

SESAME

Number 248: July 2023

AM on 1 July/JYM Epistle/Climate Crisis/YFGM/Impressions of YM/
FWCC-EMES Epistle/'Captains, Kings and Soft Power'/Scottish Govt. Draft
Energy Strategy: PEWG's response/Letter writing to MSPs/Edinburgh QMH/
General Meeting/Statement on Peace in Ukraine/NFPB/Conscientious
Objection/Sanctuary Sunday/Sarah Grubb, 1782/May Minutes/ ... *etcetera*



Through a Doorway ... Friends at the Walpole Hall, 27 May (see overleaf and page 4.)

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SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

The next Area Meeting will be on Saturday 1 July 2023, at the Bleachingfield Centre, Bleachingfield, Countess Crescent, Dunbar EH42 1DX. It will also be possible to attend the Meeting online.

The business meeting will start at 11.30 am, with refreshments available from 11.00; the Zoom link will be open from 11.15. We will be winding up around 3.30, so there will still be plenty of time to enjoy a long summer's day at the seaside.

DRAFT AGENDA

1. Worship and introductions
2. Minutes of the meeting of 9 May 2023
3. Matters arising from previous meetings
4. Decisions by between-meeting procedure
5. Membership matters:
 1. *Transfer*
 2. *Death*
6. Junior Yearly Meeting 2023 – *report from participants*
 [See the JYM Epistle, opposite]
7. Matters from local meetings
 1. East Lothian – *memorial minute for Doreen Dodd*
 2. East Lothian – *pastoral care system*
8. Receipt of accounts for 2022
9. General Meeting matters
 1. *Options for Scotland*
10. Reports and correspondence
 1. *Hardship fund* (see minute 2023/01/10.2)
 2. *John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust – annual report for 2022*
 [See Sesame 247, page 25]
 [Cont'd opposite]

AT the AM event on Climate Crisis on 27 May (see page 4), participants in the art workshop, led by Diana Simcock, had the task to build and decorate, in just over an hour, a free-standing doorway, high enough for the tallest Friend present to walk through without bending, and wide enough for a wheelchair. Through the finished structure can be seen Friends still deep in conversation after the last plenary session had ended, including (standing) our GM and AM clerks, Michael Hutchinson and Alastair Cameron.

11. Appointments:
 1. *From Nominations Committee*
 2. *Reporter for General Meeting, 16 September 2023 at Inverness*
12. Area Meeting dates 2024
[Lunch]
13. Climate Justice – *report and discussion following ‘Stepping Through a Doorway’ event, 27 May [See overleaf]*
14. Closing minute

Epistle of Junior Yearly Meeting, 2023

To all Friends everywhere,

B*ETWEEN the 1 and 4 of April 2023, 46 participants and 10 adult volunteers gathered at the Frontier Centre in Northamptonshire to consider the theme:*

“Speaking Truth to Power: How can we release this energy to bring light to our worlds?”

Our weekend was filled with fascinating explorations of truth, power, and integrity. As young Quakers, we experienced the importance of building community and forming meaningful connections. Throughout the weekend, we participated in Base Groups, which provided a familial atmosphere that enabled us to quickly become comfortable with one another. This allowed us to let loose, laugh, and truly be ourselves.

We met daily in worship and felt enriched by the ministry shared, which was a vital part of our community. Through song, movement, and quiet reflection, we strengthened our spiritual connection. Together, we explored the subjectivity of definitions, the importance of discernment, and the balance between faith and practical action. The final epilogue ended with a bonfire, where we shared our gratitude for one another in an incredibly sentimental way.

Our community was further enhanced by a range of activities and events, including a Ceilidh, outdoor activities run by the Frontier Centre, and a quiz. The weather improved as our community strengthened, encouraging us to utilise the outdoors as well as the indoors.

Our theme was introduced by our Arrangements Committee, and their interpretations of it so far were shared. We ended with reflective questions including “How can we create positive change from intense feelings?” We contrasted these thoughts with actions by listening to the adult volunteer team sharing their experiences of speaking truth to power through different lenses. This included restoring historical voices, smashing a Banksy and speaking Truth to Power as part of the trade union movement.

Our guest speakers included Paul Parker, who shared reflections on the work of Marjory Post Abbott. This discussed Everyday Prophets, and how young Quakers who are often called ‘the future’ of Quakerism can hold this prophetic role as

Quakers now. The session enabled us to appreciate the importance of speaking with love. Jude Acton encouraged the group to explore what speaking truth to power meant to us as individuals as well as members of communities. We shared in groups how we might do this in our everyday lives. This thought-provoking session raised a multitude of questions that the community was very eager to engage with. This contributed to making our Quaker Meeting for Worship for Business so powerful.

As we reflect on our time together, we are filled with gratitude for the connections we formed and the insights we gained. We depart with a renewed sense of purpose and a commitment to speak truth to power in our everyday lives.

We wish to share the final paragraph of our minute, as we leave this community ready to seek the balance between speaking truth and hearing it in our lives.

“To speak truth to power is as much about knowing when to use our voice as it is to use our silence. This balance is quintessential, if we only speak we have no chance to listen inclusively but if we only listen we cannot bring about change. This balance is the answer.”

Signed in and on behalf of Junior Yearly Meeting 2023,

Eve Park

Olwyn Lewis-Bowen

“Stepping Through a Doorway”

St Mary’s Episcopal Cathedral, 27 May 2023

I approached this day with some trepidation, not at all keen on the idea of spending 7+ hours with a large group of worthy Quakers, and fearing I would emerge feeling more depressed and guilty than at the start. When could I make my excuses and bolt? Lunchtime, perhaps ...

In fact, I found it nourishing. The organisers evidently understood and planned for the range of emotions and baggage represented in the room, and the day was thoroughly worthwhile. I stayed right to the end. There was a variety of whole group and workshop activities with songs to top and tail the day.

Memorable snapshots for me were being made to talk for four minutes to a small group on the subject of our dependence on fossil fuels and then to listen to an octopus reflecting on how they observed the mess we humans are making of it all; facing a stranger, making eye contact for perhaps three minutes, and listening as powerful words were read about our individual gifts and potential; getting some hard facts and figures about where the money is going; a ten-minute presentation on the history of climate justice, with the links made between colonialism, slavery and the burden today on those who have already been exploited and abused thanks to our historic and current greed.

The absolute highlight for me was the workshop on mental health; I took away from that the observation that we are the planet; if we do not look after ourselves, we are in no position to act effectively in the climate emergency.

A heartfelt thank-you to the organisers.

Esther Shreeve

The workshop in which Esther participated is described below; there were five others in the course of the day. In the morning, as well as the art workshop, a writing workshop led by Anna Levin extolled “the practice of writing as a tool for transformation”, while Suzanne Ismail of QPSW led one entitled ‘Follow the Money!’ on how the global financial system is at the heart of climate crisis, and what can be done about it. After lunch, Rosemary Hartill delivered a presentation (prepared by Rebecca Woo, QPSW) on ‘Climate Justice, from Slavery to Now’ which led into a workshop discussing ‘Making Climate Justice Real’ by working with others (e.g. Christian Aid – see page 39). Meanwhile, Sarah Gittins led one on the natural world – ‘Plants are our teachers’ – and of course there was also ...

Health and wellbeing workshop, led by Jane Lewis & Lesley Morrison

There were 13 people in the workshop; after an opening silence, Jane read us Miroslav Holub’s poem, ‘The Door’, which encourages us to open the door and see what comes in.

Lesley read Rumi’s poem ‘The Guesthouse’ which urges us to greet all internal guests at the door laughing and let them in! Jane then led us in a mindfulness practice called RAIN devised by Tara Brach to help with difficulties in a gentle, more accepting, mindful way. We were invited to bring to mind any difficulty and to begin by **Recognising** it, opening the door of the guesthouse to this difficulty. We then moved onto **Allowing** the difficulty – can we invite it in, to sit down and have a cup of tea? The next stage was to **Investigate** the difficulty in 3 areas: sensations in the body, thoughts and emotions. We ended with **Non-attachment** – can we begin to see that we are more than the difficulty? Is it maybe not quite as solid as we thought? Can we allow the mind to be vast like the sky and the difficulty like a cloud passing through? And we also offer ourselves some **Nurturing** because we acknowledge that this can be hard.

After the practice people were invited to share their experiences in pairs and then, if they wished, within the larger group.

Lesley read the poem, ‘Clearing’ by Martha Postlethwaite, about not trying to do everything but creating a clearing in your mind and waiting for what arrives. She shared thoughts about the parallels between the experience of bereavement for a loved one and bereavement for the planet as we have known it. Both losses cause shock, denial, depression, and anger, and can go on to acceptance and action. We are all part of one eco-system and, by looking after ourselves, we become better at looking after others and the planet. Individual health and planetary health are interlinked.

Around the room were quotes relating to wellbeing and the climate crisis, and participants were asked to move around, read them and settle at one or two which spoke most to them. In feedback form the groups of two and threes, people were invited to share a “jewel” from what someone else had said. This led to a discussion about what these responses meant for community climate action.

Quotes included:

“Come to the woods for there is rest”, *John Muir*

“Be the change you want to see in the world”, *Mahatma Gandhi*

“May your choices reflect your hopes and not your fears”, *Nelson Mandela*

“Beyond right and wrong there is a field. I will meet you there”, *Rumi*

“Imagination is more important than knowledge”, *Albert Einstein*

“Those who seek new land have to spend a long time out of sight of shore”, *Andre Gide*

“In a dark time, the eye begins to see”, *Theodore Roethke*

Lesley Morrison

[Holub’s ‘The Door’ and Jalaluddin Rumi’s ‘The Guest House’ are on the website of the Scottish Poetry Library at <https://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poem/door/> & <https://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poem/guest-house/> respectively; Martha Postlethwaite’s ‘Clearing’ is at <https://www.mindfulnessassociation.net/words-of-wonder/clearing-martha-postlethwaite/>.]



