

SESAME

Number 247: May 2023

AM on 9 May / YM Epistle, &c. / Options for Scotland *working group report* / QLRC / Finland YM / Fàilte update / Climate Justice *actions* / Silence / 'Meet a Quaker' *enquirers' event* / Christian Aid Week / 'Opening the Door' / John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust 2022 *Report* / Opposing 'The Refugee Ban Bill' / Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees / Books, *recent & forthcoming* / Isabella Lickbarrow / Vocal ministry *critically considered (1784)* / March Minutes / &c.



A golden lion tamarin and a greater bird-of-paradise, both by the Edinburgh-born Quaker artist Sydney Parkinson (*see page 4*).

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SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

The next Area Meeting will be on Tuesday 9 May 2023, at 7.00 pm at the Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2JL. It will also be possible to attend the Meeting online.

DRAFT AGENDA

1. Worship and introductions
2. Minutes of the meeting of 18 March 2023
3. Matters arising from previous meetings
 1. *Peace exhibition (2023/03/09.1 refers)*
 2. *Meeting for worship for marriage, 24 June: appointment of elders*
(2023/01/06)
4. Membership matters:
 1. *Reports on visits for membership*
 2. *Applications for membership*
 3. *Transfers*
5. Options for Scotland – *consideration of report [see pages 6-12]*
in advance of GM on 10 June
6. Matters from trustees and local meetings
 1. *Safeguarding policy and guidelines – approval*
 2. *East Lothian LM – clerking arrangements*
 3. *South Edinburgh LM – clerking arrangements*
 4. *Tweeddale LM – meeting arrangements*
7. General Meeting matters
 1. *GM at 7 Victoria Terrace, 10 June:*
appointment of elders; catering arrangements; reporting back
8. Reports and correspondence
 1. *John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust: annual report for 2022 [see page 25]*
9. Appointments: from Nominations Committee
10. Closing minute

The SCHOOL OF PEACE STUDIES at Bradford University celebrates its fiftieth anniversary this year; our late Friend Adam Curle was its first head. See:

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2023/apr/08/bradford-university-peace-studies-department-turns-50>

THE EPISTLE FROM BRITAIN YEARLY MEETING

Held in person and online, 28 April – 1 May 2023

We send loving greetings to Friends everywhere.

Cyfleuwn gyfarchion cariadus i Gyfeillion ym mhob man.

QUAKERS of all ages gathered for Yearly Meeting at Friends House in London, Hemel Hempstead and online. Preparatory sessions took place online in the week before, and Junior Yearly Meeting met earlier in April. An All-together meeting for worship was held with many local meetings and individual Friends joining virtually across Britain and beyond.

We meet at a time when existential issues face us both within our aging and numerically diminishing Society and in the wider world. These require urgent responses. Quakers can show leadership and offer counsel that will help our nations in matters of the degradation of public truth, the climate and ecological crisis, and divisive public commentaries around people's identities and associated rights.

How best can we achieve this? We are a people of faith, always in transition on an exciting path of collective and personal exploration. We seek and follow the eternal Truth of the Spirit, which has many names, remaining open to new leadings and also to the possibility that we are mistaken. Our faith requires us to practise our testimony of truth and integrity in all that we say and do.

Kindness has a powerful impact and we hope to offer caring support to all, including those with whom we may disagree. Speaking from a faith perspective can carry weight. We try to let our lives speak and have a ministry of presence, but can we speak out more as Quakers?

We can be a listening presence, creating a "kinder ground", alongside speaking truth in public places and contexts. We are called to witness truth-telling, accountability, community-building, and to give messages of hope. Speaking truth to power with love is a ministry, and is vital in a time when truth is often corrupted.

Our Quaker community has many voices, and we are upheld as one by the power of the Spirit. We all have a part to play, need to collaborate and trust those doing work on our behalf. Are we open to all voices, and how can we develop structures to engage all Friends through active listening? Ensuring true access for all in our community is a work of love. This may require us to move outside our own comfort and experience others' frustrations and discomforts.

Yearly Meeting is the all-encompassing body of which we are all a part and where we are most diverse. It takes on the big questions – Who are we as Quakers? Why are we here? What are we led to do? At times we have been mystified, even baffled. However, we discern a need to simplify our struc-

Continued on page 5

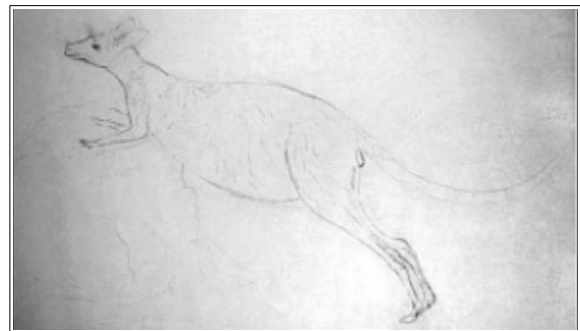
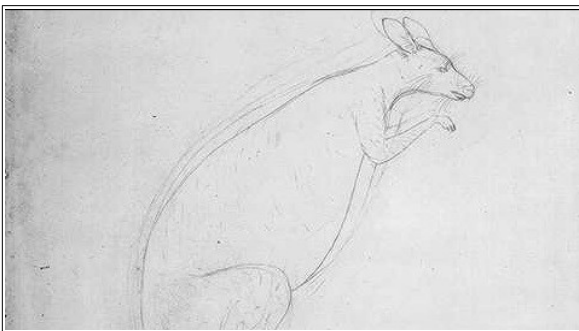
*“How amazingly diversified are the works of the Deity”**

SYDNEY PARKINSON (?1745-1771: *His date of birth has been queried, as his mother would have been aged 45*) was the first Quaker to visit Australasia and the first European to draw a kangaroo (*below*), both resulting from his being an artist on Cook’s voyage to the South Seas, 1768-71. He was born in Edinburgh, the second son of Joel Parkinson, a brewer, and was apprenticed to a draper. According to his brother, he took “*a particular delight in drawing flowers, fruits and other objects of natural history*”, becoming “*so great a proficient in that stile of painting, as to attract the notice of the most celebrated botanists.*” James Lee, also a Friend, was one such, and employed him to teach illustration to his daughter Ann, as well as introducing him to Joseph Banks, through whom he was recruited to join Cook’s expedition. On the journey home, he died at sea of dysentery. In his will, he left “*whatever utensils that are useful in painting or drawing to Mr. Lee’s daughter, my scholar*”, and she too became a notable botanical illustrator; the Ann Lee Collection is now held at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Sydney Parkinson is commemorated on a panel of the Australian Quaker Narrative Embroidery (inspired by the Quaker Tapestry) see:



Self portrait of Sydney Parkinson

<https://www.quakersaustralia.info/Stitches/sydney-parkinson>.



These pencil sketches were the basis of George Stubbs’s oil painting, The Kongouro from New Holland (1772), now in the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich; see:

<https://www.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/rmgc-object-573621>

Stubbs also had an inflated skin to use as a model, but never saw a live kangaroo.

* *From Sydney Parkinson’s Journal: “... the more we investigate, the more we ought to admire the power, wisdom, and goodness, of the Great Superintendent of the Universe”.*

(Continued from page 3)

tures to make them more transparent, to release energy for practical ministry. We seek intentional change, led by the Spirit, to help our community to thrive as we move into the uncertain futures that dance before us.

Building on our tradition of radical spirituality, we need to be courageous, imaginative, careful, and joyful. We seek corporate structures that are agile, simpler, more inclusive and support equality. Big questions are being asked about how we take the Society forward, with ways of working that meet our practical needs and have spirit-led discernment flowing throughout.

This work will continue into 2024, and ways to involve Friends across Britain Yearly Meeting will be developed, arising from our discernment thus far. As a Society, we must go in whichever direction we are led, so that the Truth may prosper.

Signed, in and on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting,

Adwoa Burnley, Clerk

The Swarthmore Lecture

The 2023 Lecture, by **Esther Loukin**, entitled 'How we can change society', is available to watch at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wD3nelB0n-A>. It will appear in book form later this year. For more on the background to the Lecture see: <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/swarthmore-lecture-2023-news/>

The Salter Lecture

Normally at the time of Yearly Meeting but this year a week early to coincide with Extinction Rebellion's 'Big One' event, the Salter Lecture, organised by the Quaker Socialist Society, was delivered by **Rupert Read**, Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of East Anglia, a Green Party campaigner and one of the founders of XR, with the title: 'The horrible, wonderful truth on climate: how telling it changes everything'. There is more information at

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/news-and-events/news/salter-lecture-2023-how-the-love-we-are-will-guide-us-through-ecological-collapse>.

The lecture is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hX9soctwBsQ>.

Are We Being Good Ancestors?

Lesley Morrison, Attender at Tweeddale Meeting, led the Time for Reflection at the Scottish Parliament on 25 April, taking this question as her title. Her four-minute talk can be seen and heard at:

<https://www.scottishparliament.tv/meeting/time-for-reflection-april-25-2023>.

The GM Parliamentary Engagement Working Group, among all its other activities, coordinates Quakerly contributions to these sessions. It invites Friends who might be interested in leading one to contact any of its members for the guidelines. Our AM rep is **Carol Jennings** [page 85 in the new Book of Members].

Options for Scotland – The Working Group’s Report

After the previous group was laid down having reported to General Meeting, a new ‘Options for Scotland’ working group (‘OfS2’) was appointed in March 2022, with a similar remit: to

- Explore and analyse changes to our Quaker structures, which might be of future benefit to Friends in Scotland;
- Keep a watching brief on changes being adopted by Quakers elsewhere to learn from the experience of others;
- Monitor how we are putting into practice the suggestions for strengthening our Quaker community in Scotland.

Following online ‘listening sessions’ in January/February (see Sesame 246, pp. 20-21) the group has completed its report, which is reprinted here.

The report will be considered at Area Meeting on 9 May.

Our discernment (summary)

As Quakers in Scotland – by ‘Quakers in Scotland’ and ‘Friends’ we mean all members, attenders and those who identify as Quakers – we come together in worship and to witness to the world. The deep spirituality of worship, silence and stillness in community matter greatly to us, and out of this we discern the call to witness our concerns for truth, justice, peace and the integrity of creation. To thrive we need to be of strong heart, and be forward looking, ready to make strong representation on the issues that matter. We also need sound arrangements to fulfil our legal obligations, to support those who act on our behalf, and in managing our resources.

