We are grateful to Friends and partner organisations for their thoughts and questions as part of that process, including at sessions we ran at Yearly Meeting 2021 and 2022. In June this year, Trustees decided it was best to consider the Learning & Research and the Woodbrooke Centre separately when resolving the questions around the long-term sustainability of each of the two entities. This will help us focus on ensuring Woodbrooke remains at the cutting edge of Quaker thinking and learning, whilst allowing clear discernment to take place on the best use of the Centre moving forward.

To help them shape Woodbrooke's future, trustees are delighted to have appointed Martin Ford as interim Co-CEO at Woodbrooke. Martin will focus on the Learning & Research side of Woodbrooke. The current Director, Sandra Berry, will develop the strategy for the Woodbrooke Centre. Martin has considerable experience as a consultant and non-executive director, largely within the health sector. He holds an MA in Management and Leadership. He is a trustee of The Retreat in York, where he has direct experience of the complexities of a period of considerable change. He was also part of the Vibrancy in Meetings steering group and is an advocate of local development workers and how Woodbrooke can work with them to deliver learning where most needed.

Separating Learning & Research from the Centre does not mean an end to in-person learning and neither does it signal the closure of the Woodbrooke Centre. Woodbrooke is offering a series of retreats at the Centre which you can currently book on our website. 'Woodbrooke Where You

Are' learning in person is available across Britain Yearly Meeting and beyond, and we will be offering learning at other venues in future. The Woodbrooke Centre has self-catering flats available to book and is hosting many groups, Quaker and non-Quaker. Sadly, we have less residential capacity than previously due to the closure of nearby overflow accommodation.

This all means a period of significant change for Woodbrooke. It will affect all aspects of our work in visible and in less obvious ways. We ask Friends to uphold everyone involved in Woodbrooke as we go through this transition. Change brings opportunities but it can also entail letting go. We know how important all aspects of Woodbrooke are to many people. As stewards of Woodbrooke, trustees and staff take their responsibility seriously. By going through this transition, we are working to give Woodbrooke the best chance to thrive in the years to come. Together, we want to fulfil the vision on which it was founded in 1903 with so much hope and trust.

Ingrid Greenhow, Clerk to Woodbrooke Trustees

Sandra Berry, Director of Woodbrooke

26 July 2022

Your questions

By considering the Learning & Research separately from the Woodbrooke Centre, does this mean that the site will be sold?

Woodbrooke Trustees are considering many options for the future of the site and any future decisions around the Woodbrooke Centre will be made with great care. We know how important all aspects of Woodbrooke are to many people, and that change brings opportunities but it can also entail letting go. As stewards of Woodbrooke, trustees and staff take their responsibility seriously, and together we want to fulfil the vision on which it was founded in 1903 with so much hope and trust.

Why can't Britain Yearly Meeting fund Woodbrooke? / I heard BYM is funding Woodbrooke?

Woodbrooke is an independent charity and does not currently get a core grant from Britain Yearly Meeting – yet it provides many services that are extremely important to Quakers across Britain. Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees, with the approval of Meeting for Sufferings, have recently decided it is right for BYM to help Woodbrooke Learning financially so we can continue to support and strengthen thriving Quaker Communities in partnership with the work of Quaker Life. We are thankful for the engagement and support of British Friends which makes the future of our learning possible. The nature of this grant and the ongoing working relationship between Woodbrooke Learning and BYM will take time to work out.

Will there still be residential courses? Will other residential events be able to take place?

We plan to offer residential learning for many years to come; we currently have a series of retreats at the Woodbrooke Centre, of which details are at: https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/our-courses/?_sft_product_cat=spirituality-retreats.

We have offered Woodbrooke residential learning at other venues prior to 2020, such as at Swarthmoor Hall, and looking at how we can create the special atmosphere of in-person Woodbrooke learning in other places.

Like many conference centres, Woodbrooke has not resumed offering B&B, and this is because it isn't cost-effective. Although day conferences have picked up well, residential events and meetings haven't, and so we have many nights when there are no residential guests. If we let people book for just a night, and they happened to be the only person who had booked for that night, we would still need the same staffing as for 15 or 20 people. The cost of one person staying for one night would be around £550.

Can my Meeting come to the Woodbrooke Centre?

We would be delighted to see Meetings and Quaker groups here at Woodbrooke, and we have already seen that happening this year.

Email Enquiries@woodbrooke.org.uk to find out more.

What will happen to the two libraries – will this be covered by the Memorandum of Understanding?

The library of Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre and The Library of the Society of Friends at Friends House are each part of the charitable work of Woodbrooke and BYM as two separate charities. Neither library exists as an institution in its own right. The two libraries have different aims; the purpose of the Woodbrooke library is to provide resources to support our learning and research programmes, and the primary aim of Friends House Library is to support the life of BYM and promote a wider understanding of Quaker faith and practice.

The two libraries have worked collaboratively for a number of years and will continue to do so, as well as working with other Quaker libraries in Ireland and the US. If and when it is needed any formal partnership will be part of a written agreement. The future of the Woodbrooke library and collections is linked to both the learning we offer and the future of the centre. We are working on the future needs of the learning and research programmes relating to the library, particularly with regard to material that is only held in Woodbrooke's collection, or that is closely linked to our work such as the Swarthmore Lectures.

How can Friends get answers to their questions about all of this and understand what's happening?

You are welcome to email Trustees@woodbrooke.org.uk to get in touch, with your thoughts, ideas and questions.

Book of Discipline Revision Committee Woodbrooke, July 2022

Your committee met in person for the first time in over two years, spending a long weekend at Woodbrooke in early July. It was a huge joy to be physically together after simply staring at faces on a screen. It also helped those committee members who had begun to feel very isolated and in some cases quite divorced from our work. Some people had been and still are working on discrete topics; others, like me, had finished their topic work some time ago and not started new work.

Circumstance and COVID prevented some of us from being present, including our co-clerk Rosie Carnall, who tested positive on the Friday. This meant Catherine Brewer had the huge task of clerking the whole weekend, ably assisted by Michael Phipps, assistant clerk, and Michael Booth, the committee secretary. We were delighted to be joined by Rosie during our opening worship, and also to get our first glimpse of Jess Hubbard-Bailey's new baby, Walter, a brother for Norma, our very own committee baby, born the day Jess heard she'd been appointed to the BDRC.

Those who had joined the committee since the start of lockdown were meeting in person for the first time, having known some people through working in topic groups but others only in breakout groups during online committee meetings. Our newest member, Stevie Kraye, only recently appointed by Meeting for Sufferings, had to cope with all of us at once!

The main focus of our weekend was to look at what we've done so far and discern the way forward, a task much easier than it would have been if we had been working remotely: not only did we have business sessions together, but also opportunities for between-meeting conversations and exchanges of ideas. It was a pleasure to get to know the newer members of the committee and, being away from home, we were able fully to concentrate on the business in hand. I personally felt very much more connected to all those present than I often am when joining the committee *via* Zoom.