Photographs by Jonathan Baxter

Young Friends General Meeting, Bristol, 26-29 May

On behalf of South East Scotland AM, Bel Ingham and Dan Dickson attended the May 2023 Young Friends General Meeting (YFGM) at Redland Meeting House. YFGM is a vibrant and dynamic community of young adults aged 18-35 in the Religious Society of Friends, with three General Meetings held at different Meeting Houses throughout the year, with planning and special interest events in between. A YFGM weekend focuses on silent worship together, with special interest groups and spirituality sessions to explore how our faith is calling us to act. Community building is front and centre, with meals cooked communally, and ample opportunities for developing national ties and friendships.

Over a sunny bank holiday weekend, we covered a variety of topics: our approaches to racism and transphobia; sharing YFGM processes with local meetings; and what YFGM would like to see on the Yearly Meeting agenda. There were workshops on British Sign Language and Mary Magdalene, and a convening of YFGM's Tea Club. Minutes of the business meetings held over the weekend can be found on YFGM's website, <https://yfgm.quaker.org.uk/>, and include minutes on the testimony and gathering regarding the life of our Friend Naomi Haigh, and reports from role holders and representatives, and of in-person planning weekends.

Throughout all sessions and Meetings, there was an acute sense of need for community recovery and rejuvenation in the aftermath of the pandemic restrictions, and an understanding that this cannot be achieved by stripping back on events, but rather creating new opportunities for connection and joy within YFGM. A sense that is shared, we believe, across all of our Quaker communities.

We found that the strength of YFGM is this commitment to connection and joy as a foundation of our activities as Friends, brought together by a shared hope to leave the world a better place than as we found it. YFGMers work diligently and courageously year-round, asking the difficult questions, and seeking better ways of being. We're inspired by the words of YFGM's co-clerks Tim and Hannah; *"Questioning ourselves, being aware of our vulnerability and our limits, is a kind of strength we must value and must nourish. How can we make ourselves better? How can we share our light with others? How do we want to spend this precious time together? It can be fraught, and tiring, to answer questions honestly. We spend a lot of time seeking truth and speaking truth and being true to ourselves in a way that is very vulnerable and can be quite scary."*

**Dan Dickson
Bel Ingham**

The next meeting of YFGM will be over the weekend 20–22 October, at Lancaster Quaker Meeting House. Further details will be posted nearer the time at:

<https://yfgm.quaker.org.uk/event/yfgm-october-2023/>

Yearly Meeting 2023: Two Personal Views

Kate Arnot and Alison Burnley responded to the request for impressions of BYM; and, rather than try to conflate their accounts, we are including both, side by side. Alison's is on the left, Kate's (in Roman type) on the right. Small capitals (THUS) have been added to both reports to mark the start of sections on particular sessions. Editor

***B**RTAIN Yearly Meeting is one of the highlights of my year (the other is four days of patchwork at Glenthorne). Why? – because I really appreciate the way in which we seek the will of God for us, not just what some of us might want.*

FRIDAY EVENING, the first session, is important as a procedural affair, with approval needed for long lists of committee nominees. This is significant work and is a good opportunity to practice how we do business.

*It was the fourth time we had online attendance, which is good for those who cannot attend in person. Our Clerk, **Adwoa Burnley**, hoped that everyone present could feel a full part of the meeting, whether there for the fiftieth or the first time – there were 240 for whom it was the latter. Every Friend brought something important.*

***Rosie Carnall**, co-clerk of the Book of Discipline Revision Committee, spoke to us about how the work is going, reminding us they had been asked to be “prayerful, joyful, creative and bold”. The Committee is grateful for notes and suggestions from Friends – even when some are contradictory.*

During the weekend we welcomed Friends from Yearly Meetings around the world, and visitors from other churches and faiths in Britain.

On SATURDAY MORNING we had a video of the epistle from Junior Yearly Meeting – always a joy. We then moved to a consideration of how we are now as a Yearly Meeting. Prepared ministry led us to realise how everything has changed as a

***B**RTAIN Yearly Meeting, like all business meetings everywhere, probably, is a mixture of routine, perennial items and new matters. It was blended, with Friends attending in person and Friends attending on Zoom. This year was made easier for me as I had requested paper copies of documents in advance. There are pages and pages to download or you have to take a lap top with you, unless your smartphone enables you to read on a small screen lots and lots of words. (I have a paper copy of the Testimonies, including one about our much missed Friend **Pat Lucas**, which I'd be happy to pass on to anyone who'd like it).*

*All sessions begin and end with worship. FRIDAY EVENING, the first session, is never the most enthralling, consisting, as it does, of much necessary business which is almost all agreed after a very brief pause. However, the mood was lightened by **Rosie Carnall**, co-clerk to the committee working on the revision of the Book of Discipline. She updated us as to where the Committee had reached. (Friends will see Mary Woodward's regular progress reports of the many groups making up the committee).*

SATURDAY MORNING was Session 2 and began with an 'always' item of business, welcoming Friends from other Yearly Meetings, either on Zoom or in person. A very welcome video of the epistle from Junior Yearly Meeting followed. Then we heard of

result of the pandemic: how Zoom has enabled attendance at meetings for worship and committees; also, how meeting in person is valued where before we took it for granted. We talked about—and around—the title of the session, ‘Releasing Energy and Revitalising Quaker Communities.’ Friends in Wales are changing their structures; this is of interest to us in Scotland as we face the future. These ideas continued into the afternoon. **Beth Allen’s** words from 2007 in Quaker Faith & Practice 8.24 are pertinent now. Nothing is set in stone – we are continuing to evolve and change to fit into a changing world.

On SATURDAY EVENING was the Swarthmore Lecture, by **Esther Loukin**. Esther is a disabled Friend, and told us how disability has made her an activist, using court action to raise awareness as well as to secure access. It was an eye-opener of a lecture: the planning needed just to leave the house is a whole new idea for those of us not yet needing a wheelchair.

SUNDAY MORNING: Meeting for Worship all together. We were as ever connected to Friends across Britain and worldwide by what I consider magic. The younger children had loads of pencils and lots of paper to draw houses, one of the topics they had been thinking about. Worshipping with so many people in so many different places, time zones and conditions was deep, rich and meaningful.

A good place too to start from as we heard from **Diane Randall**, who had served as General Secretary to the US Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) until 2021. The theme of the session was Truth and Integrity. Her prepared ministry was moving. Lots of questions were raised: how to speak truth to power, and maintain our commitment to truth and integrity when facing flurries

how Friends in Wales had discerned ways of change to enable fewer roles being required, freeing up energy to deepen spiritual growth of Meetings for Worship. I found this session very uplifting.

After the break, we had another ‘always’ item, hearing (part of) an epistle from another Yearly Meeting, before moving on to hear from the Clerk of BYM Trustees. Since the topic was the relationship among our Central Committees and Trustees I was surprised that the Clerk to Sufferings did also not speak to us. The minute took some time to draft.

SATURDAY EVENING – the Swarthmore Lecture was by **Esther Loukin**, co-founder of Reasonable Access, “Empowering and enabling disabled people to assert and enforce our access rights through peer support” [see the website: <https://www.reasonableaccess.org.uk/>] It was at once dispiriting; informative; inspiring.

SUNDAY MORNING is one of the best times of the weekend, with Meeting for Worship which Meetings all round the world (or at least Britain) had been invited to join. Vocal Ministry was amazing, and some spoke to me and some didn’t. I never expected to hear sin spoken of so forcefully in a Quaker Meeting. More to be greatly engaged in followed – information about the children’s programmes. As always, there is so much creativity and joy when being with/hearing of the children’s and young people’s programmes. We can learn so much.

Another ‘always’ followed, welcoming interfaith and ecumenical visitors, followed by a speaker from the [US] Friends Committee on National Legislation, who shared with us the dif-

of political lies; but the hope was that we can, starting in our own communities, for it is not just a matter of concern in high politics. We as a Yearly Meeting will be going deeper into these issues in 2024.

The SUNDAY AFTERNOON session was 'Looking at Meeting for Sufferings'. This was complicated: I felt confused, even bemused; but I hope to understand eventually. (It is all very different from when I served on Sufferings.) It appears there needs to be an agreement as to where Meeting for Sufferings, the BYM Trustees, and Yearly Meeting in Session stand in relation to one another. I will not try to explain – there was a very good report in The Friend (5 May: page 19). The consideration extended through MONDAY MORNING.

MONDAY AFTERNOON: we were presented with the Epistle. It always strikes me how the drafting committee manages to say in so few well-chosen words what we have been working through over four days – amazing. Then, joy: we had the epistles from children, 0-18. They always do so well, reading their epistles clearly, and these are a delight, and moving.

There were thoughts quoted in The Friend which seem appropriate:

"It's a huge problem, but I think progress is being made."

"Speaking truth is a practice of staying open to what we don't know."

"We are a people ... forever in transition. To be faithful is to be open to change."

On 1 July – so clashing with our own Area Meeting – there will be a further day to work on the Meeting for Sufferings/BYM Trustees/Yearly Meeting in Session situation; also to deal with routine business which was squeezed off the

faculties for truth and integrity after the election of Donald Trump (which had existed before but quickened) and how we can learn from past mistakes and harms, carried out with the best of intentions.

On SUNDAY AFTERNOON, in Session 5, we heard from the Clerk to Meeting for Sufferings (MfS), followed by a member of the group set up to review MfS. I've understood the role of MfS as being the prophetic voice of BYM, but saw few signs of that when serving as an alternate representative (although I only got to a few meetings as the rep mainly attended). The relationship between MfS and BYM Trustees is similar to that between Area Meeting and AM Trustees, but the latter, it seems to me, is a much easier one, involving a much smaller body of people, fewer employees and a lot less money and assets. MfS and Trustees are both accountable to BYM.