Across Scotland we see new ways in which Friends can meet and connect, to serve, and to make our voice heard in the corridors of power. Yet, for some time now, we are hearing ever louder calls for help. Vital roles can’t be filled and some who offer service on our behalf are finding it hard. Right now, our organisational arrangements are creating burdens and anxieties. One Area Meeting faces the possibility of being laid down. Are we ready to listen?

The Options for Scotland group has considered these issues carefully and challenged ourselves about what is needed to support the Quaker community as it is now and in the years to come. We have united in a clear sense of what is required of us.

You asked us to consider how things might be different. We have listened to what is happening in other parts of Yearly Meeting. We have even imagined what new arrangements might look like in practice, but we know we should not get ahead of ourselves. As we explored this, the more we realised that small changes would solve little and, at best, would simply delay the inevitable.

To create new space and energy for spiritual growth, for the building of community, and to act out our concerns, we need to be kind to ourselves. We came to see that grasping the nettle, shaping our own future, could be invigorating and inspiring in and of itself.

So, our recommendations to Area Meetings and to General Meeting in Scotland are that:

- *We form a single body, ‘Quakers in Scotland’ through which we support all our*

Local Meetings, where our membership is held and which enables us to speak, as Quakers, on Scotland wide issues.

- *We form a single charity (a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)) to be responsible for the stewardship of all our resources across Scotland.*
- *We develop further the use of paid professional support to undertake routine tasks and provide advice, easing the load for the Friends we ask to give the greatest practical ministry*

The space that this will create, will allow Quakers in Scotland to gather in spaces and places that work for them – which could be based on geography, age, interest or concern. This already happens but is too often little known.

Friends, we have learned that working through change is as important as the change itself. Involving more Quakers in Scotland in what it will look like and how it will happen, will breathe life into our community. Think it possible that we might enjoy ourselves.

Introduction

The Options for Scotland Group was asked to “*explore and analyse changes to our Quaker structures, which might be of future benefit to Friends in Scotland.*”

Thriving Quaker communities need sound organisational arrangements that fulfil our legal obligations; we must support those who serve on our behalf, and look after our property. This enables us to engage in our worship, witness and community. They are inter-woven, inseparable.

We were asked to focus on organisational arrangements, but it is not the whole story. In preparing this report we have assembled a lot of material that covers the issues in greater depth. This is available on the General Meeting for Scotland website; see <https://www.quakerscotland.org/documents/1273>

Growing concerns

The Religious Society of Friends is a “*priesthood of all believers...without a need for a separated clergy.*” (QF&P 27.35). We are grateful to those Friends willing and able to serve in roles. They do so on behalf of us, and we all support and uphold them. As others step into their shoes when their period of service is completed, we create a rich body of experience on which we can draw.

Since 2017 General Meeting for Scotland (GM) has heard sustained expressions of concern about our organisational well-being from Friends across Scotland. The reasons for this have been considered by GM many times since then. North Scotland Area Meeting (AM) encouraged GM “*to be prepared for change, should the time come when one or more Area Meetings cannot meet their legal requirements with regard to trusteeship.*” In 2023, despite many attempts to improve the ways things work, this is now a realistic prospect.

For those not closely involved, our organisational arrangements look confusing. We have Quaker roles and others that meet our responsibilities as charities, replicated across four AMs and GM. The result is that we need to find Friends willing to serve in nearly 300 roles to sustain Quakers in Scotland. We also reflected on how some Friends feel so distanced from or disinterested in the wider Quaker community that they do not choose to become involved.

All of which makes it increasingly difficult finding Friends willing or able to fill roles which are essential for the organisation to continue. Part of the challenge

we face is to develop an environment in which Friends feel positive about contributing to the life of Quakers in Scotland.

Options for Scotland

GM asked the Options for Scotland group to explore these issues including expressing an appetite for “*more radical change in our structures, if its purpose and the way it will bring about improvement are clear.*” We were asked to consider the following in particular, along with the implications of staying as we are (the status quo):

Option A: The reconfiguration of responsibilities – transferring to GM roles/matters that are best done Scotland-wide – with AMs supporting Local Meetings (LMs).

Option B: All Quaker charities within Scotland to merge to form a single charitable body, while Area Meetings (AMs) continued with all their other current responsibilities.

Option C: Lay down AMs in Scotland, creating a single body to take on their responsibilities.

In the meantime, other ideas that were suggested are already being taken forward within current arrangements. Progress on these is summarised on the General Meeting for Scotland website.

In ten years, what would we like to see and feel?

GM invited us to describe how change to our structures might bring about improvement:

1. The process of change should release *energy* rather than consume it.
2. We will see more and a wider range of Friends undertaking *service* or making contributions to the life of our Meetings at all levels, on behalf of Quakers in Scotland. Friends will see roles and tasks (large or small) that they can readily undertake.
3. We will find that we have more *time/capacity* for worship, witness and community, and need less for administrative tasks that do not add to the life of our Meetings.
4. Change will be affordable and any costs will be proportionate to the benefits they bring.
5. Any change will be sustainable – with a realistic prospect of standing the test of time.
6. *Decision making* will be taken more simply, through fewer Quaker bodies.
7. The buildings we own are perceived (and managed) as assets, providing a place for Quaker community, outreach and service, or financial income to support us.
8. A simplified, inclusive organisational structure should be capable of being explained to local Friends and newcomers in a few sentences.

Benefits and disadvantages of the options for change

A simplified comparison between the four options is given in the table at

<https://www.quakerscotland.org/sites/quakerscotland.org/files/documents/Suumary%20table%20of%20options.pdf>

A more detailed options analysis is available at

<https://quakerscotland.org/general-meeting/options-scotland/pros-and-cons-options>

When considering options for change, we should take into account the changes that are already happening. Keeping what we have now is not available to us because the impact of the challenges which have driven us to this point will only grow; we will not have heard the cries for help.

We are grateful to the over 120 Friends from all AMs and nearly all Local Meetings who contributed to the three online listening sessions in January / February.

Experience elsewhere

The challenges faced by Quakers in Scotland are not unique, even if there are characteristics of our organisation and the geography that are particular to Scotland. We have spent time listening to and learning from the experience of Friends elsewhere.

We met with Friends directly involved in the changes under way in Wales and the Marches, London, Central England, Yorkshire and North-East England. These Friends were generous with their time and insights and we thank them. Having Lesley Richards as our Convenor, with her close experience of developments in Wales and the Marches, has been particularly helpful.

Further information about the approaches being taken elsewhere is available on the OfS2 report page.

Themes and considerations

As we considered the available options, we explored all of the following themes, and we feel they should be taken into account as we move towards deciding what should happen next:

- *Quakers in Scotland already use varying ways to find community.* Many think in terms of geography, but some find greater affinity with Friends of a similar age (e.g. young people), or who share a concern (criminal justice, climate justice, peace or mental health and well-being).

We need to ensure that any new arrangements strengthen the opportunity for Friends from all these communities to get to know and learn from one another.

- *We know from experience that Quaker worship, witness and service are inter-related and that our decisions are, and will be made under discernment*
- *We need to understand the roles and tasks that we require, and how these can change.* Some focus most on good governance and what society expects of us, while others are more about keeping our community moving with the Spirit.
- *It is realistic to assume that there will be increasing costs incurred in obtaining professional advice and/or services.* This is likely even if no changes are made to our structures. Care will be needed in how these costs will be met and ensure that they are sustainable. The following are areas of work that may be considered appropriate: e.g. accounting, property, safeguarding, recruitment & staff management, management and administration.
- *Quakers in Scotland is not a building or an address; it is all of us.* We thought a lot about whether a change in our structures would mean Friends are more isolated from activity and decisions undertaken in their name.

Our current arrangements involve only the small numbers of Friends who feel able to attend and are comfortable in our Business Meetings. Perhaps it is time to free up that space for new ways of gathering in community, allowing more to

join in the life and work of Quakers in Scotland. Care will be needed to ensure that decisions based on our discernment are taken within Business Meetings, but this could lead to a greater inclusivity.

- *Energy will be needed to nurture our faith community.* Friends like meeting face to face, but our habits have been affected by Covid-19 and concerns to avoid unnecessary travel in a climate crisis. Conversely, there are new ways to connect online. Can we support new ways of meeting and connecting in person, encouraging 'bottom-up' and communal opportunities to be more sociable and inclusive.
- *We will need to invest money, time and expertise in improving facilities across Scotland.* Some of our role-holders have already improved the sharing of expertise across Scotland. This can be extended to more specific tasks such as supporting LMs to equipment that makes connecting easier, while training and bulk licensing can be more cost effectively obtained.
- If a decision is taken to make significant changes to our organisational arrangements, then *the process of change* and supporting Friends through it will need careful consideration.

Where does this lead us?

As a group we began with very different ideas about what was needed, with some scepticism about whether change will improve things. Over time we have come to a united view about the way forward. We were appointed by GM because the status quo is fragile. We have heard the real concerns of Friends in AMs that find it hard to find ways to keep going, even that an AM might be laid down in the next year or so. For those whose experience is that we are managing well enough, we understand the concern not to lose what has served us well.

Our discernment is clear that our circumstances require a significant change to our organisational arrangements, and that we must better support those who serve in roles on our behalf. The changes we propose will not answer all concerns, but we believe they will make a difference.

Changes to organisational arrangements

We have come to discern that small changes will solve little and would make things harder in the long run. We can see significant benefits from a radically simpler approach where, in future, Friends will see themselves as belonging locally to their LM or worshipping group, and as part of the wider community of Quakers in Scotland. As we have described above, we believe that this will create space for new ways of gathering to emerge, which are not constrained by being part of formal structures. Already we find that advocacy, inter-faith links and outreach are most likely to happen locally or nationally.

What we do is for now, not for eternity; Quaker structures in Scotland have changed considerably over the years. In 1945 there were 300 members in Scotland and two AMs. Some Friends already feel more a part of a community of interest than of a Local Meeting. Quakers in geographically isolated situations feel different from those who are close to a busy city meeting. Our task is to create a community of Quakers in Scotland that makes them all feel welcome.

Supporting the Friends we ask to serve our organisation and community

Those Friends who are willing to undertake roles that require substantial service will be better able to focus their time and energy where it is most needed if they are provided with professional support in undertaking routine tasks and access to advice on complex and sensitive issues.