We were joined during the weekend by David Loxton, head of communications at Friends House, and Linda Craig, who has been appointed our project manager. At Friends House, David's brief is to "make sure Quakers are seen, heard, and understood"; his task here was to get us to look at what we are trying to communicate in writing the Book, whom we are writing it for, how to deal with an age in which there has been a massive and accelerating change in the ways we communicate and the language we use, and what might be getting in the way of effective communication.

Rachel Muers pointed out that for Friends in the 17th century the Bible was the common language for everyone and everything: nowadays we live in a world which has no shared cultural language. This is a major challenge: we can but do our best.

I have to confess to being surprised that a project manager had been appointed to the committee, being unsure quite what one was and what she would do. Having experienced Linda in action, I'm profoundly grateful for her appointment, and deeply appreciative of her work. She began by telling us that we have already come a very long way, which was good to hear given the challenges and isolation of the last couple of years. She invited us to consider the whole arc of our work and produce a timeline: working backwards from the end point of asking Yearly Meeting to approve the Book better enables us to see what steps we need to take next. It was both exhilarating and terrifying to think that our work will have an end product and a finishing date, something it's been easy to lose sight of.

Much of the weekend's work was to do with what has already been written – which texts are 'good enough' for now and can be stored for later use, and which need further attention. We are working towards sharing some of our draft text with a wider audience, initially with Meeting for Sufferings. We thought about what wider sharing might look like, and the sort of questions we'd like people to ask themselves as they read.

The language and glossary group are continuing to work towards ensuring a unity of language and tone in all that we write, and to producing a style guide for us to follow when working on new topics. The tagging group gave us an insight into the incredible amount of work that has gone in to creating a 'submissions library' that we can all access.

There has been an ongoing concern for pastoral care within the committee: at present we have committee Elders, but no-one appointed specifically for pastoral care. A questionnaire from the clerks didn't produce a clear preference. Many thought that our Elders had enough to do already but were not clear that a pastoral care team needs to be appointed. Three committee members including myself volunteered to be Named Pastoral Care Contacts for one year, after which the situation will be reviewed.

Our next meeting will be in October, when Linda Craig will guide us in working out the practical steps we need to take next. Friends House guidelines state that committees should only meet in person once a year: we feel very strongly that we need to meet in person to do this challenging work, and hope that this will be permitted.

The weekend's timetable was packed, and the work exhausting but exhilarating. I'm very glad that we weren't given new tasks to undertake over the summer – my energy levels are still not what they used to be. I'm still 'in charge' of responding to invitations to the BDRC to talk to Meetings and groups, and find it most interesting that we've received no new invitations since Yearly Meeting.

Our key messages from the weekend:

1. *We continue to progress the drafting of fresh texts on our agreed set of topics, and are planning for sharing some draft text more widely.*

2. *We have done some work on planning which has led us to identify a timeline for our work. We want to do some more work on details to build confidence that our suggested timeline is feasible before sharing it more widely.*
3. *In collaboration with the BYM publications team, we are exploring the possibilities that can be brought by accessible formats for the new book in addition to traditional formats.*
4. *We welcome new invitations from Friends across Britain to visit their meetings in order to share progress and listen to suggestions.*

Please continue to uphold us as we work on your behalf.

Mary Woodward

WAR IN UKRAINE

THE DESTRUCTION OF A FATHER

The following article by Valery Panyushkin, a Russian journalist, has been shared on Facebook by Patricia Cockrell, formerly of Friends House, Moscow. It was translated into English by Mary Raber, an American living in Odessa.

MY FATHER IS IN FAVOR OF THE WAR. Among the barrage of social ills that my country has dumped on Ukraine and the whole world, including its own population, there is also my own personal trouble: my father, my papa, a feeble old man of 82, is in favor of the war.

He's a good man and I love him. He taught me to ride a bicycle, to paddle a kayak, to use a saw, a chisel, and a plane. He's an amazing craftsman; all his life he's made models for theaters and exhibition halls. He's a favorite with my children because he plays with them and fixes their broken toys. All his life he tenderly loved my mother and gently cared for her for two years while she was dying of brain cancer.

And now he supports the war and we scarcely speak to each other. I only ask if he's taken his medicine on time.

When Mama died ten years ago, father grieved so that he shut himself up in his room and only came out to eat a little something and take care of his needs. He came out rarely, no more than twice a day. He spent most of the time in his room alone with the television.

I worked as a journalist for the TV channel *Dozhd'*, which is closed now, the radio station "Moscow echo", which is closed now, and wrote for *Novaya gazeta* [a newspaper], which doesn't appear anymore. I said to my father that it isn't worthwhile stuffing his brain with all that spiteful rubbish they carry on the official TV channels. But Papa answered that he almost doesn't watch any news or political talk-shows, but mostly football or programs about animals.

I think that wasn't true. Papa didn't sleep well and the TV in his room was almost never turned off. I suppose that in addition to the football results

and details about the lives of whales and penguins, day and night the TV also asserted things to my dad about the evil Nazis who had come to power in Ukraine, about insatiable NATO surrounding Russia ever more tightly with its military bases, about transnational companies that bought up all the Russian oil, about the dollar that will not permit the ruble to become a world currency, about traitor-journalists (I was one of them) who slander President Putin and his policy of returning Russia to great-power status—and all of that.

A few months after Mom's death, when the pain of loss had dulled somewhat, my father began to come out of his room, visit us and have us visit him, play with the grandchildren and talk to me. Mostly we talked about everyday things, but a certain propagandistic stamp was evident in his speech: "pressure of the West," "NATO aggression," "values that are foreign to Russia," "fifth column."

"Papa, I'm the fifth column!"

"Oh, yeah? What kind of fifth column are you? You're only a fool," my father parried, disregarding the fact that his son is a well-known journalist and writer, the object of his father's pride, and laughing as though to turn the burgeoning argument into a joke.

It seemed to me that by pronouncing these propagandist terms, my father was somehow testing me—would I be willing to dilute my oppositional views with a little sensible conformism? I wouldn't, and so my father fell back into the familiar position of the good old granddad who had nothing to do with any political views and is occupied exclusively with the repair of the tiny broken car that belongs to his youngest grandson.

That's the way we lived until 24 February 2022. And then the war began.

For the first week we didn't talk about the war at all, as if hoping that it would simply end, like a bad dream. Then I started writing a book about refugees, and when I got back from my journeys among them, I came to my father and told him about it. But very carefully, only human-interest stories, no political views. About people who had lost their house, about an old woman who fled from Mariupol in a refrigeration car, about a boy whose brother had been killed. My father listened, sympathized with my cast of characters, but insistently responded with propagandistic arguments: "Yes, but haven't the Ukrainians been waging war in Donbas for eight years?" "Yes, but hasn't NATO surrounded Russia with military bases?" "Yes, but hasn't the West imposed things on us that are foreign to Russian values?" That is how he talked, and I continued to tell my stories. I hoped to touch him with human stories of misfortune, gradually to disperse the murk of propaganda he was living in.