*Of the three options from the review group, if MfS is a prophetic body *i.e.* speaking as moved by God, it seems bizarre to me that its powers should be limited. As there was not unity, the Recording Clerk was asked to speak and his contribution was very helpful. We were still not in unity and there was more ministry and discernment on Monday morning. (Sunday evening was meeting the Swarthmore lecturer and I needed to rest).*

My final session was MONDAY MORNING, as I wanted to be on a train that got me home not too late. Metaphors of gardening and water enabled us finally to accept a minute, agreeing to seek change and release energy within our 'corporate structures'. (These last two words do not speak to me: how very uninspiring and secular).

agenda by the consideration of the matter running over on to Monday morning.

Being slower these days, I did not get to any special interest groups – I know I miss a huge amount of truly good and important stuff, but I did meet up with people I know whom I only get to see at Yearly Meeting. So it's swings and roundabouts. I love BYM in Session, and will go for as long as I can.

And did I mention that Adwoa Burnley is my daughter? With love to all, from the mother of our clerk – a very proud mummy!

A.B.

As always, BYM was very well organised, with longish breaks to enable everyone to get fed and meet up with Friends from the past and from other parts of Britain. Group fairs took place over lunchtimes, enabling us to talk to the vast number of Quaker bodies working around the world. This year I liked the meals, which it was requested be booked in advance to prevent waste (although you could still buy food on the day). The courtyard setting is lovely. It is expensive to attend YM in person – three hotel nights – but AM has bursaries and no one should be deterred by cost. **K.A.**

Yearly Meeting 2024 will be held over five days, 26-30 July, but rather than being a residential event on a university campus will take place at Friends House in London.



Yearly Meeting, c. 1840, by Samuel Lucas [see Sesame 245 for biographical details]

Epistle from the FWCC Europe & Middle East Section Annual Meeting 4-7 May 2023

Responding with hope to God's call to cherish creation – and one another

*For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare
and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Jeremiah 29:11 (NRSV)*

To Friends everywhere, greetings:

DEAR FRIENDS, *annwyl cyfeillion, kjære venner, chers amis, liebe Freunde, lieve vrienden, queridos amigos, cari amici, kära vänner, kære venner, rakkaat ystävät, kallid sõbrad, drazí přátelé, dārgie draugi, dragi prijatelji, допози друзи, допозве друзья, kedves barátaim, drodzy przyjaciele, Shanovni Droozi, a chairde, Salamaat Asdiqa*

Loving greetings to Friends everywhere from the FWCC Europe & Middle East Section Annual Meeting 2023, meeting at Woodbrooke, UK, and online.

Our annual meeting this year saw sixty Friends gather together from the Europe & Middle East Section and further afield. Since the start of the coronavirus pandemic this was our second blended annual meeting together in person with attendees at Woodbrooke and on Zoom. Fifty of us met in person and ten Friends participated through Zoom. Alma was our youngest joy at a year-and-a-half old.

We were able to create a rich experience. Cultivating joyful relationships enabled us to do our work. We became a gathered community.

Silence was deep when we commemorated Friends who died last year, we gave thanks for their lives and they will inspire us into the future.

Sandra Berry, Director of Woodbrooke, greeted us and she invited us to share memories of Woodbrooke. From Simon Best we heard about the wide variety of courses and other possibilities to pursue studies online and at places we invite Woodbrooke to in the upcoming years.

Personal testimonies and introductions of Finland, France, Netherlands Yearly Meetings also from Poland and FWCC Asia West Pacific Section enriched and inspired us to know more about activities of smaller groups, and co-operation within the YMs and beyond. The situation of the sold properties was explained, as well as figuring out the new normal after the pandemic, and searching for ways of outreach.

Meetings for worship were held, and gathered friends from across the section at Woodbrooke and online. Worship sharings brought us to discern more clearly, giving rise to thoughts and encouragement to bring back home.

In the reports from last year, we heard about activities that made us grateful for the work that had been done, and the efforts Friends put in. We were encouraged to work on sharing content in different languages and to find ways for outreach on social media. During the Meeting for Business we looked at the Accounts, the Budget, making the plans for and working on the discerned and most valued activities in the upcoming year.

Quaker United Nations Office New York and Geneva, Northern Friends Peace Board, Europe & Middle East Young Friends, Quaker Council for Euro-

pean Affairs, Quaker International Educational Trust and the FWCC World Office inspired us with their ongoing work, through means of quiet diplomacy and ways towards human and ecological security. We were reminded that we must keep asking what love requires of us.

Timothy Ashworth opened up the keynote quotations from Jeremiah and world Friends, in the lecture 'Sustaining Hope: Faith for Long the Term'. Can the generosity in ourselves be set free to make our partners "glow", as Bjork sings in her song from *Biofilia*? Our speakers on climate change and Quaker history brought us challenging themes to reflect upon. In our Home Groups we attempted to answer some of the questions we were given:

- Jeremiah's message was a deeply controversial one in his time, counselling acceptance in the face of dominant power. In our own time of crisis, are we open to a call that prioritises the nurture of our families and communities?
- Are we in a position of creative responsiveness to the biblical story, such that we can share in authentic dialogue with Friends from around the world?
- Both the early Christians and the early Quakers felt they were on the cusp of a breakthrough for humankind. Both groups used words like "yearning" and "longing" for new life to come. In our time, how do we hold in our hearts the hope for that new life even as we are realistic about the risk and pain in our present crises?
- What is our gut reaction to the idea of linking our care for creation with the parts of creation that are closest to us – our most intimate partners in life? What bridges do we need to build towards each other? Can the generosity in ourselves be set free to make our partners "glow"?
- What is the source of an authentic hope that will sustain us 'woven together in transformative faith and love'? We are a people of faith and follow the eternal Truth of the Spirit, which has many names around the world.
- Do we challenge growth for economic growth's sake? Early Friends like James Naylor showed great courage in their conviction. Many Friends are doing so now in their stands on the environment.
- How do we convey our epistle to those who name the spirit differently to the Bible?

A personal testimony reminded us that the words we choose to use will limit the way we think and live. All creation, including us humans, goes into the ark before the rainbow. Sustainability is the watchword. Our dependency on the earth that sustains us, is central to the continuation of our existence.

As part of the new Sustainability Policy 2022, *Among Friends* and other publications have been moved from print to instead be available online. We were considering the climate impact of our events and travel. We need to find a way to reduce the damage of the climate crises – find out what is needed and cooperate with Friends from other Sections. We made a good start and have a road ahead. We need to find the answer for our questions such as: What is the strength of our conviction?

We heard testimony on what it is like to live up to Quaker values in a war situation, help refugees, stand up for the rights of those suffering and the challenges of living up to Quaker values.

Video greetings from Friends in Ukraine and friends in Georgia deeply moved us. Some talked of sustaining hope for peace in the horrible war situation. Others shared their views and different experiences, explaining that you can fight without weapons, with the power of creativity and resistance. Central European Gathering and The Funding for Ukraine Group shared experience of ongoing aid work that's still needed, as well as keeping in touch without humiliating those in need.

We heard about the preparations for the FWCC World Plenary Meeting in 2024 in South Africa. We are invited to discern the possibilities of creating hubs in our Section/Yearly Meetings/Area Meetings so that we create the environment for Friends from our area to join in the Plenary Meeting and connect to Friends from other Sections of FWCC.

The introduction of the current situation of the Ramallah Friends School in Palestine highlighted the importance of staying committed to Quaker values and the sustenance they can give when everyday activities and tasks have been disrupted or made hard to accomplish in a situation of frequent military onslaught, checkpoints and unequal civil rights. Supporting Friends from this area of our Section and their work is very much needed and appreciated. Sami Cortas from the Quaker meeting in Brummana in Lebanon reminded us of the quiet Quaker way, our peace testimony, seeing that of God in everyone and how they had inspired former pupils of the school with different backgrounds and beliefs. On Sunday morning we joined in Meeting for Worship with Quakers in Kyiv and their supporters around the globe. Our prayers are with all those involved.

Our meeting was worthwhile beyond words. Next year we hope to meet, thanks to online devices, relying only on Zoom. Please do think about joining us.

*I*N FRIENDSHIP, *mewn cyfeillgarwch, i vennskap, i vänskap, i venskab, ystävydessä, bien amicalement, in Freundschaft, in Vriendschap, en amistad, in amicizia, v přátelství, u prijateljstvu, draudzība, baráti üdvözlettel, sõpruses, w przyjaźni, Zi Droozhnim privitom, в дружби, в дружбе, le cairdeas, fi alsadaqa.*

Signed on behalf of FWCC Europe & Middle East Section,

Ethel Livermore

Clerk

Friends World Committee for Consultation was formed in 1937, to help bring Quakers together across theological and cultural diversity. Its primary task is still to help Friends appreciate and develop unity within the diversity of the Quaker family, and it also speaks on behalf of Quakers in international spaces such as the UN. See <https://fwcc.world/about-us/>. The Europe & Middle East Section (other sections cover Africa, Asia & West Pacific, and the Americas) has affiliated meetings and groups in 34 countries. See <https://fwccemes.org/>

Captains, Kings and soft power: a Quaker view

THE TUMULT and the shouting has died. And though the captains and the kings may not have departed, they have, for the present, disappeared from our screens.

The power-pageant of throne and altar has rightly been much anatomised and discussed. This will continue to be examined for as long as there are those who do not understand that the relationships of Establishment are inimical to the Gospel.

The overwhelmingly military dramaturgy of the Coronation ceremony manifests that lack of understanding. From the display of synchronised marching through the ceremonial quarter of London, to the ritual bearing and presentation of swords and spurs within Westminster Abbey as symbols of monarchical rule, there was no escaping the fact that at present, militarism is inseparable from monarchy in this country.