We have considered the potential costs of this and, based on insights from existing accounts and an AM treasurer, a total additional provision of between £9,000 and £18,000 *p.a.* (based on current commitments) would need to be made to annual budgets should a single charity be established for Quakers in Scotland. Further detail is available on the OfS2 report page.

The result of this investment should be seen, not in a financial return, but in the release of time and energy for Friends who are engaged in the work of Quakers in Scotland.

Other options

We do not support retaining the status quo because the fragility that led to our appointment will remain; the serious concerns expressed by some anxious Friends will not have been answered; and we will probably consume rather than generate energy.

We gave serious consideration to Option A (reconfiguration of responsibilities between GM and AMs) as a less disruptive option, but have concluded that it is unlikely to resolve the challenges already present in the status quo.

We recognised that Option B (creating a single charity but making no change to AMs or GM) has attractions for many. However, we have come to discern that this will not resolve the full scale of the many other challenges we face, nor will it create the space to grow in different ways.

Recommendations

Therefore, we recommend that Area Meetings and General Meetings agree that:

- a single body, 'Quakers in Scotland' is formed through which we support all our Local Meetings, where our membership is held and which enables us to speak, as Quakers, on Scotland-wide issues (*Option C*).
- a single charity (a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)), is formed to be responsible for the stewardship of all our resources across Scotland.
- the use of paid professional support to undertake routine tasks and provide advice is further developed, easing the load for the Friends we ask to give the greatest practical ministry.

Making it happen

We have sought to balance the need to think through the practical implications of different options, without going beyond the remit set for us or anticipating the wishes of AMs and GM. If our recommendations are agreed, we do not underestimate the scale of work required, and it will not happen overnight. We have provided an outline of the likely timescale on the General Meeting for Scotland website based on experience elsewhere, from which we estimate two years is a not unrealistic estimate of the period ahead of us.

We have estimated costs and the reduction in the number of roles, imagined what a distribution of duties would look like in comparison with current ar-

rangements, and considered areas requiring more detailed attention (e.g. charity changes, pastoral & spiritual care, nominations membership, marriages and funerals). If you would like to see more of that detail, then we encourage you to look at the background material on the General Meeting for Scotland website.

We understand the reality being felt across Scotland of fewer Friends being involved for less time in the lives of our Meetings, and yet we also believe that it will be by involving more Friends in the process of change, that change will become real. Grasping the nettle, shaping our own future, can be invigorating and inspiring in and of itself.

By involving a wide selection of Quakers in Scotland in that work, will bring a wider appreciation amongst Friends of the implications and the opportunities this change will offer. How this will be managed will need careful thought, along with active and sensitive handling throughout the process, so that Friends feel informed, involved and invested in the future arrangements.

It is our belief that this can breathe new life into the community of Quakers in Scotland. Think it possible that we might enjoy ourselves in the process.

For now, we lay our report and our recommendations before you, Friends.

<i>Lesley Richards</i> (Convenor)	<i>Peter Christy</i> (WSAM)	<i>Pam Apted</i> (ESAM)
	<i>Gisela Creed</i> "	<i>Brian Ashley</i> (NSAM)
	<i>Robin Davis</i> "	<i>Neil Turner</i> (SESAM)
	<i>Kate Gulliver</i> "	<i>Zoe Prosser</i> (LDW)

Quaker Life Representative Council, 24-26 March 2023 on Zoom

Spiritual Nurture: Filling Your Bucket *(because you can't pour from an empty one)*

It's been a common metaphor in recent months, as people talk about the impact of the pandemic and other crises on their physical and emotional resources: 'running on fumes', 'not enough gas in the tank' ... having 'an empty bucket' is perhaps a more environmentally-friendly version! This Quaker Life Rep Council (QLRC) focussed specifically on spiritual nourishment, the planning group having felt that Quaker communities might well be feeling depleted in energy and resources, and that a focus on one's own spiritual 'bucket' might be helpful.

One participant described QLRC as being 'behind the curve' on this – many meetings are already attending to it, she said, and I know that this is true of some local meetings in South East Scotland AM. But it's possible that not all have got to this stage yet (or haven't felt the need), so I hope that a report on the event will be useful, nonetheless.

In terms of content, this event felt a little 'light-touch' compared with previous Rep Councils I've attended. There were no outside speakers, and only one extended piece of prepared ministry – the rest of the programme

was taken up with worship, Home Groups, and sharing with others in pairs or regional groupings. I found the informal sharing more helpful than the prepared ministry, as it illuminated the issues better. We were asked questions such as:

- *What/who has supported you in your spiritual life?*
- *Have you found the companionship of other Quakers helpful/important?*
- *How can we nurture a loving community?*

Friends shared their own ways into stillness and readiness for worship, including imagery, silently reciting prayers or other words, and ‘techniques’ for centring down (e.g. elements of mindfulness). More generally, we discussed how spiritual nurture can be supported by activities such as journaling, reading, social gatherings and learning events within meetings. We considered how enquirers and new attenders can be helped to benefit from the wisdom of more experienced Friends. One Friend described having been an attender for several years, but never hearing anyone speak about how they approach ‘centring down’. “Meeting for Worship is the tip of an iceberg,” said another. How do newcomers find out what lies beneath?

Some resources (both for ourselves and for new attenders) were recommended by Friends, including the series of ‘QuakerSpeak’ videos (<https://quakerspeak.com/video>). And we were invited to give feedback via a virtual ‘sticky note’ board, <https://jamboard.google.com> – which was new to me, and very user-friendly.

In the end, conversations often came back to passages from *Quaker Faith & Practice*. We had been asked to read Chapter 2 as preparation for the event, and there is certainly much that is nourishing and nurturing to be found there. In some ways the event felt more akin to a guided retreat than a Rep Council. I hope that some of the questions and concerns raised in small groups will find their way out to a wider audience. For example, several voices raised questions about accessibility and inclusivity. If someone finds sitting in stillness and quiet for an hour difficult, is it OK for them to dip in and out of the meeting for worship? Are there people who might really value an opportunity to explore a Quaker spiritual journey, but are put off by the times/days/lengths of meetings? Is online and blended worship, which enabled many people to access a worshipping community who might not have done so in the past, here to stay – or regarded in some places as a temporary aberration? We wandered quite a long way off the topic of our personal spiritual buckets, and a wish to look outwards at how we communicate about spiritual matters was evident.

A Friend quoted Ben Pink Dandelion on how Quakerism isn’t a ‘Do-it-Yourself religion’, but a ‘Do-it-Together spirituality’. This Rep Council provided a space to consider our own spiritual nurture, and how we work together in our quest to create loving and nurturing communities.

Sue Proudlove

Finland Yearly Meeting, Spring Gathering

AitO Centre, outside Tampere, 3-5 March 2023

FINLAND Yearly Meeting was able to gather in person for the first time since the pandemic in the autumn of 2022, but then I was only able to join them online for the first evening, when English was the language mainly used. The business meeting on Saturday was conducted in Finnish, and, while they could offer informal translation during sessions for those physically present, it was not available for Zoom participants.

I was therefore delighted to be asked to attend their Spring Gathering in person. I was first appointed by Britain Yearly Meeting to go to Finland in 2019, and had a warm and loving welcome. Assisted by grants from various Quaker bodies, I attended their autumn gathering that year, and was preparing to return in the spring of 2020 – when COVID happened.

During lockdown, Finnish Quakers began meeting one Sunday a month on Zoom, then later, two Sundays a month and some weekday evenings as well. Given the geographical isolation of some of them, this has been quite literally a Godsend, and although in-person meetings have resumed at Helsinki and Tampere the twice-monthly Zoom meetings have continued, with some new people attending, and Quakers in other countries also joining from time to time, the most regular being a young woman now in Sweden and myself. It has been a huge blessing to be able to continue worshipping with Finnish Friends, and to have been able to attend memorial meetings for Friends I met in person and remember fondly.

The resumption of direct flights from Edinburgh to Helsinki four times a week got me there with a bit of breathing space in which to recover from my first venture abroad since lockdown and catch up with the good friend (and Friend) who was my host in 2019, before joining other Friends for the journey to AitO centre, which is at Aitolahti, on the shore of Lake Näsijärvi, about 25 km from Tampere.

There are now some 25 Friends in membership in Finland, and 50-70 attendees. Tampere Meeting in particular has grown, while a Friend who lives near Oulu (a university city about halfway up the country, at the northern end of the Gulf of Bothnia) has recently had several enquiries about joining the online Meetings for Worship, and thinks that she might be able to arrange some sort of in-person meeting in the coming months.

Friday evening was spent getting to know each other over a meal and then worship-sharing about the word *elämänvoima* – life force. Many of the contributions resonated deeply with me, and inspired me to minister later in the weekend.

Saturday was spent on business – legal, financial and so on. There was discussion about how to use the money raised by the sale of the flat in which Helsinki Quakers used to meet – the emphasis was on “keeping it alive” while ensuring some stability. The issue of “reparations” for flights by

Finnish Friends on behalf of the Yearly Meeting was raised (carbon offsetting); and the need to check decisions made previously was noted. We only had one young person with us, Elvin, whose father, Brylie, had been appointed Elder for the weekend [*they are pictured together at <https://www.kveekarit.org/suomen-alajarjestot/tampere/> though Elvin is bigger now*]; others took turns being with him to free his father to concentrate on upholding the meeting. Friends were appointed to attend the EMES gathering at Woodbrooke in May, BYM in London, and Ireland YM in Dublin.

In small groups we returned to the subject of the life force, talking among ourselves but not reporting back to the main group. *What things nurture this life force, both in individuals and in society as a whole? What things drain it? How can we protect it in ourselves when we feel others are draining it from us?*

We heard about the work of the funerals group, which is gathering information to help Friends who might be involved with, or responsible for planning the funerals of, people linked to other denominations. Three leaflets, in English and in Finnish, were being prepared: suggestions for opening and closing remarks for a service; what to take into consideration in planning the service; and an explanatory leaflet about Quakers – their history and how they fit into the wider ecumenical family in Finland.

There was discussion of how to retain memories of Friends who have died: currently no records are held. Memorial minutes would be good – perhaps they could go on the website, both as a record of people's lives and as a form of outreach? The current funerals group is working on the leaflets: should there be a funerals committee, to take the burden off the executive committee who keep things running between the twice-yearly Gatherings? Perhaps such a committee could also help with arranging other events and celebrations? Finland YM is keen to avoid unnecessary committees – but this suggestion arises from a concern within its members.