Then came Bucha. I met with an escapee from that town where more than 400 peaceful residents were killed during the Russian occupation, and I recorded her story. But all it took was for me to begin to relate this woman's

story to my father before he jumped up and started yelling. He had never screamed at me that way before, not once in 52 years:

“How dare you! How can your conscience allow you to say such things! How could you even think that a Russian soldier is capable of killing children and women!”

He yelled, and I was afraid that his heart would burst and he would fall down on the spot and die. And I realized that he understands the whole thing. A person who doesn't understand, who is troubled by lies, is inclined, especially in conversation with those closest to him, to ask questions, to inquire, to doubt, to produce counterarguments. But my father screamed from the very border of despair. That's how people behave when they understand the awful reality, but cannot accept it, because to accept it would be worse than death.

The reality is that we are the aggressors. But if we are the aggressors, what is an 82-year-old man going to do who was brought up, and indeed brought up his own children, on the exploits of the heroes of World War II, who went to their death to stop the aggressor? What does it mean to “go to one's death to stop the aggressor,” if we are the aggressors? It means to commit suicide.

My father screamed, shaking and throwing things around, because he understood everything but he could not accept reality, because accepting reality demanded either his immediate death, or the complete destruction of his personhood, all his values, all his moral set-up.

I sat in silence. I thought, “O Lord, he understands everything.” Then I got up, put on my coat, and left, leaving the old man alone. Since then, we only phone back and forth and speak only about whether he took his medicine on time.

Since then, I've stopped thinking that the Russians who support the war have been stupefied by propaganda. They've been stupefied, of course, but that's not the point. Most of them understand everything. But the thing is that up to now, no one in Russia has thought of a single rational action that could be performed following the acknowledgement of the reality that we are the aggressors.

There is no single action except suicide. The only thing holding me back from suicide is the business that I began in despair and that I must complete—writing a book about the refugees, telling *urbi et orbi* that there, where the arrows are drawn on the military maps, there, where the bombs are falling, there are people.

*An interesting discussion on the war and its implications, with **Philip Austin** (NFPB), **Marigold Bentley** (ex-QPSW) and **Diana Francis** (whose 2015 Swarthmore Lecture was on Faith, Power and Peace), is summarised here:*

<https://rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/2022/07/21/reflections-on-advocating-for-peace-and-security-in-ukraine/>

Meeting of States Parties to the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, Vienna, 21-23 June 2022

The first meeting of governments which have signed the TPNW had, as its two main outcomes, a **declaration** and a 50-point **action plan**; these are summarised below in the wording of the briefing paper produced by ICAN [*International Campaign for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons*]. This can be downloaded from its website in English, French and Arabic – see:

https://www.icanw.org/vienna_declaration_action_plan_overview.

The Vienna Declaration

- States parties expressed their alarm and dismay at threats to use nuclear weapons, and condemned unequivocally *“any and all nuclear threats, whether they be explicit or implicit and irrespective of the circumstances.”*
- Affirming that the TPNW is needed more than ever in these circumstances, the states parties resolved to *“move forward with its implementation, with the aim of further stigmatizing and de-legitimizing nuclear weapons and steadily building a robust global preemptory norm against them.”*
- The Declaration reiterated the humanitarian basis of the treaty and the moral, ethical and security imperatives which inspired and motivated its creation and which now drive and guide its implementation.
- States parties resolved to move ahead with implementing all aspects of the treaty, including the positive obligations aimed at redressing the harm caused by nuclear weapons use and testing.
- They also reaffirmed the complementarity of the treaty with the international disarmament and nonproliferation regime, including the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), and undertook to continue to support the NPT and all measures that can effectively contribute to nuclear disarmament.
- The Declaration concluded that *“In the face of the catastrophic risks posed by nuclear weapons and in the interest of the very survival of humanity ... We will not rest until the last state has joined the Treaty, the last warhead has been dismantled and destroyed and nuclear weapons have been totally eliminated from the Earth.”*

Getting more countries to join the TPNW

Universalisation, (Article 12), Actions 1-14

- States commit to making universalisation a priority, including by:
 - Conducting diplomatic outreach visits with other countries that have not joined yet (Action 3);
 - Appointing a government representative (contact point) responsible for this work in 60 days (Action 6);

- Highlighting the importance of the TPNW in statements at the UN and getting more countries to join UN General Assembly resolutions supporting the Treaty (Actions 8 & 9)
- Coordinating with all relevant partners including ICAN (Action 13)

Eliminating nuclear weapons

Towards the elimination of nuclear weapons (Article 4), Actions 15-18

- States agreed to set a deadline of 10 years for the elimination of nuclear weapons when nuclear-armed states join the TPNW and 90 days for the removal of weapons from host states when they join the Treaty.
- States agreed to pursue further discussion on designating the body that will be responsible for verifying nuclear disarmament (Action 15)

Helping people and places harmed by nuclear weapons

Victim assistance, environmental remediation and international cooperation and assistance, (Articles 6 and 7), Actions 19-32

- All states agreed to steps to create a framework for implementation, including:
 - Closely consult with affected communities at all stages and engage with civil society and the UN system (Actions 19 & 24)
 - Establish a government representative (focal point) responsible for this work within 3 months and adopt any national laws to implement it (Actions 21 & 22)
 - Ensuring the principles of accessibility, inclusivity, non-discrimination throughout; as well as transparency and to consider a reporting format (Actions 25 & 28)
 - Examining how to establish an international trust fund to fund this work (Action 29)
- States that consider themselves affected by nuclear weapons use and testing agreed to:
 - Start reviewing the impacts of nuclear weapons use in their country by the second meeting (Action 30)
 - Develop a national plan to begin helping those impacted by nuclear weapons use and testing and to remediate the environment by the second meeting (Action 31)
- Other states also agreed to provide support, including financial and technical to states that consider themselves affected (Action 32)

Inclusion of civil society and particularly affected communities

Principles of inclusivity and cooperation among stakeholders in the implementation of the Treaty, Actions 39-42

- In addition to the references to inclusion throughout the outcome documents, there is a specific section of actions to ensure that this work is inclusive and transparent, including the following actions:
 - Cooperate closely with the United Nations, the International Com-

mittee of the Red Cross, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, academia, affected communities and other civil society organisations (Action 40)

- Facilitate the active participation of relevant stakeholders, and take into account the different needs of people in affected communities and indigenous people and ensure strong ownership by all States Parties (Action 41)

Progressive approach to gender and disarmament

Implementing the Gender Provisions of the TPNW, Actions 47-50

- The Vienna Action Plan commits states to turn their commitment to gender equity to action, including by:
 - Appointing a Gender Focal Point to coordinate the implementation of gender provisions (Action 48)
 - Developing guidelines to ensure age- and gender-sensitive assistance for those harmed by nuclear weapons use and testing and integrate gender perspectives into international cooperation and assistance (Actions 49 & 50)

Sustaining the work

Decision on the establishment of an intersessional structure for the implementation of the Treaty and Additional Aspects of Support for Treaty Implementation, Actions 43-45

- States agreed to establish informal working groups to advance these actions and a committee to coordinate them, including civil society and to meet at least once every quarter.
- Informal working groups include:
 - One on universalization, co-chaired by South Africa and Malaysia;
 - One on victim assistance, environmental remediation; international cooperation and assistance, co-chaired by Kazakhstan and Kiribati;
 - And one on the implementation of Article 4, in particular work related to the future designation of a competent international authority (or authorities), co-chaired by Mexico and New Zealand.