Though public enthusiasm for war may be diminishing, its pageantry retains a strong hold on our emotional responses. It is not difficult to see why. Military personnel on parade in a glitter of scarlet, blue and gold present a spectacle to remember, and onto which we may project nostalgia for Empire. Over 6,000 members of the Armed Forces took part in the Coronation procession in May, and the choreography was impeccable; the skill and discipline undeniable. Such trim and tackle can tug at something within us which needs to be acknowledged, even as we may deplore it. Gerard Manley Hopkins dares upon it in his sonnet *The Soldier*:

*Yes. Why do we all, séeing of a soldier, bless him? bléss
Our redcoats, our tars? Both thése being, the greater part,
But frail clay, nay but foul clay. Hére it is: the heart,
Since, proud, it calls the calling manly, gives a guess
That, hopes that, mákesbelieve, the men must be no less;
It fancies, feigns, deems, déars the artist after his art;
And fain will find as sterling all as all is smart,
And scarlet wéar the spirit of war thére express.*

...

It is this uncomfortable sense of paradox with which those of us who identify as pacifists or adherents of active non-violence must sometimes struggle. Whilst never doubting that all war is, in John Steinbeck's words, "... a symptom of man's failure as a thinking animal", I have to recognise that we inherit centuries of the illusions spawned by that failure; of Wilfred Owen's "old lie" and of the ardour "for some desperate glory".

It is important to me, as a Quaker, to constantly remind myself of these words from the Public Statement of the Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa/New Zealand, made in 1987: "We may disagree with the views and actions of the politician or the soldier who opts for a military solution, but we still respect and cherish the person."

Quakers are not alone in being opposed to war whilst refusing to hold enmity towards military personnel, or to take lightly their undoubted courage and skill. And I am certain that most who have seen armed conflict, abhor its horror and futility. Here, I am heartened by a recent conversation with a serving soldier, a thoughtful man who, in telling me how seriously he takes the care of the young men and women under his authority, included these words: "so long as we need soldiers..."

In our current approach to human conflict, it seems we do need soldiers. But we also need to strive towards a cast of mind which does not see armed force as the standard fallback position. For, as American theologian Stanley Hauerwas said, "As long as it is assumed that war is an available option, we will not be forced to imagine any alternative to war." The embedding of military display in both a once-in-generation event and in what has been characterised by the Peace Pledge Union as 'everyday militarism' [see <https://www.ppu.org.uk/everyday-militarism>] draws us away from considering what that might mean for wise governance and civic society.

So, a small thought experiment. When Prince George comes of age, will it be possible for him *not* to join one of the armed forces? Might a young man whose training will bend towards the concept of service, feel able to spend a few years working in an area of soft power? As a volunteer with a humanitarian NGO for example? Going forward a few years, must he become honorary colonel of a regiment? Must he, as Prince of Wales, wear military uniform at his wedding and as George VII, at his coronation? May he not, as the head of state to whom the military swear allegiance, have gained their respect for the discipline and courage of serving by unarmed force?

In June, Armed Forces Day, which focuses on the excitement and spectacle of the ceremonial aspects of the military, again draws us away from considering these difficult matters. A good time, perhaps, to consider another stanza from the poem which I referenced at the head of this piece: *Recessional* by Rudyard Kipling:

*"Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget – lest we forget!"*

Jill Segger

Reprinted with permission from <https://www.ekklesia.co.uk/2023/05/14/15308/>. Jill Segger, a member of Ipswich & Diss AM, is a freelance writer who contributes to the Church Times, The Catholic Herald, Tribune, The Friend and Reform, among other publications. Her *Words Out of Silence*, "a tapestry of poetry and prose" was published by Ekklesia in 2019, ISBN 978-0-993294-28-0.

"At the age of four with paper hats and wooden swords we're all Generals. Only some of us never grow out of it."

Romanoff and Juliet, 1956, by **Peter Ustinov** (1921-2004)

Scottish Government Consultation: **Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan (DESJTP)**

Earlier this year, the Scottish Government ran a consultation on its Draft Energy and Just Transition Plan, to which the GM Parliamentary Engagement Working Group (PEWG) responded, answering about thirty of its 50 questions (the others, we felt, were beyond us). We introduced our response with a statement of how Quaker testimonies are the basis for all the work we do, and specifically for the response. What would a strong commitment to truth and integrity, sustainability, simplicity, equality and peace require in the context of the Government's plans for energy and just transition?

We are glad to reflect now that the approach ties in with the recent BYM focus on truth and integrity in public life which will also be a keynote theme at GM in June.

Our full response to the consultation is to be put on the Quakers in Scotland website at <https://www.quakerscotland.org/our-work/parliamentary-engagement>. But it occurred to us that the opening statement in itself could be interesting or useful to Friends: for discussion in Meetings, or to send to an MSP. A short draft covering letter follows the statement, in case you would like to do this and would find a draft helpful. If you decide to use it, please do let us know as it would be a great encouragement!

Carolyn Burch and Richard Raggett (PEWG Convenors)

QUAKERS are a faith group committed to trying to live by, and work for, **peace, equality, truth, simplicity and sustainability, our five Quaker "testimonies"**. We hope to promote these values across Scotland through practical action and advocacy, and they underpin our response to this consultation. Quakers have as a guide a handbook, *Quaker Faith & Practice* which includes *Advices & Queries* (A. & Q.) to help us check our own lives against the values we hold. Examples are referenced in this statement which is an explanation of our approach to the DESJTP consultation.

As Quakers we believe that humans "*do not own the World and its riches are not ours to dispose of at will*" (A. & Q. 42). In the face of overwhelming evidence of rapidly increasing destruction of the life systems of the Earth we are called to work for an equitable way of life, driven by justice rather than greed, so that human life on earth is sustainable and fulfils the best of human potential. Decisions about energy sourcing and usage are absolutely key, as is a just transition which for us has a global meaning, incorporating international climate justice.

Peace Our commitment to peace convinces us that 'energy security' has to mean sourcing energy in a way that does not risk leading to conflict within our own society or internationally, over access to the world's resources. Our energy must be genuinely renewable – not only energy for home consumption but also energy we export, so that our energy policy overall is in every aspect contributing to a peaceful transition away from fossil fuels.

(A. & Q. 31) '*Search out whatever in your own way of life may contain the seeds of war*'.

Simplicity Demand reduction should be a foremost part of the energy and just transition strategy. But not as a negative ‘deprivation’ but as a vision of a healthier more equitable world: improvement, not loss, of quality of life. The health benefits of ending our dependence on fossil fuels do not receive enough emphasis. The document is not clear on current demand and needs nor does it explain and prioritise how we can reduce our energy use and live within planetary limits; on the contrary, it seems to assume we should generate as much energy as possible, which is not a sustainable model.

(A. & Q. 41) *‘Try to live simply. A simple lifestyle freely chosen is a source of strength. Do not be persuaded into buying what you do not need or cannot afford. Do you keep yourself informed about the effects your style of living is having on the global economy and environment?’*

Equality Our commitment to equality leads us to see the concept of just transition applying not only across our own society but across international boundaries too. We are fully behind the Scottish government’s commitment to Loss and Damage finance, for example. It is vital that we wealthier nations cut emissions rapidly and limit climate collapse as much as we can, since we have caused and continue to cause this damage and are already responsible for extensive suffering.

In the context of our own society, we feel the strategy could be more openly progressive in proposing redistributive measures to make the transition feasible and affordable to all.

We would like to see clear timetable of radical steps to achieve significant demand reduction (which we’d prefer to frame as ‘need reduction’) through expedited efficiency / retrofitting in buildings, and through radical policy on publicly owned electrified public transport. This would demonstrate how the just transition is also for communities beyond the oil and gas employment sector.

Truth and Integrity Our commitment to truth and integrity convinces us that the Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan needs to be open, honest and clear.

The major example of where we would like to see greater integrity is in the references to maximum economic recovery from oil and gas. In the Cabinet Secretary’s Ministerial Statement, at the launch of the DESJTP, he said: *“Our previous policy position of maximum economic recovery is no longer appropriate.”* and *“This means that domestic production will effectively end within the next 20 years if we do nothing. The draft Strategy is consulting on whether we should act faster than this”*.

But the draft strategy itself includes no statement that this is no longer appropriate. We were glad to see the wording that: *“The Scottish Government is clear that unlimited extraction of fossil fuels is not consistent with our climate obligations. It is also clear that unlimited extraction, even if the North Sea was not a declining resource as outlined above, is not the right solution to the*

energy price crisis that people across Scotland are facing or to meeting our energy security needs."

But for the strategy to have integrity this should be made explicit in a **clear statement that maximum economic recovery is no longer the policy of the Scottish Government.**

We believe the text also shows a lack of integrity when, in several instances, it appears to conflate 'low carbon and renewable' hydrogen (only in the glossary are the separate meanings acknowledged). The text falls short of openly explaining that there is a massive difference between low carbon ('blue') and renewable ('green') hydrogen in their appropriateness as part of an Energy Strategy aimed at lower carbon emissions. Hydrogen is simply *not* 'low carbon' unless green, and its efficiency is not great even when green; moreover, green/renewable hydrogen cannot be made at massive scale without removing renewable energy potential from other needs. (More detail and source references are provided in our answers to the relevant consultation questions.) The section on hydrogen is a stark example of the draft strategy being less than direct in its message, and we hope this can be re-thought. Similarly, we are concerned about the lack of truthfulness about CCUS [*carbon capture, utilisation and storage*]. It is not tried and tested, and this should be made clearer; in addition, the strategy should put the onus of proof of efficacy onto the private sector who are taking a lead in developing CCUS and aim to profit from it.

Another worrying conflation is between community energy and shared ownership.