There was also a growing concern for our earth: Finland has an increasing number of cattle, which means more methane. A report (in Finnish) was given of the work of the Peace & Service Network of the Europe & Middle East Section (EMES) of Friends World Committee for Consultation; and another, of the recent face-to-face EMES meeting in Paris. The group dealing with Finnish Quaker archive material, which was set up at my first Finland YM in 2019, continues to make progress.

I decided to give Saturday evening's musical sharing a miss – after concentrating on the day's business with the help of a whispered translation from Leena beside me, I felt the need for some down time – but was glad to join many of the other women in sauna, with the added bonus of a swimming pool rather than just a shower to give periods of relief from the steam. It's a wonderful time of sharing and bonding which I really miss in Scotland. After sauna, I left the others in the fireplace room and went upstairs to find a small group in the dining room, affording yet another opportunity to develop friendships and share experiences.

Our Sunday morning worship was joined by participants online, and then there was a session on “focusing”, led by one of the newer members of the group. We were invited to sink down inside ourselves, ask a question and consider the answer we received: if we wished, we could share the experience with the whole group. Again, I had much to ponder.

After our last meal together we shared thoughts on the weekend before we dispersed. Final goodbyes were at Tampere Station: I was going north, for a couple of days with my nieces in Jyväskylä, in the Finnish lakeland. I parted from Friends old and new, in equal measure exhausted and elated, and already looking forward to joining them in October. I am so grateful to have been appointed to visit Finland YM – I learn so much from their commitment to ‘being and doing Quaker’. I had the chance to share a little about the Book of Discipline Revision Committee; and was delighted to be assured that my attempts at Finnish were both intelligible and correct!

We did not write an Epistle during Yearly Meeting, but the Clerk, Toni Hämläinen, included these words with his email of the minutes and reports:

Viime viikonloppuna saimme AitO-keskuksessa nauttia hyvästä seurasta, jaetusta hiljaisuudesta ja herkullisesta ruoasta, muun muuassa. “Elämänvoima” – kevätkoontumisemme oli varmasti kaikille osallistujille antoisa ja voimauttava. Minulle tämä tämä viikonloppu oli henkilökohtaisesti merkittävä, sillä olin ensimmäistä kertaa työhartauskokouksemme kirjurina. Tästä jäi minulle kiitollinen olo. Meitä oli monta paikalla ja saimme yhdessä todeta, että vuosikokouksemme on kehittyvä ja elinvoimainen Ystävien yhteisö. Olemme myös osa kansainvälistä kveekari-liikettä ja-henkeä.

Ihanaa kevättä kaikille! Luottakaamme Valoon, elämään.

GoogleTranslate, with a little tweaking for the Quaker terms, renders this:

Last week at the AitO centre we were able to enjoy good company, shared silence and delicious food, among other things. Our “Life force” Spring Gathering was certainly rewarding and empowering for all participants. This weekend was personally significant for me, as I was the clerk of our meeting for worship for the first time. This left me feeling grateful. There were many of us there and together we could say that our annual meeting is a developing and vibrant community of Friends. We are also part of the international Quaker movement and spirit.

Have a wonderful; spring everyone! Let us trust in the Light, in life.

From Jyväskylä I went back to Helsinki, where I was joined by Lari, one of the Tampere Quakers. I had a brilliant time and am happy to talk at great length about it ... (!) I bring loving greetings from Finnish Quakers to all Quakers in the UK, and especially those in Scotland.

I would encourage you to think about offering service as a BYM representative to another Yearly Meeting – it’s a fantastic experience, both great fun and very rewarding, while also strengthening connections between Quakers around the world.

Mary Woodward

[Finnish Friends’ website is <https://www.kveekarit.org/en/homepage/> (in English)]

Fàilte Edinburgh – May update

THROUGHOUT the month of Ramadan, our meetings with the family were kept to a minimum at their request. Since it ended we have held a Moving To Independence Meeting, part of our commitment to helping them become largely self-reliant by the end of August. They still have a long way to go, however, as they themselves recognise.

We were pleased to learn that the father has been looking for possible jobs with the help of the Central Mosque, which runs employment workshops on Fridays. His limited English hampers him. We have suggested that both adults accept extra tuition at home, and they have agreed to this; we are now trying to find a suitably experienced ESOL teacher to start one-to-one work with them, for two hours each per week. Fàilte Edinburgh will pay for these lessons. [*ESOL = English for Speakers of Other Languages*]

Socially they have made some friends in the Arabic-speaking community and also with a neighbouring Pakistani family whom they invited in for coffee one day. The teenage child has also made friends through the Syrian Homework Club which takes place once a week at the Chaplaincy Centre.

We are listening to the teenage child read once a week after school, and have been giving the middle child one-to-one 'English as an Additional Language' lessons, one morning each week at school. Starting in May, this is to be extended with extra enrichment activities in the afternoon provided by our volunteers. Meanwhile the youngest child is receiving extra language support at the Nursery, prior to beginning Primary 1 in August.

We expect Benefits to continue to be a problem area, as it has been since their arrival. Certain payments from the Department for Work & Pensions have not yet been received; we think the effect on council benefits of DWP errors has now been rectified, but await confirmation. The Scottish Government announced in February it would undo the effect of George Osborne's 'Benefit Cap' – which was costing the family £490.61 a month in 2022/23 – by providing for 'discretionary housing payments' from councils to affected claimants; although these have been applied for, we still haven't heard that the family will go on receiving them in 2023/24. Meanwhile, the Home Office finally agreed in March to pay the money promised us before the family's arrival – £2,025.60 for void rent on the flat – although we only received it in April. It may just be a coincidence that it arrived almost at once after an M.P. had been copied into our email complaining at the delay.

Mark Bitel has resigned as our Treasurer; we thank him for his work on behalf of Fàilte Edinburgh in the past year. We are grateful to Chris Holman, Treasurer of Portobello & Musselburgh LM, for taking on this arduous role. Chris's personal contact details are on page 79 of the new Book of Members; correspondence for him should be sent to Fàilte Edinburgh, % 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2JL.

The Core Group

Quakers and Climate Justice

It was back in 2006 that I joined Central Edinburgh Local Meeting; and in the same year I started to worry seriously about climate change. With Don Stubbings and others, I formed a “living witness” group, and we tried to engage with Friends on the subject. To my dismay, many did not share our concern: “We are Quakers, we already have concerns, what has this to do with us?” Gradually the penny dropped that climate change has to do with *all* the Quaker testimonies. For example, it will be the greatest generator of war and mass migration this century.

Our aims at that time were local and modest. We gardened, we cleaned beaches, we encouraged recycling, and we gained access to the Johnston Terrace Garden, still used by the children.

In 2023, the atmosphere has transformed. Now Quakers in Britain are saying it’s time for deep change, not just in our personal lives but in politics, finance and industry. It must happen, and we need to play our part. Here are things Friends corporately are doing, and how we can join in.

QPSW – climate and economic justice

Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) has some good information on its website at <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/climate-economic-justice>. A significant and ambitious project involves stopping new fossil fuel extraction projects by cutting off access to essential insurance and financing.

1. No insurance for oil projects

A current QPSW campaign, led by Anna Lewis (AnnaL@quaker.org.uk), is asking Lloyd’s of London not to insure EACOP (the East Africa Crude Oil



Pipeline). The French oil giant Total and the China National Offshore Oil Corporation are planning to build a massive crude oil pipeline through the

heart of Africa – displacing communities, endangering wildlife and tipping the world closer to full-blown climate catastrophe: EACOP would cause higher CO₂ emissions than the combined annual emissions of its host countries, Uganda and Tanzania! More than 100,000 people will lose the land they farm, and its low-cost construction and route through an earthquake zone put the critical fresh water source of the Lake Victoria basin at risk.

The insurance market has a decisive role to play. An international coalition of organisations, including faith leaders in the UK, is calling upon leading brokers and insurance companies, particularly Lloyd's of London, to pledge not to insure the project.

The STOP EACOP campaign has a template letter to insurance companies, asking them to commit to not insuring EACOP. It can be accessed at:

<https://www.stopeacop.net/action-email-insurers>

All you need to do is personalise the text of the letter – it will then be sent on your behalf to the companies who have not yet made this commitment.

Anna is looking for Friends to help develop this campaign. It has already been successful in persuading many banks and insurance companies not to support fossil fuel extraction. Insurance is essential for these projects and without it they cannot proceed.

2. Banks

Anna Lewis is also working with ShareAction to take this campaign to the banks. ShareAction seeks to harness the power of investors to promote social and environmental progress. One way it does this is by undertaking research to inform the hard questions we want asked at the AGMs of banks and other companies, relating to issues such as climate change, public health, working conditions and protecting the natural world. ShareAction provides helpful guides, hands-on training, briefings, and support on the day, so that people are ready to go to meetings and question CEOs and board members about issues that matter. This is something we can all get involved in. For more information see <https://shareaction.org/> or email Anna.

3. Just Money Movement

Quakers are part of the Just Money Movement, formerly the Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility, a Christian group organising for a fairer world. It produces a regular newsletter, and has a website at:

<https://justmoney.org.uk/>

Our Area Meeting

We have a Climate Justice day, planned for Saturday 27 May. [see page 24]. This will be an important moment for us to get to know each other as an Area Meeting and coordinate our response to climate justice. Some of our meetings are already very active on the matter, others less so.

One topic that involves us all is the stewardship of our Meeting Houses. AM Trustees are already concerned about the cost and use of Edinburgh

Meeting House. One way to save money and reduce our carbon footprint is to improve our buildings' energy efficiency. Dan Dickson and Andrew Muirhead have shared the information in the slide presentation at https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1E0rjR6v_QpqPPMN76RdD_bMo6CVaOx28/edit#slide=id.p4 (which readers are welcome to pass on to others; it is especially relevant for buildings that are hard to make efficient, such as churches). Further action in our AM depends on the outcome of our affordability review.

Also, Central Edinburgh LM is concerned about hotels and hotel waste.

- Did you know that hotels in the UK use over 2 billion metal hangers in the laundry every year, which are used once and then discarded? Where? How?
- Edinburgh City Council has commissioned consultants to estimate the number of new hotel rooms that could be added in the city by 2030. They think nearly 8,000.

Our investigations continue.