Working with scientists and other UN treaties

Decision for the institutionalization of scientific and technical advice for the effective implementation of the Treaty (establishment of a scientific advisory group) and Institutionalizing scientific and technical advice for the effective implementation of the TPNW, Actions 33-34

- States decided to create a Scientific Advisory Group which will:
 - Advise states parties and report regularly on the status and developments regarding nuclear weapons, nuclear weapon risks, the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, nuclear disarmament, and related issues.

- Comprise of up to 15 members and take into account the need for a comprehensive spread of relevant fields of scientific and technological expertise, gender balance, and equitable geographical distribution

The relationship of the TPNW with the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, Actions 35-38

- States agreed the TPNW builds upon, contributes to and complements a rich and diverse disarmament and non-proliferation architecture, and agreed on some steps to highlight this including:
 - Appointing an informal coordinator to articulate areas for cooperation between the TPNW and Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) (Action 36)
 - Cooperating with other international bodies, such as the IAEA [*International Atomic Energy Agency*] and the CTBTO [*Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization*], in order to enhance cooperation (Action 37).

The first session of the Meeting of States Parties (MSP) can be watched at:

[https://media.un.org/en/asset/k19/k19ddgix64#:~:text=Treaty%20on%20the%20Prohibition%20of%20Nuclear%20Weapons%20%E2%80%93%20Meeting%20of%20States,June%202022%20in%20Vienna%2C%20Austria.&text=The%20Treaty%](https://media.un.org/en/asset/k19/k19ddgix64#:~:text=Treaty%20on%20the%20Prohibition%20of%20Nuclear%20Weapons%20%E2%80%93%20Meeting%20of%20States,June%202022%20in%20Vienna%2C%20Austria.&text=The%20Treaty%20)

(Note that Alexander Kmentt opens proceedings about half an hour into the video recording (at 32:17 of 03:43:36).)

Bimal Khadka, who attended the MSP representing International Physicians for the Prevention of the Nuclear War (IPPNW) reports on it at:

<https://www.medact.org/2022/blogs/blueprint-for-nuclear-disarmament/>

There is an interesting article about the declaration and the action plan by Ruth Rohde in the online *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, at:

<https://thebulletin.org/2022/07/whats-next-for-the-nuclear-ban-treaty>

Reiner Braun, Executive Director of the International Peace Bureau, writes about the MSP and looks forward to the UN conference reviewing the Non-Proliferation Treaty, at

<https://www.ipb.org/what-we-do/after-the-states-conference-on-the-tpnw-and-before-the-npt-conference-from-vienna-to-new-york/>

IN ANTICIPATION of the long-delayed NPT Review Conference, held in New York, 1-26 August 2022, the statement opposite was issued, signed by 104 faith organisations including Quakers in Britain; the full list of signatories is at:

<https://cdn2.assets-servd.host/un-sgi/production/assets/downloads/Interfaith-Statement-to-the-2022-NPT-RevCon-rev.pdf>

Official information about the conference is on the UN website, here:

<https://www.un.org/en/conferences/npt2020>.

Joint Interfaith Statement
to the Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the
Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)
August 2022

AS PEOPLE OF FAITH committed to building a peaceful and just world, we come together to unite our voices on this occasion of the Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which coincides with the solemn anniversaries of the days atomic bombs were dropped on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. We are honored that survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki continue to guide our activism. Today, as we find ourselves faced with deep concerns about a potential escalation of nuclear war, we renew our determination to carry on their legacy and do our part as faith communities to keep working toward a future without nuclear weapons.

The NPT is a landmark international treaty on nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament, and its wide adherence is a testament to the Treaty's significance. We believe the NPT's objectives are more relevant in today's security environment than ever.

However, as the 2020 joint civil society statement to the States Parties of the NPT indicates, the Treaty is only as strong as its implementation. The escalating tensions and uncertain global security environment are the very reasons we need decisive and timely action for nuclear disarmament, not increased investment in and modernization of such catastrophic weapons. It is urgent that we take such concrete action toward full implementation now, because our survival depends on it.

As people of faith, we are here to remind you, delegates of the NPT Review Conference, of our shared humanity. Despite national interests and objectives that seemingly contradict each other at times, we share the fundamental goal of preserving our planet, our countries, communities and families, without which we cannot pursue our prosperity, well-being or happiness. We know that nuclear weapons, whether used by design or accident, will destroy the world as we know it and cause tremendous suffering of many people, as testified by the *hibakusha* and those from affected communities. Nuclear weapons are incompatible with our fundamental values of respect for human dignity; their continued role in so-called national security should not be tolerated.

All of us, as leaders, delegates, civil society, and faith communities, share the moral and ethical responsibility of realizing a world without nuclear weapons, knowing that the possibility lies in our hands. It is up to each of us to enact this mission, and history will surely show that we took the right course. We say this, as we are encouraged by the commitment and leadership demonstrated by the States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear

Weapons (TPNW), as seen in their bold commitments produced at the first Meeting of States Parties.

As we embark on the negotiations at the Review Conference, based on the shared recognition that the horrors of nuclear weapons must never be visited upon any country, or any persons, we urge each delegation to the NPT to consider the following:

1. Heed the voices of *hibakusha* and those of affected communities, and recognize nuclear weapons for what they are — weapons of mass destruction capable of killing millions of people with long-lasting, devastating humanitarian consequences;
2. Affirm that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought, and commit to concrete actions to prevent any possibility of escalation toward a nuclear war;
3. Fulfill commitments and obligations for nuclear disarmament under Article VI of the NPT, and also support other international instruments that complement such obligations, including the TPNW and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Our diverse faith traditions remind us that we are not prisoners of our current reality. Each of us are creative, resilient, and capable of creating a world we desire. We trust that you will act in accordance with your moral conscience, and we pray for a fruitful Review Conference, one which future generations will take inspiration from.

ON HIROSHIMA DAY (6 August), nuclear disarmament action groups Gareloch Horticulturalists Affinity Group and Trident Ploughshares built a huge cairn of 140,000 origami cranes outside Queen Elizabeth House in Edinburgh, headquarters of the UK Government in Scotland. There is a video on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Up64ib-fh8Q>.