(A. & Q. 37) *'Are you honest and truthful in all you say and do? Do you maintain strict integrity in business transactions and in your dealings with individuals and organisations?'* (A. & Q. 38) *'If pressure is brought upon you to lower your standard of integrity, are you prepared to resist it?'*

Sustainability This clearly applies across the strategy. Points made above indicate some of the ways in which we feel the strategy could be genuinely sustainable, by avoiding false solutions and expediting truly sustainable ones in a fearlessly equitable way. It's also so vital to bring people with you. Please consider building more of an educational element into the strategy so that it draws people in and helps them believe in it for their children's future and wellbeing as members of our workforce and society.

We are concerned about the prevalence of 'net zero' as the aim. The use of this term places a strong emphasis on carbon removal and offsetting, while offering no guide to the extent of their contribution towards the goal. This leaves a large loophole for the continuation of "business as usual" based on the assumption that carbon emissions emitted into the atmosphere now will be removed at some future date by the yet-to-be proven technologies of CCUS, and carbon offsetting projects. The primary emphasis must be to reduce the pumping of carbon emissions into the air by as much as possible, as fast as possible.

Scotland's energy strategy can in the end only have a small effect on global carbon emissions and the future of life on earth. But it is looked to as an example, and has acted admirably in many ways, the commitment to Loss and Damage finance being one, and ambitious emission reduction targets being another. But it should also be an example in terms of the truthfulness and the sustainability of its policy.

'Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you may come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone.' (A. & Q., quotation from George Fox, founder of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), 1656.)

Dear [MSP's name: if in doubt, see <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/scotland/>]

As I am sure you know, the Scottish Government has recently run a consultation (closing date 9 May) on its Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan.

Quakers in Scotland as a faith group are taking an active interest in the government's approach to energy and the just transition, and our Parliamentary Engagement Working Group has responded to the consultation on our behalf. The response was introduced by the attached statement on how the Quaker 'testimonies' or core values – truth and integrity, sustainability, simplicity, equality and peace – are the grounding for all our advocacy, and specifically for this consultation response.

Where would a strong commitment to these values lead, in the context of the government's plans for energy and just transition?

I would be glad to hear from you, in particular about whether there are steps you can take to support energy transition policies that show a commitment to truth-telling, sustainability, equality and peace. For example:

- a focus on energy demand reduction; or
- a clear statement that the Maximum Economic Recovery from North Sea oil and gas fields is no longer government policy.

With all good wishes

[name & address (to show you are a constituent)]

New Parliamentary Engagement Officer

Britain Yearly Meeting has appointed a new Parliamentary Engagement Officer to replace Andrew Tomlinson.

Sarah Komashko will start work on 11 July. She lives in Edinburgh and her career to date has been in Scots law. She also has some direct experience of parliamentary engagement, with the European Parliament, and of advocacy, working with councillors on behalf of a climate charity. Members of the PEWG are looking forward very much to having her in post and engaging with her in our work with the Scottish Parliament and government.

‘Peace at the Heart’ at Holyrood

The Parliamentary Engagement Working Group, along with QPSW staff and the GM Young People’s Coordinator, Mary Troup, have been working to organise two events at the Scottish Parliament this autumn – a children’s musical performance on 21 September, and an exhibition, 26-28 September. The official invitation to MSPs was sent in June from the office of the sponsoring MSP, Michelle Thomson, but we can all encourage our MSPs to accept the invitations! If you would like to do this, you may like to use the draft note below; you can check who your constituency and list MSPs are, by entering your postcode at <https://www.parliament.scot/msps>.

If one or more of your MSPs signed Paul McLennan’s motion in support of the Peace at the Heart report, you might like to start your note with, e.g. “I was very glad that you signed Motion S6M-04587 in June 2022 in support of British Quakers’ ‘Peace at the Heart’ report.”

The ten who signed the motion and represent constituencies or regions in South East Scotland appear in **bold type** in this list of all the 35 signatories:

| | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Karen Adam | Maggie Chapman | Monica Lennon | Willie Rennie |
| Clare Adamson | Foysoil Choudhury | Douglas Lumsden | Emma Roddick |
| Colin Beattie | Alex Cole-Hamilton | Michael Marra | Douglas Ross |
| Neil Bibby | Annabelle Ewing | John Mason | Mark Ruskell |
| Miles Briggs | Meghan Gallacher | Liam McArthur | Paul Sweeney |
| Ariane Burgess | Rhoda Grant | Stuart McMillan | Evelyn Tweed |
| Stephanie | Ross Greer | Marie McNair | Mercedes Villalba |
| Callaghan | Daniel Johnson | Jenni Minto | Martin Whitfield |
| Donald Cameron | Bill Kidd | Oliver Mundell | Beatrice Wishart |

Dear [MSP’s name]

I’d like to encourage you to accept the invitation from Michelle Thomson MSP who is sponsoring two ‘Peace at the Heart’ events at the Parliament in September.

The first event, in The Robert Burns Room (CR1) 1 pm–2.15 pm on 21 September (International Day of Peace) is a lively storytelling and music performance ‘Peace at the Heart: Wangari’s Trees of Peace.’ It has been created and will be presented by children in Primary 6 from Oakgrove Primary School in Glasgow, in partnership with undergraduate music students from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. There will be a chance to speak with the organisers and performers, and lunch will be provided.

The second, related event is an exhibition, ‘Peace at the Heart’, in the Members’ Lobby on 26-28 September. The exhibition brings together the findings of the ‘Peace at the Heart’ report commissioned by Quakers in Britain, with inspiring examples of successful current practice in Scottish schools. It features multimedia examples of peacebuilding at the heart of schools, from young peacemakers mediating disputes to action on global issues.

[P.T.O.]

I would be so glad if you could accept the invitation to the performance and make time to come and see the exhibition. Both are such positive events and an opportunity to

- *see some examples of the value of promoting peace at the heart of Scottish schools*
- *see the power of storytelling and music to inspire courage*
- *meet some pupils and facilitators with peer mediation experience*

Yours in Friendship

[name & address (to show you are a constituent)]

Victoria Terrace Affordability Group – an update

THE GROUP has met four times since the start of March 2023. Although its reason for existence is financial, we don't want to lose sight of the purpose of our Meeting House at 7 Victoria Terrace. Our working definition is a vision that was being developed just before the pandemic struck: *"The Meeting House is the home to the worshipping Quaker community in the centre of Edinburgh and South East Scotland. We would like it to be: (1) An excellent place for meetings, both by Quakers and other groups, which reflects and proclaims our Quaker values; (2) A more comfortable and sustainable place, a model for what can be done with a Victorian building; (3) Economically viable in the longer term."* We are also mindful of the minute from Area Meeting in March, which reminded us to *"locate our decisions in the context of the climate emergency, and that they should be rooted in building a community space that people can relate to"*.

We have been reviewing and forecasting the finances of the Meeting House: building costs, operational income and expenditure, and the financial benefit it brings to us as Friends, assuming that Central Edinburgh LM and the Area Meeting would hire other premises were there no Meeting House. The overall deficit depends on assumptions and unknowns – we'll present the full workings in a final report which we hope will be approved by Trustees in mid-October, in time for Area Meeting in November.

One of the group, Rachel Fitzgerald, is Manager of Augustine United Church, close to the Meeting House. Her insights on how the two venues compare have been very helpful. Some space in Augustine is let out to long-term tenants, with less income from *ad hoc* lets than in the Meeting House. We've considered if long-term tenants could be an option. Letting out the Hall and Meeting Room would make it a much poorer place for Quaker and other meetings. However, part of the ground floor being used as a public café run by an external organisation might be compatible with the purpose of the Meeting House and we are exploring the option further. We have investigated whether the meeting house could operate with fewer staff on the premises, including investigating if a hotel-style electronic card

access system might allow Friends to use the ground floor at times when the building is not staffed, which could lead to savings on quiet weekday evenings. If we used the building on Sunday without staff present, we would be following the example of Augustine Church, whose members open up on a Sunday, while our Meeting House is always staffed. Alongside opening and closing the building is the question of accessibility to the first and second floor; Augustine's lift is rarely used, whereas ours is, and our staff are trained to operate it, if it breaks down.

As Janet Saunders suggested in May's *Sesame*, saving energy would benefit the climate and our finances. Since 2012, Trustees have investigated replacing the storage heaters in the meeting room and hall with an air source system that could heat, ventilate and perhaps cool. It's technically complicated and expensive, and the investigation was derailed by the need for a roof repair, in 2017, and then by the pandemic reducing our income. However, the Scottish Government's Community and Renewable Energy Scheme, "Let's Do Net Zero" Community Buildings Fund, could provide grants, and we are investigating again.

The Area Meeting minute encouraged Friends to bring ideas such as building partnerships with like-minded bodies to the working group – and we would still encourage Friends to do so.

David Sterratt (*Convener, former convener of Management Committee*), **Miranda Girdlestone** (*Meeting House Manager*), **Henry Thompson** (*Convener of Management Committee*), **Rachel Fitzgerald** (*Portobello & Musselburgh LM, Manager of Augustine United Church*), **Phil Lucas** (*Former Meeting House Manager, Trustee and member of Management Committee*), **Neil Turner** (*Clerk to Trustees*), **Jacqueline Noltingk** (*AM Treasurer, ex officio member of Management Committee*)

Meeting House Assistants, Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House

Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House wishes to recruit two **Meeting House Assistants** on a casual basis to join our staff team. Duties include providing a friendly welcome for users of the building, serving/clearing refreshments, and setting up/clearing away furniture for meetings. Hours: variable, mostly evenings and weekends, by mutual agreement. Availability to work on Saturdays and Sundays would be helpful.

Salary: £10.90/hour (Real Living Wage). Start date: early September 2023.

For full details and an application form, go to equaker.org.uk/vacancies.