Janet Saunders

Silence

After the huge success in 1889 of Three Men in a Boat (To Say Nothing of the Dog), the next book by Jerome K. Jerome (1859-1927) was another fictionalised account of a holiday: a trip with his friend Walter Helmore to see the 1890 Oberammergau Passion Play. In The Diary of a Pilgrimage (1891), the narrator, J., goes to Germany with B., an experienced traveller who is keen to show him the sights. The following passage – written at a time when humankind could be referred to as men and Truth and Silence given feminine pronouns – expresses thoughts prompted by their visit to Cologne Cathedral on the way. Construction of the building, begun in 1248, had been abandoned around 1560, and it had only been finally completed in 1880, ten years before. B. is enthusiastic about seeing it; J. rather less so ...

THERE IS LITTLE to be said about a cathedral. Except to the professional sightseer, one is very much like another. Their beauty to me lies, not in the paintings and sculpture they give houseroom to, nor in the bones and bric-a-brac piled up in their cellars, but in themselves – their echoing vastness, their deep silence.

Above the little homes of men, above the noisy teeming streets, they rise like some soft strain of perfect music, cleaving its way amid the jangle of discordant notes. Here, where the voices of the world sound faint; here, where the city's glamour comes not in, it is good to rest for a while – if only the pestering guides would leave one alone – and think.

There is much help in Silence. From its touch we gain renewed life. Silence is to the Soul what his Mother Earth was to Briareus. From contact with it we rise healed of our hurts and strengthened for the fight.

Amid the babel of the schools we stand bewildered and affrighted. Silence gives us peace and hope. Silence teaches us no creed, only that God's arms are around the universe.



Cologne Cathedral, c. 1885 (from the A.D. White Architectural Photograph Collection, Cornell University Library).

How small and unimportant seem all our fretful troubles and ambitions when we stand with them in our hand before the great calm face of Silence! We smile at them ourselves, and are ashamed.

Silence teaches us how little we are – how great we are. In the world's market-places we are tinkers, tailors, apothecaries, thieves – respectable or otherwise, as the case may be – mere atoms of a mighty machine – mere insects in a vast hive.

It is only in Silence that it comes home to us that we are something much greater than this – that we are *men*, with all the universe and all eternity before us.

It is in Silence we hear the voice of Truth. The temples and the marts of men echo all night and day to the clamour of lies and shams and quackeries. But in Silence falsehood cannot live. You cannot float a lie on Silence. A lie has to be puffed aloft, and kept from falling by men's breath. Leave a lie on the bosom of Silence, and it sinks. A truth floats there fair and stately, like some stout ship upon a deep ocean. Silence buoys her up lovingly for all men to see. Not until she has grown worn-out and rotten, and is no longer a truth, will the waters of Silence close over her.

Truth is the only real thing we can lay hold of in this world of passing dreams. Time is a shadow that will vanish with the twilight of humanity; but Silence is a part of the eternal. All things that are true and lasting have been taught to men's hearts by Silence.

Among all nations, there should be vast temples raised where the people might worship Silence and listen to it, for it is the voice of God.

These fair churches and cathedrals that men have reared around them throughout the world, have been built as homes for mere creeds - this one for Protestantism, that one for Romanism, another for Mohammedanism. But God's Silence dwells in all alike, only driven forth at times by the tinkling of bells and the mumbling of prayers; and, in them, it is good to sit awhile and have communion with her.



Thinking about MEMBERSHIP?

13 May 2023

10.30 – 1.00 by Zoom

You have maybe been coming to Quakers for some time. You'll have noticed that some people are members of the Society of Friends, while others are 'attenders'. Maybe you are thinking about the difference, and whether you might make the step to closer commitment.

There is a whole chapter of *Quaker Faith & Practice* on membership (chapter 11), and there are people in your meeting to talk to about it – particularly elders or pastoral Friends.

But if you want something more, try these events, put on by South East Scotland Area Meeting for anyone in Scotland considering membership.

MEET A QUAKER, by Zoom, on Saturday 13 May 2023, 10.30-13.00; and in person, in Falkirk on 23 September 2023 (*time and venue to be confirmed*).

We will share our personal experiences of being a Quaker and the journey to membership. There will be plenary discussions and small group conversations and suggestions for reading and other resources. We hope to be warm and welcoming and to help you on your way to membership. Book your place by contacting Mariot:

dallasfalkirk@btinternet.com or telephone 01324 639245.

"If the Society can be thought of as a ship, I would like to be one of the crew, not a passenger, and to be seen like this". Quaker Faith & Practice, 10.34

Book of Members & Attenders 2023

Copies of the new Book are now available (at £4); it lists all the members of the four Area Meetings in Scotland and known Attenders, giving their email and postal addresses and telephone numbers, arranged by Local Meeting (or, in some cases, the worshipping group they usually attend). It is however a confidential document and so may only be bought by those who are included in it themselves.

It is assumed that readers of Sesame will have access to it.

Christian Aid Week, 14-20 May

CHRISTIAN AID is celebrating how its partners in Malawi are helping farmers to transform their livelihoods using the humble but mighty pigeon pea: a drought-resistant, soil-revitalising, high-protein, low-cost, delicious crop.

Inspired by the transformational pigeon pea, **The Big Pea Challenge** invites you to hold your own pea-themed fundraiser this May. Whether you're a gardener, a cook, or just up for a bit of fun, there are resources to help you get out into your community and bring other good-hearted people into the Christian Aid movement.

See: <https://bigpeachallenge.christianaid.org.uk/>

Book Sales in Edinburgh and Falkirk

There will be sales at **Holy Corner** (Morningside United Church, EH10 4DJ) on Saturday 13 May & (afternoon only) Sunday 14 May; and at **St Andrew's & St George's West** (13 George Street, EH2 2PA) on 13, & 15-19 May. At the end of the week, on Thursday/Friday/Saturday, 18-20 May, **Falkirk Trinity Church** (Manse Place, Falkirk FK1 1JN) has a sale, 10.30 am – 4.30 pm each day.

Coffee Mornings

On Saturday 20 May, starting at 10.00 am, there will be coffee mornings at **Burntisland Parish Church** (East Leven Street, Burntisland KY3 9DH), **Larbert East Church** (Kirk Avenue, Stenhousemuir, Larbert FK5 4QB), and **Morningside Parish Church** (2 Cluny Gardens, Edinburgh EH10 6BQ).

Other Events

Queensferry Parish Church (The Loan, South Queensferry EH30 9NS) is holding a **Plant Sale** on Saturday 13 May.

The **Peebles Christian Aid Group** is holding **coffee mornings** (St. Andrew's Leckie Parish Church, Eastgate, Peebles EH45 8AD) on 18-20 May, 10.00 – noon, and on the Saturday will have a **Plant Sale**. There is also to be a **children's sponsored walk** on Saturday 13 May, setting off from Hay Lodge Park, 10 am.

See also: <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved-locally/scotland>

SESAME 244 drew attention to the Will Aid scheme, by which, during the month of November, a will can be drawn up by a solicitor whose fee is waived in return for a donation divided among nine particular charities. (For a reminder of the details, see <https://www.willaid.org.uk/>.) A similar scheme is operated by the **National Free Wills Network**, which, though it may be accessed throughout the year, is different in that would-be users have to be referred to it by a participating charity. **Christian Aid** is one of the two hundred involved; others include Amnesty International, the British Red Cross, Greenpeace, Oxfam and Shelter – see <https://www.nationalfreewills.net/>.

“Opening the Door” – Saturday 27 May 2023

A special day of creativity and reflection on climate justice

Britain Yearly Meeting has recognised that

The wealth of the UK and other industrialised countries is built on the violent and racist exploitation of people and the earth. Today, our economy’s dependence on fossil fuels and their extraction still hits poor people hardest. This is unjust. Quakers are working within the principles of climate justice to set things right. Quakers in Britain supports that work.

This will be a day in which we come together to work out what this means for how we act locally as Quakers, individually and collectively, to promote this work. We probably recycle; we probably eat no, or less, meat; we probably fly less than in the past, or not at all. But we all know that the climate emergency demands more; that it is tied up with economic injustice and other forces going far beyond our individual choices. We also know that it is easy to get depressed about it, or to avoid thinking about it.

The day will recognise these temptations and equip us to resist them, by joining together, learning from each other, and expressing our love for our earth under threat. It will be an all-age event, for everyone to join in.

The venue is the Walpole Hall at St Mary’s Episcopal Cathedral, Palmers-ton Place, Edinburgh EH12 5AW. The Hall is adjacent to the Cathedral Song School, decorated with murals by Phoebe Anna Traquair (1852-1936), which may inspire us – and which can be viewed online, in a virtual tour prepared for Doors Open Day, here:

<https://www.cockburnassociation.org.uk/dod/st-marys-cathedral-song-school/>.



Painted between 1888 and 1892, the murals illustrate the hymn of praise by all creation, *Benedicite omnia opera*, the canticle based on Daniel 3:57-88 and Psalm 148, which in the Anglican prayer-book of 1662 begins “O all ye Works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord: praise him, and magnify him for ever ...” They include portraits of leading figures of the day, of the choir and clergy of the time, and [left] a distant view of the Leaderfoot Viaduct!

Image © Peter Backhouse, reproduced with kind permission of St Mary’s Cathedral

John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust – Annual Report 2022

2022 saw the new trustees and treasurer settle into their roles. We are very aware of the enormous contribution to the Trust made by Annie Miller and John Phillips over almost twenty years. We record our thanks for all their efforts, the smooth handover and continuing support.

Four applications were made to the Trust this year. All were awarded a grant. They were for a variety of “enjoyments”.

- A visit for 16 people to Benmore Gardens in Dunoon for volunteers at Mrs Elder’s Rose Garden in Govan, as a thank-you for their efforts and to provide the opportunity to “get away from some of the difficulties of life for the day.” For a mother and two children, this was their first trip outside Glasgow since the older boy (11) was born. He wrote, *“It was amazing to see the water. I loved the ferry, Benmore park, the amazing view and the trees. Loads of trees!!”* (His 5 year-old brother *“loved the pizza”!*)
- On a smaller scale, a recipient of a grant for a weekend break at a Quaker community reported, *“Just writing about it, brings back the sense of peace and utter joy I experienced at Bamford.”*
- A mother, single since her husband left two years ago, and two daughters had a three-night caravan break. They had to reschedule because one daughter was hospitalised with a kidney infection, and the break did not include the Blackpool Illuminations as originally planned, but it was, nevertheless, *“a fantastic weekend.”*
- And finally, the trust contributed towards an e-bike [See Sesame 245] to help with limited mobility caused by ill health. This has facilitated travel to an allotment (uphill on the return journey) and helping people out. We hear that the *“iron steed”* for which the recipient is *“so grateful”* has made a *“marked and measurable improvement to my life”*.