AT AREA MEETING IN JUNE, it was agreed to support South Edinburgh's new **MEETING FOR WORSHIP TO WITNESS FOR PEACE** near the fountain at the west end of Princes Street Gardens, in support of worship taking place simultaneously outside the Faslane naval base. The next will take place at 10.30 am on 25 September; the following one on 13 November (Remembrance Sunday). Those able to attend are invited to do so.

SCOTTISH FAITH COMMUNITIES have sent a letter to COP26 President Alok Sharma calling on him to demonstrate what the Presidency has been doing to honour the Glasgow Pact commitments. The Glasgow Pact includes commitments from 197 nations to build resilience to climate change, curb greenhouse gas emissions and provide finance for both. The letter's signatories include Elizabeth Allen, GM Clerk, and also David Somervell and Jonathan Baxter. The text can be read at <https://interfaithglasgow.org/cop27-open-letter/>

The Mistake, by Michael Mears

Scheduled for the Fringe in 2020, The Mistake, at last appeared this year, performed by Emiko Ishii and our Friend Michael Mears himself, who also gave a talk about it at Edinburgh QMH on 24 August. It is hoped it will be touring in 2023. (Ed.)

Michael Mears has a history of bringing uncomfortably challenging theatre to the Fringe. In 2016 he brought *This Evil Thing*, a horrifying account of the treatment of conscientious objectors in the First World War, some of whom were still in prison many months after the war's end. His passionately anti-war play has since been very well received in the UK, the USA and who knows where else.

This year Michael's play couldn't be more timely. Using the actual words of some of the scientists, politicians and military personnel who were involved in the creation and use of the bomb, and contrasting these with verbatim testimonies from survivors in Hiroshima, the audience sees the chain of events that led to the bomb's development and is forced to confront the appalling consequences of its deployment.

Of course, one knew it was horrible – but hearing someone describe how survivors' skin peeled and hung off them, and that their own hair fell off and their face developed purple spots; to hear of the frantic search for family members and the impossibility of helping the innumerable suffering survivors of the blast passed on the way; to confront the fact that so many of the dead were innocent children; all this vividly brings home the suffering inflicted on Hiroshima.

Leo Szilard, the Jewish Hungarian scientist who first had the idea of splitting atoms to release previously undreamed-of amounts of energy recounts the steps by which his idea was turned into hideous reality. On the way, we see his own journey from proud inventor of a new source of power which he hopes could be used in a weapon to defeat Hitler in Europe to the horrified realisation that this weapon could be the catalyst for an uncontrollable nuclear arms race that could lead to the annihilation of the whole world.

Mears is brilliant in his lightning-swift changes of costume, accent and persona as he portrays the many men encountered in Szilard's narrative. Perhaps the most chilling is Colonel, later General, Paul Tibbets, the pilot of the US B-29 that dropped the bomb, who seems to refuse to accept any responsibility for the horrors unleashed by it. According to him, he was merely there to do the job of flying the plane (named *Enola Gay* after his mother) and getting his crew safely out of harm's way once the bomb had been sent on its way.

Emiko Ishii joins Michael Mears on stage to tell the story from the Japanese point of view. The morning of 6 August 1945 was beautiful and bright: an earlier air raid warning triggered by the flight over the city of three US

weather planes had been cancelled by the 'all clear' and adults and children alike were going about their daily business, completely unprepared for what was about to happen. Nomura Shigeko left her grandmother's home to go to the factory where she and many others make earplugs for their soldiers; her mother is going to visit her father, who is in hospital; and she has just received a brief but most welcome letter from her fiancé. What a survivor's diary said was described as "a reconnaissance plane" flew over, and suddenly the world exploded.

Both sides of the story are book-ended with the present-day questioning of General Tibbets by a young Japanese woman, as she attempts to get him to admit his guilt or at least show some remorse. She becomes increasingly emotional: he remains unmoved.

The military version of things: "*There's no morality in warfare*" (i.e. nothing is 'right' or wrong'); "*my conscience is completely clear*"; "*I flew the plane, I didn't drop the bomb*"; "*if it had been a cloudy day over Hiroshima, the bomb would have been dropped on one of the other three potential targets*"; "*four Japanese cities [the potential targets] were left untouched so that scientists could study the after-effects of the bomb in isolation*"; "*the children shouldn't have been there – they should have been in shelters*"; "*yes, many people died, or suffered: but the lives of many people, both American and Japanese, were saved*"; "*the Japanese should have surrendered sooner*" ...

The human viewpoint finds it impossible to accept that the use of nuclear weapons is ever justified. Nomura Shigeko initially hates the Americans for the suffering they have inflicted on the people of Hiroshima, but comes to realise that the real enemy is not the Americans, but war itself. She manages to accept her mother's message "Don't waste your precious life hating the enemy".

The final journal entry of one woman who survived the blast but later died of its effects was "I wanted you to know and feel my experiences: I am sorry if you feel distress".

The inscription in Japanese on the Memorial Cenotaph in Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park is open to a number of possible interpretations, one of which is reflected in the title of this show:

Rest in peace, for we shall not repeat the mistake

I only hope and pray that this is true.

Mary Woodward

(This review first appeared at <https://scotsgayarts.com/blog/>)

A "collage of extracts and images" from the play is at:

https://youtu.be/OUROZ6WUU_g;

and see also

<https://michaelmears.org/the-mistake-a-new-play-about-the-day-the-world-changed-forever/>

At the Festival

*Among several re-inventions of classic works at the 2022 Edinburgh Festival, Euripides' Medea was put on by the National Theatre of Scotland in Liz Lochhead's Scots version (first brought to the Fringe by Theatre Babel in 2000); and a production by Scottish Ballet based on Coppélia, incorporating dance, theatre and film, and in which Delibes's score was "referenced and re-imagined as part of a new composition by Mikael Karlsson and Michael P Atkinson", had its World Première. They are considered here by **Mary Woodward**; her reviews are reprinted with grateful acknowledgment to <https://scotsgayarts.com/blog/>, where they first appeared.*

It is still possible to see Coppélia, which is now touring – dates and venues are at: <https://www.scottishballet.co.uk/event/coppelia>

There appear to be no plans for Medea to tour, but there is more information about the production with photographs and video clips at <https://www.nationaltheatrescotland.com/events/medea>.

National Theatre of Scotland: Medea by Liz Lochhead after Euripides

Stunning. Searing. Spectacular.

Liz Lochhead's translation of Euripides' Medea left me speechless, groping for superlatives – or indeed any words to describe the experience I'd just been through.

Raised up on a catwalk, surrounded by a throng of people, the tragedy is played out and we are powerless to intervene or avert the catastrophe Medea, for love of Jason, left her home and family, used her magic to enable him and the crew of the Argo to pass through untold perils and win the Golden Fleece. Now, living in Corinth, she sees Jason turn from her and their three children and prepare to wed Glauke, daughter of King Kreon.