For an informal chat about the role please contact the manager on 0131 225 4825, or email office@equaker.org.uk.

Closing date: Wednesday 28 June 2023

Interviews: week beginning 10 July 2023

General Meeting for Scotland: Edinburgh, 10 June 2023

Despite its being, as the Clerk remarked, a “good gardening day”, there were eighty people at General Meeting, either in person at Edinburgh Meeting House or online, including three attenders, and three visitors. The business was dominated by consideration of the report from the ‘Options 2’ group (see *Sesame* 247, pages 6-12) which was before the meeting for most of the morning, and to which we returned after lunch. We began, however, with some ‘housekeeping’ matters, notably changes in the membership of our four Area Meetings.

Book of Members and Attenders

The number of amendments to the new Book [*there is one on page 31*] make an update necessary; our Administrator, Sue Proudlove, will produce it later this year.

Nominations

Our representatives on the Interfaith Group on Domestic Abuse (Ifgoda) and the World Day of Prayer Scottish Committee have swapped roles: Kate Arnot now represents us on the latter, and Margaret Roy (West Scotland) on the former. Both will serve until the end of 2025. Nominations Committee is still seeking a Friend to serve as Custodian of Records, and for someone from South East Scotland AM to join the Scottish Quaker Community Justice Working Group. Other posts too are currently vacant.

Quaker Truth and Integrity Group

Martina Weitsch, York AM, and a member of the Steering Group of the Quaker Truth and Integrity Group (QTIG) spoke to us about how the present group came into existence. It is not a revival of the Truth & Integrity in Public Affairs (TIPA) Committee, established in 1990 and finally laid down in 2004, which had originally reported to Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) and from 1993 was reconstituted under the care of Quaker Social Responsibility & Education (QSRE); QTIG arose instead from a concern of Southern Marches Area Meeting which was forwarded to MfS in 2018. After a consultation in which more than forty AMs participated, Sufferings minuted, in February 2019, that it “[*did*] not suggest any new committee or programme of work at this time” and expressed the hope, should the desire for it be evinced at AM level, “*that Southern Marches AM may be able to coordinate this in the first instance.*”

The Meeting of Friends in Wales took up the issue, and (which Martina said was “not a coincidence”), Thomas Penny was invited to deliver the 2021 Swarthmore Lecture on ‘Creating space for truth’: the subtitle of his Lecture, ‘The Kinder Ground’. Woodbrooke’s follow-up session brought together the Welsh Special Interest Group and concerned Friends from elsewhere, and the enlarged group applied to become a Quaker Recognised Body, achieving this status in March 2022. Martina summarised what QTIG has been doing since and outlined its approach as follows:

- *We want to raise up the good examples and create kinder ground;*
- *We want to work with others – within and outside of Britain Yearly Meeting and be open to joint work with other faith groups, other denominations and organisations that come from a non-faith background;*
- *We want to make sure that the work we do engages Friends across the Yearly Meeting – this can take many forms;*
- *Individual Friends can also become members of QTIG, can join our various working groups (some exist, others are planned); we are also seeking more members of the Steering Group.*

One of the ways QTIG has adopted to “raise up good examples” is by means of annual award to mark “an exceptional contribution by a British individual or organisation towards the enhancement of standards of truth and integrity”. (Since General Meeting, it has been announced that the inaugural Quaker Truth and Integrity Award has been given to Carole Cadwalladr, an investigative journalist for *The Observer*, who “[in] seeking to promote democracy and the rule of law over and above personal interests ... is an exceptionally worthy recipient”)

The QTIG Steering Group currently has no Scottish representation, a deficiency it hopes to rectify, and is also looking for a Scottish MP to join cross-party discussions; a Friend suggested Alyn Smith MP (and ex-MEP).

Trustees Report for 2022

Robin Waterston spoke to the Report, which was presented for information, having already been approved. A surplus in the budget was due to an unexpected legacy of £10,000.

Options for Scotland

The Meeting’s minute reads in part:

We agree to extend the life of Options for Scotland 2 Working Group until 16 September 2023 so preparatory work on the recommendations may continue. We agree to set up an Options for Scotland 3 Working Group from that date, to serve until the end the end of the process, as outlined in the Options for Scotland 2 Working Group document “OfS2 Path for Implementation”.

We ask the existing group to bring suggestions to us in September about how we might support current structures where they are in difficulty. We feel that we could unite about moving to a single charity for Quakers in Scotland as a first step, and this might go some way in helping Area Meetings. We ask the group to make clear what would be involved in this.

Parliamentary Engagement Working Group; Social Witness Reports

There was not time in the meeting to have the written report of the PEWG presented orally, but some of its principal contents are set out elsewhere in *Sesame* [see pages 17-22] or else were in the previous issue. Likewise, other reports were not taken.

The next General Meeting will be in Inverness on 16 September 2023, “if nothing occurs to prevent.”

Statement from the International Summit for Peace in Ukraine

[Over the weekend of 9-12 June, the Geneva-based International Peace Bureau held a conference in Vienna to discuss how to bring an end to the war in Ukraine. It was organised in partnership with the International Fellowship of Reconciliation and seven other bodies; Charlotte Cooper of QPSW attended on behalf of Quakers in Britain (see opposite). This statement was issued by the organisers, not the participants.]

WE, the organizers of the International Summit for Peace in Ukraine, call on leaders in all countries to act in support of an immediate ceasefire and negotiations to end the war in Ukraine.

We are a broad and politically diverse coalition that represents peace movements and civil society, including people of faith in many countries. We are firmly united in our belief that war is a crime against humanity and there is no military solution to the current crisis.

We are deeply alarmed and saddened by the war. Hundreds of thousands have been killed and wounded and millions have been displaced and traumatized. Cities and villages across Ukraine and the natural environment have been shattered.

Far greater death and suffering may yet ensue if the conflict escalates to the use of nuclear weapons, a risk that is higher today than at any point since the Cuban missile crisis.

We condemn Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. The institutions established to ensure peace and security in Europe fell short, and the failure of diplomacy led to war. Now diplomacy is urgently needed to end the war before it destroys Ukraine and endangers humanity.

The path to peace must be based on the principles of common security, respect for international human rights and self-determination of all communities.

We support all negotiations that stand for the logic of peace instead of the illogic of war.

We affirm our support for Ukrainian civil society who are defending their rights. We commit ourselves to strengthening the dialogue with those in Russia and Belarus who are putting their lives at risk opposing war and protecting democracy.

We call on civil society in all countries to join us in a week of global mobilization (Saturday 30th September – Sunday 8th October 2023) for an immediate ceasefire and peace negotiations to end this war.

Vienna, June 11th, 2023

“We must all do our share, that we may be equal to the task of peace.” – Albert Einstein

Northern Friends Peace Board: Darlington, 24 June 2023

As has happened before, our summer meeting coincided with 'Armed Forces Day' – we were in Edinburgh on the day in 2009 when the very first such celebration, a pet project of Gordon Brown's, was also noisily focused on the city, with pipes and drums and fly-pasts – but this year's jollifications were in Falmouth, so did not impinge on our business. (However Philip Austin, our coordinator, had been contacted by local Friends planning to protest at the event; ITV news picked up the criticisms that it presents "war as family entertainment", and serves as a recruitment tool; see:

[https://www.itv.com/news/westcountry/2023-06-24/protesters-warn-of-child-soldier-danger-as-falmouth-marks-armed-forces-day.](https://www.itv.com/news/westcountry/2023-06-24/protesters-warn-of-child-soldier-danger-as-falmouth-marks-armed-forces-day))

In our opening worship we were reminded, in Wolf Mendl's words (in *Q.F. & P.* 24.60), of "the way of love" as the better alternative.

Peace Studies at 50; Swords into Ploughshares

Geoff Tansey, of the Quaker Peace Studies Trust, joined us online to tell us about the work of QPST and recent developments in the Peace Studies Department at Bradford which the Trust helped establish. (This year's anniversary is of the foundation of the chair, and the inauguration of Adam Curle as first professor; it was in 1974 that the first students arrived, and so celebrations will continue into next year.) Irene Santiago from the Philippines delivered the third Adam Curle Peace Lecture in April; after the disruption of the pandemic, links have been re-established with QUNO Geneva, and visits to Northern Ireland have resumed. Discussion of what QPST might do in the *next* fifty years was aided by our having two other trustees among our members present, Ann Bettys of Huddersfield and Liz Scurfield from York.

Geoff also updated us about the 'Swords into Ploughshares' initiative of Brighouse West Yorkshire AM, about which he had spoken to us at our June meeting last year. The working group is collaborating with Cambridge University's Centre for the Study of Existential Risk (see <https://www.cser.ac.uk/>) where a project called 'People & Patterns' is looking at "*transforming the ways we think and connect when everything is at risk ... [to] develop effective ways to empower and energise people's commitment to working together with complexity, imagining diverse futures that hold positive promise as well as those with sobering warnings.*"

Quaker Peace & Social Witness; Vienna Summit

Charlotte Cooper, who took over as QPSW Peace Lead at the start of 2023, joined us in person to talk about the work about she is currently doing and possible new directions in it; also, about the Vienna conference she had attended two weeks previously. The fact of its taking place at all had been criticised by Civil Society groups within Ukraine and by the Ukrainian Embassy, and also by some Austrian groups, all of whom alleged that to talk of ending the war is to support Putin; the conference venue had had

to be changed at short notice when the original host organisation withdrew its offer of accommodation.

The Conference itself, Charlotte felt, ducked some of the difficult questions relating to Ukrainian territorial integrity and its future neutrality (or not), and a Ukrainian member of the Women's International League for Peace & Freedom (WILPF) challenged the meaning of "peace" as others understood it. Nevertheless, there had been much that was valuable. Charlotte had appreciated contributions by Jeffrey Sachs (whose conversation with Heinz Gärtner is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVMnfNCSGtQ>) and by Clare Daly MEP, and from some of the Civil Society organisations, including WILPF. Delegates from the Global South reported on efforts to begin peace negotiations which had been frustrated.