At the start of 2022, available funds stood at £5,731.03. This was augmented by Friends’ earmarking and generous donations, totalling £1,483.00. After the payment of grants totalling £1,850, the sum in hand at 31 December was £5,364.04.

John Wigham’s bequest of £42,000 used to accumulate interest which helped to keep the Trust afloat. In recent years this has not been the case and the capital sum is now depleted. Therefore, a request to the Area Meeting for a supplement was made in November. At present, it has not been possible for this to be considered because of continuing financial constraints, but the Trust will be invited to submit a report at a suitable time. There may be some crossover with the recently established Hardship Fund.

Carol Dean

Convener, John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust



“The Refugee Ban Bill” and why we must fight back

On 7 March, Home Secretary Suella Braverman introduced the Illegal Migration Bill in the UK Parliament. **We oppose the Bill in its entirety.** This proposed law removes the right to seek asylum for people arriving in UK ‘irregularly’, instead rendering them permanently inadmissible to any protection status. This affects nearly all seeking asylum, as there are *no* ‘regular’ or safe routes to access the UK’s asylum system.

The Bill also ends legal recognition for trafficking survivors, if arriving ‘irregularly’. The UN Refugee Agency said the bill is effectively an “asylum ban.” We agree. That is why we call it “the Refugee Ban Bill”. The Nationality and Borders Act 2022 criminalised irregular arrival to seek asylum – this Bill goes even further and extinguishes the right to even apply for asylum in the UK and have that claim considered. We should remember this is all meted out to refugees fleeing war, torture, and violence.

Through the Bill, the UK Government abandon not only their responsibilities under international law for refugee and anti-trafficking protection, but they also abandon people to be exploited and exposed to life-threatening harm; this time by smugglers and organised crime groups. That abandonment betrays the profound origins of these rights, from the international community's resolve for a human rights system, in direct response to the Holocaust perpetrated before and during the Second World War.

The human consequences of this Bill are devastating. It means a family fleeing the Taliban in Afghanistan, or a woman fleeing violence from the Iranian regime and sexually exploited as she fled, or a man escaping forced labour in Eritrea – none of them would be able to claim asylum or seek protection as a survivor of trafficking. This proposed law slams the door on vulnerable people, including survivors of oppressive regimes and organised crime.

The Bill replaces asylum and trafficking protections with a duty on the Home Secretary to seek the removal of all arriving ‘irregularly’, irrespective of their circumstances, protection needs or exploitation suffered. This “duty to remove” is the rotten core of the Bill, trumping all other considerations. There can never be a “face behind the case”. Women, men, and children are consigned to a limbo of forcible removal, detention, destitution, and re-exploitation.

This “duty to remove” regime operates via both reduced Home Office accountability for how and where it uses its power to detain people, and sharp increases in the detained population, including mandatory 28-day initial detention with no possibility of bail in that period. This detention regime is to include children. The Bill also removes the court’s authority to challenge or

overrule the decision to detain. Detention may be where the Home Secretary deems appropriate, including – but not only – in a detention centre or a short-term holding facility such as the Manston processing centre [see below].

The Bill also gives the Home Secretary jurisdiction over the care of unaccompanied children. That is despite 222 lone children recently going missing from Home Office “hotels” [see below]. The Home Secretary will decide whether the Home Office or a local authority are the corporate parent. This is deeply inappropriate. Care responsibility must remain with child protection professionals working and accountable to Scots child law.

The Bill, in extinguishing recognition as a trafficking survivor if they arrived ‘irregularly’, may well be unlawful in human rights anti-trafficking law. That risk should underscore Scottish Ministers’ response to this Bill to protect the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015. The Bill is explicit in seeking to cut off Scottish devolved competence on survivor rights in the 2015 Act as well as prevent a future Scottish trafficking survivor identification and decisions system. This Bill is about protecting traffickers and punishing survivors, including in Scotland.

What we must do now in Scotland – together – to stop this Refugee Ban Bill

In short, this Bill is out of step with everything we stand for in Scotland. It offends our values and sense of fairness. It must be scrapped. It is an assault on the principle that all people deserve equal protection under the law and contrary to our belief in a system built on dignity, respect for the rule of law, fairness, and compassion.

We call on the Scottish Government, and all MSPs in the Scottish Parliament:

- *To oppose this Bill in its entirety, and to make that opposition clear in communication with the UK Government and the UK Parliament;*
- *To bring a motion for debate to (a) withhold legislative consent for the Bill, (b) reject the Bill as a whole, and (c) outline a plan to protect refugees and trafficking survivors;*
- *To take all possible legal steps to ensure that Scotland complies with its obligations to protect victims of trafficking in Scotland, including legislation and litigation;*
- *To take all possible steps to ensure that lone migrant children are not detained in Scotland, are cared for in accordance with Scots child law, with full access to their independent guardianship service entitlement and other related rights; and*
- *To reaffirm our commitments in Scotland to the universality of human rights, including compliance with the Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights, as well as concluding the incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and introduction of a new Scottish Human Rights Bill.*

We ask all MPs, in particular those representing Scottish constituencies:

- *To oppose this Bill in its entirety, to seek to remove as many of its provisions as is possible and to work collaboratively across party lines to do this.*

We ask people and organisations across Scotland:

- *To publicly reject this Refugee Ban Bill, in its entirety, and ask others to do the same;*
- *To write to your MSP and your MP asking them to oppose the Bill in Parliament.*
- *Join Together With Refugees and help campaign for a compassionate asylum alternative.*

We do not need new laws to prevent people from taking dangerous journeys, we simply need a government that starts doing its job, by providing safe, dignified, and legal routes.

We, the undersigned, will not stand for this Refugee Ban Bill to be passed in our names.

Emma Hutton, CEO, JustRight Scotland

Sabir Zazai, CEO, Scottish Refugee Council

[+ 98 others, including **Michael Hutchinson**, GM Clerk, for Quakers in Scotland.]

A report on conditions at the Manston detention centre by Liberty Investigates (published with *The Independent*) is at:

<https://libertyinvestigates.org.uk/articles/asylum-seekers-at-manston-were-handcuffed-restrained-and-struck-internal-docs-show/>

and an article from *The Guardian* on the 222 missing children is at

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/oct/22/uk-asylum-seekers-home-office-accused-of-catastrophic-child-protection-failure>.

The Bill has been described as “an assault on the rights of migrants and on the rule of law” by the Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network (QARN):

<https://qarn.org.uk/government-plans-for-borders-and-immigration-2023/>

and condemned on behalf of the Society of Friends generally by the Recording Clerk, Paul Parker:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/news-and-events/news/new-migration-bill-is-inhumane-quakers-say>

At the website of Churches Together in Britain & Ireland

<https://ctbi.org.uk/churches-voice-opposition-to-illegal-migration-bill>

there are links to statements by other denominations and bodies such as the Joint Public Issues Team [of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church, and the United Reformed Church]; also to statements by church leaders such as the Archbishop of York, who has described the Bill as “cruelty without purpose”.

The Law Society of Scotland has expressed “huge concerns” at the Bill, see

<https://www.lawscot.org.uk/news-and-events/law-society-news/illegal-migration-bill/>

and its legality is also questioned by the Institute for Government:

<https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publication/illegal-migration-bill>

The website of JustRight Scotland is <https://www.justrightscotland.org.uk/>; the Scottish Refugee Council’s is <https://scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/>.

SCOTTISH FAITHS ACTION FOR REFUGEES

Manipulating Migrants – a weapon of ‘hybrid warfare’

AT THE SCOTTISH FAITHS ACTION for Refugees meeting on 25 April, Anna Alboth gave a devastating report on the Belarus–European Union (EU) border migrant crisis. Anna is a Polish journalist, blogger and political activist who gained international attention as the initiator of the Civil March for Aleppo—a peace march from Berlin to Aleppo between December 2016 and August 2017, for which she was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. In 2021 she helped set up *Grupa Granica* which was formed in response to the humanitarian atrocities taking place at the Polish-Belarusian border. *Grupa Granica* is an informal network of Polish NGOs, activists, and inhabitants of the border region; members provide – at great risk to themselves – humanitarian, medical, and legal aid to migrants deliberately left stranded in the surrounding forests. They also support people searching for missing family members, document human rights violations and try to educate a largely indifferent Polish society about the appalling situation there.

The Belarus-EU border migrant crisis arises from an influx into Europe of tens of thousands of cynically manipulated immigrants. Ethnic and religious minorities from Iraq form the majority, most fleeing persecution by Islamic State, but people from Kurdistan, Syria and Yemen have also fallen prey to the scheme, as have migrants from Cameroon and other African countries. They have been encouraged by the Belarusian government to attempt the perilous crossing overland into Lithuania, Latvia or Poland.

The scheme began after a severe deterioration in Belarus-EU relations, following the 2020 Belarusian presidential election which saw Alexander Lukashenko strengthen his already iron grip on the government. Most Western countries refused to recognize the result, widely regarded as rigged, and the EU imposed sanctions on Belarusian officials after the violent quashing of the protests that followed Lukashenko’s re-election.

Sometime in July 2021, Lukashenko, who had threatened to “flood” the EU with “drugs and migrants” (as reported in *The Week*, 28 May 2021: see

<https://www.theweek.co.uk/news/world-news/europe/952979/belarus-dictator-threatens-flood-eu-with-drugs-migrants-avoid-sanctions>)

started to allow human traffickers and drug smugglers into Belarus while also implying he might provide migrants with their own weapons.

Iraqi TV stations repeatedly broadcast Lukashenko’s statement that Belarus would no longer prevent migrants from crossing into the EU, while the Syrian media also reported widely on his new migrant-friendly “policy.” Belarusian authorities and state-controlled tourist enterprises, together with some airlines operating in the Middle East, then started promoting cut-price tours to Belarus by increasing the number of connections and giving those who bought them Belarusian visas, ostensibly for hunting

trips which were at that time COVID-exempt. Social media groups offered fraudulent advice on ways they could cross borders into Western Europe. Those who arrived in Belarus were given instructions about how and where to breach the EU borders and what to tell EU border guards. Migrants reported that Belarus had provided them with wire cutters and axes to cut through border fences. Many, however, did not succeed and were then forced to stay at the border by the Belarusian authorities who were subsequently accused of assault and ill-treatment. Poland's offer of humanitarian aid, including tents and sleeping bags, was also rejected.

Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia later described this human trafficking of migrants as "hybrid warfare" deliberately being waged by Belarus against the EU. The three governments declared a state of emergency and started building barriers. Poland agreed the expenditure of 353 million euros to build a sixty-kilometre barrier five and a half metres high.

Human rights organisations criticised asylum-seeker pushbacks by Lithuanian and Polish border guards. ('Pushback' is defined as *a set of state measures by which refugees and migrants are forced back over a border – generally immediately after they crossed it – without consideration of their individual circumstances and without any possibility to apply for asylum: a violation of the prohibition of collective expulsion of aliens in Protocol 4 of the European Convention on Human Rights.*) They also deplored inadequate levels of food, water, and shelter, the last being the subject of an order by the European Court of Human Rights. Polish officials were further criticised for not allowing journalists, doctors, and non-governmental organisations access to the area. The NGO Human Rights Watch accused Belarusian authorities of manufacturing the crisis, finding Belarusian border guards responsible for violence, inhuman and degrading treatment and coercion, but also censuring Polish border guards for the pushback of migrants into Belarus. [See <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/06/07/violence-and-pushbacks-poland-belarus-border>]

In September 2021 Poland introduced a state of emergency and created an exclusion zone on the Polish side to prohibit entry. For ten months thereafter, migrants stranded in the forests around the exclusion zone were left destitute. People got lost, families were separated, some were severely injured and others were shot at by guards on both sides of the border. There was extreme suffering and an unknown number of deaths; one of the most recent occurred in the Białowieża Forest in January this year where a Yemeni doctor, Ibrahim Jaber Ahmed Dehya, died from exposure. (The Białowieża Forest is one of the last remaining parts of the primeval forest that once stretched across the European Plain; it is almost impassable in places and is home to wild animals that include wolves and bison. Temperatures in winter drop to minus 10-15 degrees.)

Many instances of brutality by Belarusian border guards have been documented. One migrant told reporters that they beat up his companion and broke his leg. A group of Yazidis from Iraq made a similar complaint. They

also reported food shortages and said that some were sick and in need of medical attention. Another migrant was reported to have been thrown into a freezing river. Guards were accused of robbing them of their money, phones, documents and other possessions. A Syrian who managed to reach Poland but was subsequently detained said the Belarusian military had threatened to kill him if he went back. In November, after Iraq launched rescue flights for its citizens, migrants on the Belarusian side reported that they were trapped and unable to leave the border zone.

Anna said that her group has documented 320 people confirmed missing and 42 deaths on the Polish side of the border, though there will certainly have been more. They have had to work clandestinely and at great personal risk and have been shot at by both Polish and Belarusian border guards as they attempted to reach sick and injured migrants. Despite that, they have managed to save more than fifty lives by conducting individual searches lasting up to ten hours each, alerted by desperate relatives of the missing. They have protected 150 people by registering them for asylum while they were still hiding in the forest, and have helped many more to survive their ordeal of being used as human weapons in what she described as Lukashenko's deliberate attempt to destabilise Western Europe. Of the suffering she had personally witnessed and which she shared in a few graphic photographs she said, "I've never seen anything like it in my life." She urged us to share with as many people as possible what is happening and to write to the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights [*address below*] which has so far refused to get involved.

The fate of these migrants contrasts sharply with the warm welcome given to refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine, approximately 11 million of whom have entered Poland since early 2022. Marianna Wartecka, an activist from the *Ocalenie* Foundation which assists migrants on both the Belarusian and Ukrainian borders, was quoted as saying: "It's like there are two different countries in one, two totally different sets of rules – people whose lives are worth saving and those who can die in the forest."

Anna Arboth echoed this sentiment. She had asked a border guard, she said, why their behaviour was so contradictory. He replied that he personally had not had to work on the Belarusian border but those there simply had to obey orders. She said it made her feel ashamed to be Polish – but the same apparent double standard has been pointed out in the UK Government's refusal to assist Sudanese refugees, as against the generous assistance promised to civilians fleeing Ukraine.

Lynne Barty

The postal address of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (part of the Organisation for Security & Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)) is

UL. MIODOWA 10, 00-251 WARSAW, POLAND.

There is more on Grupa Granica and its work at:

<https://freedomnews.org.uk/2022/10/05/pushbacks-and-dehumanisation-from-poland-two-reports/>

Books of Possible Interest

HELEN HOLT, an Attender at Tweeddale, has written *Quakers and Science*, a new title in the Quaker Quicks series, to be published at the end of May. It is coming out as a paperback (ISBN 978-1-80341-139-2) and as an e-book from Amazon (ISBN 978-1-80341-140-8), and has Phil Lucas's warm recommendation. We hope to have more about it in the next issue.

SARAH RUDEN'S *The Gospels, a new translation* (2021), which was reviewed in *Sesame* 239, is now available in paperback, ISBN 978-0-399-59296-6.

ALSO new in paperback, under the revived Pelican imprint, is *How Religion Evolved And Why it Endures* by Robin Dunbar, Professor of Evolutionary Psychology at Oxford, ISBN 978-0-241-43179-5. Some of the 'Further reading' previously listed as "forthcoming" appears still to be so – perhaps it is, but it seems likelier that the 2021 text has not been updated.

RATHER more unexpectedly, Marcus Rediker's 2017 biography of Benjamin Lay, the anti-slavery campaigner whose outspokenness caused his disownment by Meetings on both sides of the Atlantic (see *Sesame* 216), has been re-worked by David Lester as *Prophet against Slavery: Benjamin Lay, A Graphic Novel* (ISBN 978-1-80429-347-8). Verso Books published it in Britain in April, and at the same time reissued Rediker's original text with a new preface (*The Fearless Benjamin Lay: The Quaker Dwarf Who Became the First Revolutionary Abolitionist*, ISBN 978-1-7866-3472-6). For more on both books, see: <https://www.versobooks.com/en-gb/blogs/authors/rediker-marcus>.

Recommendation: a book from the AM Library

Beyond the Spirit of the Age: Quaker Social Responsibility at the End of the Twentieth Century by Jonathan Dale

Reading *Openings to the infinite ocean: A friendly offering of Hope* by Tom Shakespeare for a study group reminded me of the books of of the Swarthmore Lectures. (Tom Shakespeare's was the 2020 Lecture.) Our Library used to hold an unbroken run which were shelved in date order, but now some of the more recent ones are missing. I wonder if Friends might be able to fill the gaps.

My most recent borrowing has been Jonathan Dale's 1996 Lecture. It is a sobering read. He reminds us that prayer has to be matched with action: in his own case, it led him to give up his university job at St Andrews, re-train as a community worker and move to Salford. Praying for the poor and disadvantaged can be risky.

Rachel Frith

[Ten years before his Swarthmore Lecture, Jonathan Dale wrote in the QSRE Journal about his new life, and Q.F. & P. 23.50 is an amended extract from that article. ED.]

An Unlettered Poetess

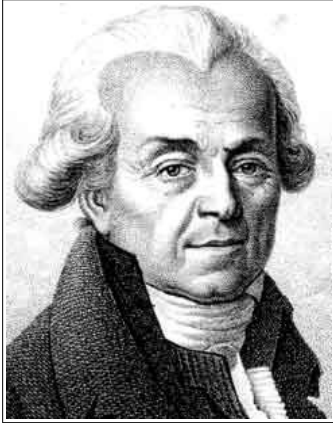
ISABELLA LICKBARROW (1784-1847) described herself thus in the preface to her second book of poems, *A Lament upon the Death of Her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte* (1818). Her first book, *Poetical Effusions* (1814), had had among its subscribers various Friends including her cousin, the scientist John Dalton; the list had also included [Thomas] De Quincey, *Grasmere, R. Southey Esq., Keswick* and *W. Wordsworth Esq., Rydal Mount*, yet, despite having had such famous literary admirers, by the end of the century she had been forgotten. Nothing of hers was included in Evelyn Noble Armitage's *The Quaker Poets of Great Britain and Ireland* (1896), and it was only in the 1990s that she was rediscovered, with her *Collected Poems* first published in 2004*. Many of her works originally appeared in periodicals, such as the following, which was in the *Westmorland Advertiser*, 1 February 1812, and is less serious than most of her poems. More than two centuries later, the contents of a Quaker newsletter may be just as ephemeral – but the editor would be dismayed rather than consoled, if, once read, *Sesame* were torn into spills for pipe-lighting, or in any other way used to facilitate the consumption of harmful drugs, however stimulating.

On the Fate of Newspapers

<p>WHAT changes time's swift motion brings! What sad reverse of human things! What once was valu'd, highly priz'd, Is in a few short hours despis'd, I'll but solicit your attention, While I a single instance mention, The "Advertiser" you must know, Fresh from the Mint not long ago, We welcom'd with abundant pleasure, Impatient for the mighty treasure, In what an alter'd state forlorn, 'Tis now in scatter'd fragments torn, Part wrapp'd around the kettle's handle, Part twisted up to light the candle, Part given to the devouring fire: Ah! see line after line expire; It surely would, beyond a joke, The patience of a saint provoke, To think that after all their pains, The rhymes which rack'd the poet's brains, And all the antiquarian's learning, Display'd so justly in discerning</p>	<p>The ancient Saxon derivation Of half the places in the nation, And the philosopher's vast skill, In measuring each stupendous hill, From Sca-fell down to Benson-knot, And even hills of lesser note; To think that what such wits have penn'd, Should come to this disgraceful end. Why 'tis enough to make them vow, With aspect stern and frowning brow, They'll such an useless trade resign, And never write another line. But stop good sirs, a nobler fate May your productions yet await; A thought just now my head has enter'd, In which alone my hopes are center'd. Perhaps, preferr'd the pipe to light, For some dull heavy witless wight, They'll, with tobacco's fumes, infuse The inspiration of the muse, And furnish many an empty brain — If so, we'll write and sing again.</p>
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* Isabella Lickbarrow, *Collected Poems, and a Biographical Study* by Constance Parrish, The Wordsworth Trust, Grasmere, 2004 ISBN 978-1-870787-92-5

“These worthy people” (1784)



Barthélemy Faujas de Saint-Fond (1741-1819) [left] was a French geologist, volcanologist and naturalist. He visited Britain in 1784 to see Fingal's Cave on Staffa (he was the first to recognise the volcanic origin of its basalt columns), accompanied on his trip by the American inventor and architect William Thornton (1759-1828), who later designed the Capitol in Washington D.C., and the Italian balloonist Paulo Andreani (1763-1823). His two-volume *Voyage en Angleterre, en Écosse et aux Îles Hébrides* (1797) – publication was delayed by the Revolution – records meetings with Sir Joseph Banks, William Herschel, James Hutton, Adam Smith (who, in Edinburgh, took him to hear a bagpipe contest), James Watt and Joseph Priestley, among others.