The king banishes Medea and her children, at her plea granting her a day in which to prepare for her departure. Jason and Glauke both visit her and urge her to leave the children with them: she pretends to agree. Her hatred of Jason leads her to poison Glauke and then kill the children so that finally Jason will feel pain, and her pain will be lessened by seeing his suffering.

The essence of tragedy is to see events unfolding and be unable to prevent them. We are to some degree prepared by the opening lament of Medea's nurse: would that the Argo had never been built, the voyage never undertaken, Medea never met Jason – but that's impossible, and we have to witness raw, uncensored emotions as the tragedy unfolds.

Liz Lochhead's translation makes the drama immediate, vivid, gripping, and frighteningly relevant to today's world - 'mansplaining', dismissing 'hysterical females', refusing to admit that women also have brains or allow them any power or control over their own destinies – or even their own children – are all on display in this ancient tragedy.

It's a very clever piece of work, very funny at times while also making you

want to weep with compassion, fury and frustration. It exposes the cruelty of people towards anyone they see as 'other', and underlines the otherness on stage by casting a Black woman with an English accent as Medea herself while the 'civilised' Greeks are all white-skinned, most probably blue-eyed, and all speak good honest Scots. It's a darkly tragic piece too, unsparing of the details of the horrors which, mercifully, we don't see on stage.

The cast are outstanding. Adura Onashile's Medea is unforgettable, howling out her grief, driven to unthinkable acts, and yet in an instant able to transform to smiling compliance with the Greeks' demands. Robert Jack's Jason is ridiculously skilled at making out that nothing is his fault and that all his actions are for the very best motives and driven by concern for others. Stephen McCole's Kreon is quietly powerful and determined that what he wants will happen. Alana Jackson is so young, so shiny, so blonde, so self-centred, so catty... Anne Lacey is a quiet, self-contained witness to all the horror and Adam Robertson holds us in the palm of his hand as he recounts the horrors he witnesses at the wedding of Jason and Glauke. The chorus of women were highly effective and superb in their precision and unity as they commented on and were part of the action.

The three children did extremely well.

The set was simple, the lighting effective, and James Jones' subtle percussion score with whispers of sound, rustlings, shiverings, and the selective use of a large portentous-sounding gong illuminated and supported the action without ever becoming intrusive.

It's a long time since I've seen a good production of the Greek tragedies: I remember some brilliant ones at the Nottingham Playhouse in the seventies, but the plays seem to have fallen out of fashion – strange, since they deal with timeless, universal dilemmas and basic raw emotions. And as the Greeks knew, becoming involved in the tragedy is cathartic: one feels washed clean and relieved of the pain and torment that one suffered during the performance.

Simply sensational.

Scottish Ballet: *Coppélia*

Well, my daughter saw this on Sunday and thought it was brilliant; 70 % of the audience was on its feet at the end; I have to confess to thinking more than once "this is going on TOO LONG" ...

Coppélia was a superb piece of technical collaboration between any number of disciplines. The orchestra, under Jean-Claude Picard, deserved the hearty applause it got for fitting so well with the pre-recorded stuff that was going on. There was a lot of technically brilliant dancing (which I'm too ignorant fully to appreciate). But at the end of it all I was disappointed, largely because I couldn't find anyone with whom to empathise, or about whose fate I really cared – my emotions weren't involved in the drama.

Delibes's *Coppélia* is a comedy. Swanhilda's fiancé Franz is besotted with a mechanical life-sized automaton, the creation of Dr Coppélius; the girl dons its costume and pretends to be the doll; great unmasking and everyone falls about laughing (things were so much simpler in those days, no?)

In this version "Scottish Ballet is taking *Coppélia*'s spirit into the 21st Century". Franz and Swanhilda have come to inspect NuLife, the brainchild of Dr Coppélius (who looks uncannily like Steve Jobs). White-clad, important-looking people rush around a stark white box doing important-looking and inscrutable things while Dr Coppélius moves through the complexity like a shark through a cloud of minnows, the centre around which everything revolves, without which the entire enterprise would collapse.

Swanhilda has come to interview him. He mouths a lot of grand-sounding platitudes and oracular nothings. She and Franz are shown around the site, and see laboratories containing many separate body parts. There is a demonstration of "a revolutionary piece of Artificial Intelligence" (a robot – Coppélia) which does not go well. For some reason the couple are invited to sleep in a cabin bedroom, which creepily has a camera watching their every move. Franz goes to sleep but Swanhilda, disturbed by the fact that a blanket has covered them without any visible means of propulsion, gets up and goes to investigate her surroundings. She finds a control box and some more robots and has fun animating them, then goes back to bed.

In the morning Dr Coppélius is full of beans, jogging, drinking his coffee and generally being the Great I Am. Swanhilda interviews him again. There is a wild party, from which Swanhilda steals away. She finds, activates and interacts with the giant screen on which Coppélia was first displayed/chosen: she is sucked into the screen and becomes her. She encounters many other robots all dressed identically; Dr Coppélius at some point slips a Mickey Finn to Franz who collapses and is dumped somewhere while the doctor encounters 'Coppélia'. He is convinced that his experiment has worked, but Swanhilda reveals that he's been interacting with her and his work is a failure. She leaves him trapped in virtual reality, and goes off with Franz.

The story seemed to take a very long time to play out. Even having read the programme beforehand, I was struggling to work out what was going on; re-reading it, I find I missed many of the subtleties in the action. Some of the clues were in the two interviews. Both were recorded, and I found it hard to concentrate on what was being said while at the same time watching the action both on stage and on screen. I also found it hard to work out the principal characters' emotions – they were so contained and precise all the time, never letting their real feelings out (did they have any?) I kept wanting the robots to turn on Dr Coppélius, or Swanhilda either to snap in her interviews with him, where he was getting way too personal, or to slap Franz's face (he was far too interested in Coppélia the robot).

Technically, all was brilliant. The music fitted the choreography, and we got occasional snatches of the original music. The choreography was extremely clever and the dancers as incredible as the Scottish Ballet company always are, with outstanding performances from Constance Devernay as Swanhilda (barefoot) and Coppélia (en pointe) and the guy who danced Dr Coppélius – unfortunately the programme credits the extensive production team but none of the dancers... The whole company are superb dancers, creating so many characters dancing in a variety of combinations and styles and brilliantly mimicking artificial movements. I particularly liked the four-dancer robot combo with added limbs that resembled a giant insect folding and unfolding itself – not something I'd like to encounter at close quarters!

The camera work – and the choreography for the cameraman – was both impressive and very helpful, as we could see close-ups and detail especially when the characters were inside the small three-walled room/cabin/office, or offstage. Scottish Ballet have learned a lot from their ventures into recorded works during lockdown: but it's getting to be a bit of a cliché – what is real, what is filmed, what is recorded, and what do you attend to???? I guess it's trying to push the message “in today's world, how do we know what is real and what is artificial?”