Charlotte also reported on meetings with QUNO (Quaker United Nations Office) Geneva, and QCEA (Quaker Council for European Affairs).

NFPB and Ukraine

The working group is drafting a statement – its latest version, shared with members, was felt to be on the right lines, but not ready yet for publication. (The news on the day of our meeting was dominated by the Wagner Group's seizure of Rostov-on-Don and speculation about a "march on Moscow", making it seem likely that anything said could be overtaken by events.)

Members' Forum

Work with refugees and asylum seekers is being done in several places.

Robin Bowles of Huddersfield (and Quaker Roots) spoke of plans for acts of witness and protest before and during the DSEI [*Defence & Security Equipment International*] arms fair in London in September.

Concern was expressed at dwindling participation in protests at such sites as Faslane, Fylingdales and Menwith Hill. On the other hand, vigils in towns and city-centres are well supported.

The BBC Two series *Once Upon a Time in Northern Ireland* was commended to Friends' attention; it can be watched on the BBC i-Player.

Reports

Philip Austin gave a summary of recent work; Peter Speirs reported on behalf of Trustees; our treasurer, Deryck Hillas, spoke to the financial report.

The Peace Testimony Today

Our final item, introduced by Philip Austin and Jennie White of Trustees, was a sharing of reflections on what the Peace Testimony means to Friends now: not as principle, but as practice. Is Peace *in fact* at the heart of what we do and how we live, or has it been supplanted by other concerns?

The Board's next meeting will be at Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House on 23 September. Local Friends will be welcome to attend.

Alan Frith

The Russia-Ukraine War and Conscientious Objection

Derek Brett, of Switzerland Yearly Meeting, prepared the following notes for the June meeting of the FWCC Europe & Middle East Section's Peace & Service Network (PSN). Derek works with Conscience and Peace Tax International (CPTI) – see <https://www.cpti.ws/> – and the European Bureau for Conscientious Objection – see <https://www.ebco-beoc.org/>. (His wife is **Rachel Brett**, formerly of QUNO Geneva, who Friends may remember gave the Swarthmore Lecture in 2012.)

QUAKERS have for a century worked for recognition of the right of conscientious objection to military service, and have supported conscientious objectors worldwide. The current Russia-Ukraine war has posed an unprecedented threat to what we have achieved. It was no accident that it was in the context of the first “World War” that persons of all beliefs who refused on grounds of conscience to fight were excused service in the armed forces.

Now in the biggest European war in a lifetime, both participants feel that they can mobilise men without giving them access to exemption procedures. What does the right of conscientious objection mean if it does not apply in wartime?

The time is ripe for Quaker bodies at all levels to issue authoritative, loud and unequivocal restatements of our historic support of all those refusing on grounds of conscience to fight, irrespective of the justice of the cause. Any more specific advocacy must be based on this.

At present, the major practical help we can give is to the hundreds of thousands of Russians who have managed to flee to neighbouring countries, principally Georgia, Kazakhstan and Armenia. They are permitted to stay for only a limited period of time before being returned to Russia, where, having once fled the incalculable risk of military call-up, they can now count on being prioritised for it. There are also among them deserters from the armed forces, who face very heavy penalties on return. We must recall that shortly after the invasion, several European politicians issued statements encouraging members of the Russian armed forces to desert and giving assurances – which they are unable to fulfil – of asylum in Europe.

The first priority for all is simply to remain outside Russia. (Many of those who have left are able to continue doing their jobs in Russia online.) They seek to get into Europe on tourist or residence visas; above all it is essential that they be allowed to apply from the countries outside Russia which they have reached. Advice and help as we can to individuals who come to our notice must be supplemented by lobbying at the political level.

Ukrainians have hitherto been granted refugee protection in Europe – we must monitor closely whether this continues: They have no problem in entering Europe, but men are not permitted to leave Ukraine (similar measures are now in place in Russia). Numbers in future will thus be limited to those who contrive to leave illicitly.

Conscientious objectors can qualify for asylum (including as deserters), but a strong individual case must be argued, and success is never guaranteed. In the case of Russians, it may be strengthened by the condemnation of the invasion by the international community, or by the risk of being ordered to commit war crimes, but the latter is almost impossible to prove in practice. I suggest we call on Governments, political parties, legislators and members of the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, to ensure that:

- a) that for the duration of the war no one should be returned unwillingly to either Russia or Ukraine, including men of “military age”;
- b) that applications be favourably considered for asylum from men who would face persecution on return to Russia on account of their avoiding or deserting from service in the armed forces;
- c) in principle, all applications from Russians for entry visas as tourists or for work, including applications made from such third countries as Georgia and Kazakhstan be granted, and without unreasonable delay.

I suggest also that we, individually and through our Meetings and other networks, monitor what happens on the policy or individual level regarding Russians and Ukrainians in our own countries, and feed back so that this Network [EMES PSN] can act as a two-way channel for information.

For background information on the right of conscientious objection and refugee issues I suggest two publications by QUNO:

<https://quno.org/resource/2021/2/international-standards-conscientious-objection-militaryservice-2021>

<https://quno.org/resource/2021/5/report-conscientious-objection-military-service-andrefugee-status-determination>

For the situation of, and updates on, conscientious objectors worldwide:

<https://wri-irg.org/en/co/rtba/index.html>

and specifically in Europe, including links to EBCO’s annual reports and recent press releases:

<https://ebco-beoc.org>

Recommendation: a book from the AM Library

I have started to read *Living in Godless Times: Tales of Spiritual Travellers* by Alison Leonard (2001). Her parents were Church of England and Methodist, and she became “a Quaker ... with interests in Buddhist meditation, Ignatian-style visualization and Goddess stories”. Her book comprises interviews with sixteen people willing to describe their widely differing spiritual journeys to her, including Jocelyn Bell Burnell and Adam Curle. It is an absorbing read.

Rachel Frith

For further reading

Following her article last time, **Lynne Barty** would draw readers' attention to a recent report on the migrant crisis at the Belarusian / Polish border, see: <https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/migrants-with-children-stuck-at-poland-s-border-wall/>

A report of the celebration at the House of Lords of the fiftieth anniversary of Bradford's School of Peace Studies [*referred to in the last issue, and see also page 27*] is at

<https://www.bradford.ac.uk/news/archive/2023/house-of-lords-celebration-for-peace-studies.php> and a brief history of the School is at

<https://www.bradford.ac.uk/news/archive/2023/uks-first-peace-studies-turns-50-.php>

More on the Vienna Summit on the war in Ukraine (see pages 26 & 27) is at

<https://www.commondreams.org/opinion/vienna-summit-for-peace-in-ukraine>

and there is more on opposition to Armed Forces Day at

<https://www.ekklesia.co.uk/2023/06/21/local-and-national-groups-oppose-armed-forces-day/>

... and watching

Some of the presentations mentioned by Alison Burnley and Kate Arnot in their accounts of BYM can be watched, or re-watched, online:

Rosie Carnall, speaking of the work of the Book of Discipline Revision Committee, is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTywZlTlog>.

The reading of the **JYM Epistle** is at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gzv3zPHaGOU&t=29s>.

Huw Meredydd Owen on 'Symud Ymlaen' – the changes in Wales – is at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arVOHOBSbKw>.

Diane Randall, of FCNL, speaking on Truth and Integrity is at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9YDjYCV9ADw>.

From Session 5 (Sunday Afternoon), **Robert Card**, Clerk of Meeting for Sufferings, is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ekt1BgMZJrM>; and

Chris Skidmore, of the review group, is at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8xAT7R0gLO>

A clip of **Derek Brett** [*see page 29*] speaking about conscientious objection in the context of the war in Ukraine to the UN Human Rights Council earlier this year is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3HT0tBlZZA>; the full session is at <https://media.un.org/en/webtv>.

Faith and Welcome on Sanctuary Sunday

TO CELEBRATE Sanctuary Sunday on 25 June, a mixed group representing different faiths (though predominantly Quaker) gathered at Central Edinburgh Meeting House to watch *Journeys of Faith and Welcome*, produced by Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees and Faith in Community Scotland.

Journeys of Faith and Welcome is a set of four short videos produced to celebrate the stories of New Scots and faith communities; they illustrate the role faith has played in their common quest to seek, find or offer sanctuary.

Two videos showcase the work of churches that regularly welcome refugees and asylum seekers, and the others tell the personal stories of two women, one Christian and one Muslim, seeking refuge in Scotland and finding hope and belonging in their local churches.

Faith groups are at the heart of their communities and are well-placed to offer friendship, support and a warm welcome for people seeking sanctuary. Faith is also the cornerstone of the lives of many New Scots, helping to create resilience and endurance when all else has been lost.

After watching the videos there was a discussion on the implications of the Illegal Migration Bill, currently before Parliament, and actions we can take both to campaign against it and to show continuing support for asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland. For information about the Bill see:

<https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/information/what-is-the-illegal-migration-bill/>.

Scottish faith leaders have now joined forces to voice their continuing opposition to the Bill. Bishop Mark Strange, Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Rev. Fiona Bennett, Moderator of the United Reformed Church, Imam Dr Sayed Ali Abbas Razawi, Chief Imam of the Scottish Ahlul Bayt Society and the Rt Rev. Sally Foster-Fulton, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, have all spoken out to mark Refugee Week. (19 -25 June). They are featured along with other faith leaders from across the UK in a video produced by Together with Refugees. See:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W1YU_vir8jc&t=26s

Together with Refugees is a coalition of more than 500 national and local organisations representing refugees and people from all walks of life who believe in showing compassion to those fleeing war and persecution. There are actions are being organised across the UK. See:

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

If the Illegal Migration Bill becomes law, as is widely expected, it will mean anyone who arrives in the UK by an irregular route, such as a small boat across the English Channel, will never be able to claim asylum here despite having had to flee their home country due to persecution or conflict.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has said that the Bill, which includes extensive powers to detain people, including children, for

an indefinite period of time “would amount to an asylum ban”.