Faujas encountered Quakers through Thornton's friend John Coakley Lettsom (1744-1815), a doctor who (Faujas says) “was the first to give the example of emancipating the negroes from slavery, in his rich possessions in America.” In Chapter I of his book Faujas describes a dinner party at the Lettsoms, after which

I meditated how I should become a quaker; for, if happiness exists anywhere on earth, it certainly dwells among these worthy people.

In Chapter IV, he sets down his observations on meetings for worship and vocal ministry.

I LOVE THE QUAKERS, and I have great pleasure in seeing them in private, in society, and in their religious assemblies. They inspire me with an involuntary veneration.

Clothed with all that is most simple, plain, and modest, but at the same time, most neat, finished, and perfect, it has seemed to me that their mind shares in the whiteness of their beautiful linen, and must be as pure and as carefully tended as their clothes.

...

The places where the quakers assemble for worship, or rather for meditation, where they descend into their own thoughts, and await the inspiration of virtue in their hearts, are calculated to awaken respect.

This kind of temples, like those of the nations of antiquity, admits the light only from the roof. The walls are of a dazzling white; the wainscotting, unencumbered with sculpture, shines in the modest lustre of its native colours, and the exquisite cleanliness with which it is kept; the seats are simple benches, placed in parallel rows. In vain would one look here for paintings, statues, altars, priests, and acolytes. All these accessories are considered by the quakers as excrescences, devised by man, and foreign to the Supreme Being. They prefer to offer up to him pure hearts, and acts of virtue and beneficence. They are persuaded that nothing can be more agreeable to him than that mild philanthropy which induces them to regard all men as brothers and real friends, with whom they travel, in common, the short, but difficult road of life, in which they reciprocally stand in need of assistance.

They, accordingly, hold in abhorrence those cruel and sanguinary persons, who, from motives of ambition or vengeance, provoke war; that is, compel or excite men who have no real cause of quarrel, to cut each other's throats in cold blood.

When the quakers are assembled in their churches, the men occupy a place apart from that of the women, and have their heads covered with a black hat, of a broad half-cocked brim, without loop or button. Their eyes are humbly bent on the ground, and often entirely shut, to avoid any distraction in the midst of their contemplative meditations.

The women also have their heads covered with bonnets, made of silk, velvet, or straw, but very plain. They, in general, conceal their faces; at least they do so in this place of meditation. Their hair, too, is without powder, but is washed and trimmed with such neatness, that it forms one of their finest ornaments. They are attired in the most decent taste; their clothes, however, are generally made of the finest and choicest stuffs, though at the same time in a style of the greatest modesty.

At the farther end of the church there is a kind of platform, a little raised, and surrounded with a wooden balustrade. It is not a pulpit; it is rather a large and long tribune from which to harangue. Here it is that those (including the women) who are animated by heavenly inspiration, take their place, to communicate in a loud voice to their brethren the transports of their souls, and the impressive thoughts which the Eternal has sent to them.

I have often beheld them, in that prophetic state, with a perfect conviction that they were no more inspired by the breathing of the Holy Ghost, than was the Sybil in the time of the Oracles by the spirit of Apollo, or the Somnambulists, lately, by the illusions and signs of Mesmer.

But, making a distinction between the quakers, who are certainly sincere in their belief, and the latter, who exhibited nothing but imposture, I like to trace the impressions produced on them by the action of the mind, when too long employed in metaphysical abstractions. I saw some who, from fatigue of the head, ended by forgetting themselves, and believing they were inspired, broke the profound silence which reigns in these assemblies, and mounted the tribune.

Then it was that I delighted to watch them more closely, with the help of a glass. They keep their eyes half shut, or bent towards the ground, while slowly, and at long intervals, they pronounce some words in a sad and melancholy tone; supporting themselves with their hands strongly pressed against the balustrade of the rostrum, and seeming to make efforts to reach, and, as it were, to seize thoughts.

They then sway themselves backwards and forwards, sometimes sideways; at first with a slow and uniform motion, uttering some words more rapidly. Their action then redoubles: and this struggle of body and mind

soon drives the blood towards the head; the cheeks redden, a crowd of thoughts arises, expressions follow; the whole soul and heart are kindled; a sort of quaking appears, and the orator is inspired.*

The women in similar circumstances follow nearly the same course as the men; they are neither more nor less loquacious. Many of these discourses are below mediocrity; some are tolerable; it is even said that some are very eloquent; but all of them are favourably received. The subject always turn on the duties of man, on the pardon of sin, and of lessons of the most perfect morality. I heard a woman, one day, improvise a very fine prayer to God. She might possibly have known it by heart beforehand; or her feeling soul had had inspired that fine emotion of love and gratitude. Women will always give us lessons in this respect.

There are meetings at which nobody speaks, as might be expected among men of worth, happy in their own consciences, and more accustomed to put morality into practice, than to cry it up in words. As there are here no bespoken discourses, nor a pastor who governs the flock at pleasure, the only rule observed in this matter is, never to speak but from the impulse and transport of the heart. But as these depend upon an ardent soul, and a strong imagination, under the influence of physical causes, which must vary according to the season, the state of the air, or that of the health, it follows that the thermometer of the head, no less sensitive than that of art, must sometimes be found in a state of immobility and stagnation.

But what seems to distinguish this simple worship from many others is, that experience has proved that it leads men to the practice of their duties without wearying them with vain superstitions; that it makes virtue amiable, by presenting her under attractive forms; and that men of this disposition are valuable to a government, by their good example. Happy in their good deeds; rich, in general, from their application to industry, they furnish the strongest proof that the morality of individuals, by creating private happiness, give birth to public prosperity.

* It is this which has procured them the name of *quakers* [*Faujas' note*].

From A Journey Through England and Scotland to the Hebrides in 1784, edited by Sir Archibald Geikie (1907). The omitted third paragraph considers at length Quaker dress in the light of the theories of Faujas' mentor, the Comte du Buffon (1707-88) – e.g. that on first sight, people are judged by their clothes. Faujas' disparaging reference to Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815) reflects the view of most French intellectuals of the time that the discoverer of "animal magnetism", later called hypnosis, was a charlatan working with accomplices. It is now thought, however, that his successes with patients can be attributed to the placebo effect, then unidentified, and thus that he may have been sincere but mistaken, rather than fraudulent. Benjamin Franklin, the American ambassador, led the Royal Commission which condemned Mesmer's work, forcing him to leave France; Franklin, who also knew Faujas, provided letters of introduction to some of his acquaintances in Britain. – EDITOR.

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

**Minutes of Area Meeting held on Saturday 18 J March 2023
at Bellfield, Bellfield Street, Portobello
and by remote videoconferencing**

2023/03/01 Worship and introductions

During worship, we have heard read from the academic Howard Zinn (1922-2010): *“To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic ... To live now as we think human beings should live ... is itself a marvellous victory”*.

[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]

[*Redacted*]

2023/03/12 Closing minute

64 Friends (50 members, and 14 attenders, including seven children) have been at all or part of this meeting, either in person or by Zoom.

Local meeting attendance is indicated below:

Central Edinburgh 11 + 2 children	Central Fife -	East Lothian 4	Kelso 2	Penicuik 1
Polmont 5 + 2 children	Portobello & Musselburgh 24 + 3 children	South Edinburgh 9	Tweeddale 1	Visitors/Others -

We have welcomed our children to the meeting following their time together.

We record our thanks to Portobello & Musselburgh LM for organising this meeting and the social elements to come; to Edinburgh Youth Theatre for use of their wifi; to Duncan Wallace for setting up remote participation; to those who have cared for children during our meeting; and to the staff at Bellfield.

We next meet on Tuesday 9 May at 7.00 pm at Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh and by Zoom.

(Signed)

Alastair Cameron, Clerk
Cath Dyer, Assistant Clerk

The flowers are coming up all around us and we do have hope. (GM Minute 23/03/19)

SCOTTISH FAITHS ACTION FOR REFUGEES

Sanctuary Sunday – 25 June 2023

Churches across Scotland are encouraged on this day to take time to pray with and for refugees and asylum seekers in our communities and abroad. It is the last Sunday during 'Refugee Week' and follows 'World Refugee Day' on Saturday 24 June. There are more displaced people in the world today than at any other point in history; and the Bible is clear in its expression of God's loving concern for the stranger and refugee.

Celebrating **Sanctuary Sunday** is an opportunity to express our prayers and solidarity, but also to raise awareness again of our Christian calling to welcome the stranger and do this openly and proudly. More information will be made available before Refugee Week, at

<https://www.sfar.org.uk/get-involved/promote-sanctuary/sanctuary-sunday-2023/>

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 9.30 and 11.00 am. Tea & coffee after both; soup and bread & cheese lunch, 12.30.

Wednesday, 12.30–1.00 pm. Tea & coffee; you may bring your own lunch.

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 **Phil Lucas** for updates.

Kelso – QMH, Abbey Row, Kelso TD5 7JF

Sundays at 10.30 am. Contact **Anne Macnaughton** 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, with a children's meeting.

1st Sundays: Evening meeting at 7.30 pm; NO children's meeting.

Please contact **Robin Liebmann**, if you plan to attend at either time.

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

Sundays, 10.30 am. For information contact the clerking team, sedclerks@gmail.com.

Tweeddale – 2nd Tuesdays, at 6.30 pm. Contact **Anna Lawrence** for more details.

MEETING BY ZOOM

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

Every Sunday at 9.30 am and at 11.00 am (blended with the meetings 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 **Phil Lucas**

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

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 sedclerks@gmail.com.

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.