Coppélia is very clever idea that for me took too long to play out. This didn't put off the rest of the audience who surged to their feet and roared their applause at the final curtain.

Mary Woodward

A Recommendation

New Light: 12 Quaker Voices

*edited by Jennifer Kavanagh, published by Christian Alternatives
(2008)*

I have just finished reading this book which has its origin in seven booklets produced by Quaker Quest. They accompanied what was (maybe still is) a series of open meetings for people interested in a spiritual path which is simple, radical and contemporary. The writers hope that the book will be a help to those seeking meaning and purpose in their lives. Don Cupitt commended it, and so do I.

You can borrow it from the AM library at 7 Victoria Terrace.

Rachel Frith

Community in Earthly Treasury

(The following was written by **Alastair McIntosh** for West Scotland Quaker News, and appears here by courtesy of the Editor, Margaret Roy.)

In his magnificent book, *The World Turned Upside Down* first published in 1972 and now in Penguin, Christopher Hill describes the 17th century English Revolution through the eyes of the Levellers, Diggers, Ranters and early Quakers. It's a complex story as England began the revolutionary transition from monarchy to partial democracy. It might speak today to those whose spiritual life leads them into social awareness, or *vice versa*.

The Levellers, Diggers, Ranters and early Quakers found in early translations of the Bible a liberation theology – a theology that liberates theology – filled with what a theologian has called “texts that linger, words that explode”. For all its antiquated but poetic language, it therefore rather delights me to see a copy of the Geneva Bible sometimes knocking around on the benches of our Glasgow Quaker Meeting House.

Liberation theology expresses God's “preferential option for the poor”. As Pope Francis puts it in his great ecological encyclical, *Laudato Si* (158):

“In the present condition of global society, where injustices abound and growing numbers of people are deprived of basic human rights and considered expendable, the principle of the common good immediately becomes, logically and inevitably, a summons to solidarity and a preferential option for the poorest of our brothers and sisters.”

After all, in Luke 4, Jesus had proclaimed his mission statement as being to bring good news to the poor, comfort to the broken-hearted, sight to the blind, liberty to the prisoners and the oppressed, and “to preach the acceptable year of the Lord”. That phrase means the Jubilee, the periodic cancelling of debts to iron out accumulated economic inequalities, and redistribution of the land, because land is life and central to God's providence.

The Levellers were for equal rights for all. The Diggers reclaimed land robbed from the common people as the Enclosures took hold (and later, in Scotland, we could add the Lowland and the Highland Clearances). James Nayler was a Ranter-come-Quaker who got so high on the Holy Spirit that to shut him up they bored his tongue through with a red-hot iron, and branded “B” for blasphemer on his forehead.

And us, today? In in the face of fuel poverty, kleptocracy, democratic deficit and blatant political cruelty? “What canst thou say?” Here are some words drawn from *A Watch-Word to the City of London* (1649), written by Gerard Winstanley who probably died a Quaker:

All men have stood for freedom ... and those of the richer sort of you that see it are ashamed and afraid to own it Freedom is the man that will turn the world upside down, therefore no wonder he hath enemies... True freedom lies in the community in spirit and community in the earthly treasury, and this is Christ ... spread abroad in the creation, restoring all things unto himself.

The Thirsty Traveller in his Journey Towards Zion

CAPTAIN *William Barber of Gissing*, described by George Whitehead as “our ancient and faithful Friend”, was one of a number of prominent Quakers in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex, each of whom (in the words of William C. Braithwaite in *The Beginnings of Quakerism*) was:

the centre of a group of honest-hearted Friends, meeting regularly for their simple worship, witnessing by life to the reality of the Christ of their inward experience, opposing with courage and acerbity the pretensions of priests and the fashions of the world, suffering without flinching imprisonment and the spoiling of their goods, and greatly refreshed from time to time by the ministry and fellowship of the travelling Publishers of Truth.

Suffer he certainly did: Joseph Besse records that in 1657, he was imprisoned in Norwich Castle for non-payment of tithes; in 1660, he was imprisoned again after a meeting for worship at Pulham was broken up; he was fined £40 under the Conventicle Act of 1670 and at the same time “was committed to prison on a Significavit of Excommunication procured by the priest of that parish”.

These lines appeared in The Quaker Poets of Great Britain and Ireland (1896) with no indication of where or when (if at all) they had been published previously.

OH! mighty God, great things for me thou hast done,
 Thy love and presence hath my heart o’ercome.
 Yea in the feeling life, my heart’s refresht,
 My soul’s rejoyc’d more than can be exprest.
 Thy power is great, thy mercy great also,
 I’ th’ sence thereof, my cup doth overflow.
 For clearly in the light it may be seen,
 How loving and how gracious thou hast been,
 To me poor worm; who hath been in distress,
 And sorrow great my tongue must needs confess:
 Yea though the enemy did me sore oppress,
 Through strong assaults, and batteries no less.
 Then didst thou in thy love, to me appear,
 Which did rejoyce my heart, thy seed didst chear,
 Thy lovely presence did my soul rejoice,
 Exceeding much, when I did hear thy voice.
 Which draws me forth, thy goodness to declare:
 Thy love and bounty (Lord; how great they are.)
 Oh! blessed God, great is thy living power;
 Without thy presence, who can stand one hour?
 Lord, keep me in thy truth, make me to walk
 In thy pure life, and power, not in the talk.
 For being in thy fear, kept poor and low,
 Living refreshment from my God doth flow.

For when that I i' th' silence pure do sit,
 Great's the refreshing I do feel in it.
 And when that any from the life do speak,
 Th' immortal seed's refresht, the heart doth break.
 Now these that faithful in the truth do stand,
 Thou wilt preserve by thy almighty hand,
 Yea doubtless those that to the end endure,
 The crown of life to wear they will be sure.
 And though with trials great we meet with here,
 Both inward and without, we need not fear;
 But God his lambs will in his bosom bear.
 Yea those that in the living faith do live,
 Such to thy name do living praises give.
 All glory unto thee my heart doth sing,
 Yea endless glory from thy life doth spring.

From my house at Reveland, the 19th of the 10th month, 1663

To a Pious Slave Owner

*This short poem reproving the hypocrisy of professed Christians' keeping slaves is by **Bernard Barton** 'the Quaker Poet' (see Sesame 241). The last line quotes Matthew 9:13 – "But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." The phrase is taken from the Old Testament: "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings" (Hosea 6:6).*

Wouldst thou before the altar place thy gift,
 Thou who canst hold thy fellow-creature slave,
 First from his neck the yoke of bondage lift,
 And then of God and him forgiveness crave.

Till this be done, the word of holy writ
 The folly of the offering implies,
 Oh! Read, mark, learn, and inly ponder it,
 "I will have mercy and not sacrifice."

Bernard Barton's other anti-slavery verses included 'A Tribute for the Negro Race', written as an introductory poem to Wilson Armistead's A Tribute for the Negro, an anti-racist work published in 1848 ("Being a Vindication of the Moral, Intellectual, and Religious Capabilities of the Colored Portion of Mankind; with Particular Reference to the African Race"); and two poems in praise of the abolitionist Thomas Clarkson, included in The Bow in the Cloud, a collection of verse and prose which celebrated the legal ending of slavery in British colonies in 1834.

Geoffrey & Elizabeth Carnall Peace Award 2022

Wednesday 21 September, 6.30 pm-8.30 pm

Augustine United Church, 41 George IV Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1EL

PAUL ROGERS, the winner of the 2022 Award, Professor Emeritus of Peace Studies at Bradford University will be present in person for a discussion on

“PEACE AND SECURITY AFTER UKRAINE”

Contributing remotely will be **Yurii Sheliashenko** executive secretary of the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement, a board member of the European Bureau for Conscientious Objection; and **Vijay Prashad** Director of Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research and a senior non-resident fellow at Chong-yang Institute for Financial Studies, Renmin University of China.

For more information see:

<https://peaceandjustice.org.uk/news-and-events/our-workshops-and-events/>

This is a free event, and it will be possible just to turn up on the night. However, there will be an Eventbrite registration page set up shortly with a link from the Peace & Justice web page.

[More information about the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement is at:

https://ebco-beoc.org/sites/ebco-beoc.org/files/Presentation_Ukrainian%20Pacifist%20Movement.pdf;

on Tricontinental at <https://thetricontinental.org/>; and on the European Bureau for Conscientious Objection at <https://www.ebco-beoc.org/>.]

THE PAINTING on the front page shows the Meeting House built in 1803-05 at 320 Arch Street, Philadelphia, on land given to the Society by William Penn in 1701 for a burial ground. Extended in 1810-11, and in 1968-9, it is still in use.

Fanny Trollope attended Arch Street Meeting in 1830:

The little bonnets and the large hats were ranged in long rows, and their stillness was for a long time so unbroken, that I could hardly persuade myself the figures they surmounted were alive. At length a grave square man arose, laid aside his ample beaver [hat], and after another solemn interval of silence, he gave a deep groan, and as it were by the same effort uttered, 'Keep thy foot.' Again he was silent for many minutes, and then he continued for more than an hour to put forth one word at a time, but at such an interval from each other that I found it quite impossible to follow his meaning, if, indeed, he had any. My Quaker friend told me she knew not who he was, and that she much regretted I had heard so poor a preacher. After he had concluded, a gentleman-like old man (a physician by profession) arose, and delivered a few moral sentences in an agreeable manner; soon after he had sat down, the whole congregation rose, I know not at what signal, and made their exit. It is a singular kind of worship, if worship it may be called, where all prayer is forbidden; yet it appeared to me, in its decent quietness, infinitely preferable to what I had witnessed at the Presbyterian and Methodist Meeting-houses.

From *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, 1832

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

**Minutes of Area Meeting held on Saturday 26 June 2022
at Abbey Row, Kelso, and by remote videoconferencing**

2022/06/01 Worship and introductions

During worship, we have heard read from *Quaker Faith & Practice* 10.01, Isaac Penington: *Our life is love and peace and tenderness...* and 10.03: waiting for God's guidance in our meetings for worship and for church affairs, together with careful listening and gentleness of heart, forms the basis on which we can live out a life of love with and for each other and for those outside our community.

[The full minutes are included in both the print edition of Sesame, and in the PDF emailed to Members and Attenders on the circulation list, but are redacted in this publicly available version. – Editor]

Quaker Meetings for Worship in South East Scotland

Contact details of named Friends are in the Book of Members. 'QMH' = Quaker Meeting House

MEETING IN PERSON

Central Edinburgh – QMH, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2JL

Sundays at 11.00. No booking required. Tea & coffee provided; you can bring a packed lunch.

Wednesday, 12.30–1.00 pm. Tea & coffee, etc., as on Sundays

Contact the office, centraledinburgh@quaker.org.uk or 0131 225 4825, for updates; see also <https://www.quakerscotland.org/central-edinburgh/covid-guidance>.

Central Fife – The Old Kirk, Kirk Wynd, Kirkcaldy KY1 1EH

On the 2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays at 10.30 am. On 1st Sundays, also at 10.30 am, at

Linburn Scout Hall, Abbey View, Dunfermline KY11 4HA.

Contact **Laurie Naumann** for further information.

East Lothian – Dunbar Town House, 79 High Street, Dunbar, EH42 1ER

On the 2nd & last Sundays of the month at 11.00 am. Contact **Di Simcock** for updates.

Kelso – QMH, Abbey Row, Kelso TD5 7JF

Sundays at 10.30 am. Contact **Marianne Butler** for updates.

North Edinburgh worship group – St Mary's Church, 12 Bellevue Cres., EH3 6NE

4th Sunday in the month at 7.00 pm. – contact **Tony Gross** for updates.

Penicuik – Venue to be confirmed: contact penicuikquakers@blueyonder.co.uk

1st Sundays at 11.00 am – contact **Mark Hutcheson** for updates and further information.

Polmont – Greenpark Community Centre, Greenpark Drive, Polmont FK2 0PZ

Sundays at 10.45: contact **Marriot Dallas** for updates, and if bringing children.

Portobello & Musselburgh – Bellfield, 16B Bellfield Street, Portobello EH15 2BP

On the 2nd and 4th Sundays at 11.00 am.

1st Sundays: Evening meeting at 7.30 pm. Children's meetings at morning AND evening mtg.

Please contact **Mary Jane Elton**, if you plan to attend at either time.

South Edinburgh – The Open Door, 420 Morningside Road, Edinburgh EH10 5HY

Sundays, 10.30 am. Contact **Rici Marshall Cross** for information/updates. See also p. 24.

Tweeddale – No meetings in person at present. Contact **Anna Lawrence** for updates.

MEETING BY ZOOM

Central Edinburgh – for login details contact centraledinburgh@quaker.org.uk

Every Sunday at 9.30 am (Zoom only); and at 11.00 am (blended with the meeting in person).

Central Fife – for login details contact **Laurie Naumann**

On the 2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays at 10.30 am, blended with the meeting in person.

East Lothian – for login details contact **Di Simcock** or **Phil Lucas**

Tuesdays at 7.30 pm; NO meeting on the 1st Tuesday in the month.

Kelso – for login details contact **Marianne Butler**; blended with mtgs in person, as above.

Penicuik – for login details contact **Mark Hutcheson**

Polmont – for login details contact **Mariot Dallas**

Also Wednesdays at 8.00 pm (online only).

South Edinburgh – for login details contact **Rici Marshall Cross**

Sundays at 10.30 am, blended with meetings in person.

1st Thursdays at 8.00 pm (online only). Meeting for worship (30 mins) followed by chat.