There has never been a more urgent time to speak out and to add our voices to those who have already spoken publicly –

“We believe in a fair and just asylum system that welcomes those who need protection and respects their dignity.

We call on the (UK) Government to listen to communities who say this bill does not reflect what we want our country to be.

As people of faith, we will stand together with refugees, because it’s who we are.”

Lynne Barty

An Idea whose Time Has Come (again)

Basic Income: A Short Guide by Annie Miller

Luath Press – ISBN 978-1-80425-092-1

In June 2020, when *Sesame* 230 reported the publication of two new books by Annie Miller on Universal Basic Income (UBI), it was Nicola Sturgeon we were quoting as having said, a month before, that it was time to introduce UBI; in 2023, it is Andy Burnham. He said it a year ago, and was quoted in the *Guardian* when it announced in June, too late to be noted in this new book, that UBI is to be trialled in England, simultaneously in Jarrow and East Finchley, with the recipients getting £1,600 a month – see

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/jun/04/universal-basic-income-of-1600-pounds-a-month-to-be-trialled-in-england>.

(A similar experiment, to run over two years, has already begun in Wales.)

According to the information facing the title-page, *Basic Income: A Short Guide* is a revised edition of *Essentials of Basic Income* (2020) – itself an expanded version of a 2019 pamphlet. The *Short Guide* runs to a dozen more pages, though is still brief enough to get through in a couple of hours despite there now being pages of (not-too-difficult) equations in the chapter on tax. Most of the expansion of the text is in the parts rebutting objections rather than in those that make the positive case for UBI – the former chapter 5, now chapter 9, on “What difference could a BI make?” has a new list of bullet points at the start, and an extract from *The Wealth of Nations* at the end, but lists the same five substantive advantages. The next chapter, “Who would benefit [from an ‘Adequate’ BI]?” – the bracketed words are added to its title – has been slightly trimmed, and the final sentence from 2020 has gone, though it is surely true: “... the more generous the BI, the greater its effects”. To readers looking to the *Short Guide* for arguments to use against sceptics rather for confirmation of their own view, the shift in emphasis will be welcome, as will two features unchanged from the *Essentials*; the writing style is the same, and so is the price: still £4.99. *Ed.*

Quakers in Kelso, Edinburgh and Fife, in 1782

SARAH GRUBB (1756-1790), was the daughter of William Tuke (1732-1822), who served as Yearly Meeting Clerk in 1783, helped to found the Quaker schools, Ackworth and Bootham, and was a pioneer of the humane treatment of the mentally ill; he established the Retreat at York, and is commemorated on the Pinel Memorial at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital. Sarah "appeared in the ministry" at the age of 22 and became a noted Quaker preacher – not to be confused with Sarah Lynes Grubb (1773-1842), who is quoted in *Quaker Faith & Practice*, 28.04, nor with Sarah Grubb, née Pim (1746-1832); all three married into the Grubb family of Clonmel, Co. Tipperary.

According to *Some Account of the Life and Religious Labours of Sarah Grubb* (posthumously assembled from journals and letters, and published in 1795 – on both sides of the Atlantic, such was her high reputation), it was two weeks after her marriage to Robert Grubb that Sarah set out to visit Scotland, departing from York on "the twentieth of fourth month, 1782." It was a project she had had been considering for some time, and she had secured a "certificate of concurrence" from her monthly meeting. Until 1786, the Society of Friends in Scotland was organised in two 'yearly meetings' in Edinburgh and Aberdeen, and she planned to visit the former, held over two days; the experience was not to her liking despite its leading to an opportunity (Friends' term for an intense time of waiting in silence, especially during a religious visit). Before that, she and her companion Mary Proud attended meeting in Kelso ...

[We] were at their meetings on first day, which are very small of friends, but many others came in, especially in the afternoon; and though, at first, they appeared rude and ignorant, yet the power of truth, in which the authority is felt, rose so into dominion, that it became a solemn opportunity. And thus we had fresh cause to observe, that it is only by divine strength, that we can run through a troop, or leap over the walls of opposition. On second day, we went to Edinburgh, where, on third we rested, and on fourth and fifth attended the yearly meeting, which was but small, there being very few members of [the] society of that nation then present. There were several, who through neglect of christian discipline, think they have a claim to the society, as being the offspring of friends; others were like the Philistines in whose hands the ark of the testimony is fallen, and esteemed by them as a contemptible thing; there were also present a number of students from distant parts, whose parents are not only members of [the] society, but some of them useful therein. On account of all these, our minds were painfully exercised: and notwithstanding the publick meetings were large, and owned with divine favour, in covering these assemblies with degree of holy awe, and the minds of some of his servants with gospel power and authority, to declare the way of life and salvation: yet through all, the sense of deep, hidden, as well as flagrant corruption, so impressed my mind, that I was led to believe, truth will never prosper in this place, nor the excellency of it appear unveiled, till, not only the branches of the corrupt tree are cut off, but the root so dug up that the remembrance thereof may rot; and then, there is a hope that the present planting

may get watered, the ground renewedly cultivated, and fruits appear to the praise of the great Husbandman. Deep discouragement attends the Lord's exercised servants in this day, when labour is added to labour, baptism to baptism, for those that are dead in trespasses and sins, and for those that are unacquainted, in their own experience, with the glad tidings of the gospel; so that, if they were not at times refreshed with a little bread handed in secret, and their evidence confirmed, that the foundation of God stands sure, having this seal that the Lord knows them that are his, they would be ready to faint in the work, and to shrink in the day of battle, when the arrows of the archers surround, and the spirits of the people are opposing sound doctrine, and crying "prophesy unto us smooth things." But I have had frequently of late, under these discouraging views, to remember the prophet when he mournfully exclaimed; "I have laboured in vain and spent my strength for nought;" yet recollecting himself in holy confidence in, and interest with, invisible and divine justice, he added, "but surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God." From some necessary baptisms of mind, and renewed evidences that this is enough for any true minister of the gospel to desire, I have been led awfully and humbly to implore increasing strength and ability, to walk before that gracious eye that sees in secret, without seeking the praise, or regarding the censure of men who are not circumcised in heart and ears, and who cannot discern, or value, sound uncondemnable words, but want their sensual wisdom and depraved ideas gratified with the divinations of men, and approbation of themselves. We had an exercising, close, and searching opportunity on fifth day evening (after the publick meetings were over) with those under profession with us, and particularly the students; to whom divine regard was eminently manifested, and a powerful call extended, to close in with the present visitation and day of salvation that is offered; whereby they would be redeemed from that wisdom which separates them from the pure fear of God, and the tree of immortal life; and also preserved from going down to the chambers of death, by falling in with those snares and gilded pollutions, with which the unwearied enemy of our souls is seeking to entrap and defile us. Their minds were sensibly affected, at that time, under the power of truth; and he who was pleased thus to influence their spirits, is alone able to prosper the work. The next morning we went to Kirkaldie, (by Queen's Ferry) where we had a meeting with the town's people, some of whom behaved well, the glad tidings of the gospel were preached; and a satisfactory meeting it was.

From Kirkcaldy, Sarah Grubb went on to Coupar, Dundee, "Aberbrothick" [Arbroath], and Montrose (where "divine regard was powerfully manifested"). At Inverberoy, "a very solid company attended", but among Stonehaven Friends, she felt, "the life of religion is weak". Aberdeen and Old Meldrum were better; she noted Friends "departing from the plain language, and losing the distinguishing marks of their profession", but found "comfortable hope" in "the youth ... raised up ... to support the cause of truth". The one meeting on the return leg of the tour was at Urie: a "painful opportunity". Ed.

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

**Minutes of Area Meeting held on Tuesday 9 May 2023
at the Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh
and by remote videoconferencing**

2023/05/01 Worship and introductions

During worship, we have heard read from *Quaker Faith & Practice* 3.02: in our business method, we seek to discover God's guidance through silence and listening.

We have remembered the lives of our friends Daphne Foster and Patrick Copsey, who have both died since we last met.

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

We ask Cathy Holman (*P&M*) to serve as Elder for this meeting.

2023/05/02 Minutes of Meeting of Saturday 18 March 2023

The minutes of our meeting held on 18 March at Bellfield, Portobello and online have been signed and entered in the minute book.

[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*]

[Redacted]

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Central Edinburgh 22 | Central Fife 1 | East Lothian 6 | Kelso 4 | Penicuik 1 |
| Polmont 4 | Portobello & Musselburgh 7 | South Edinburgh 11 | Tweeddale 2 | Visitors/Others 5 |

We record our thanks to the Meeting House staff for their support of this meeting.

We next meet on Saturday 1 July at the Bleachingfield Centre in Dunbar, hosted by East Lothian local meeting.

(Signed)
Alastair Cameron, Clerk
Cath Dyer, Assistant Clerk

Christian Aid: Loss and Damage Campaign

The biggest polluters are responsible for the loss and damage caused by the climate crisis.

It's time to make polluters pay.

The people who have done the least to cause the climate crisis are dealing with damage to harvests and homes, **right now**. They are losing their lives, land and culture, **right now**.

'History is made by those who show up', as the saying goes, and the Church has often been at the forefront of social justice movements.

It's time for churches across the UK to rise up. Let's make loss and damage the social justice issue of our times.

Start now, by getting your Meeting involved in the campaign. See:

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/climate-change/loss-and-damage-church>

The UK has a key role to play in generating the money needed to compensate communities for the loss and damage they face.

The UK can lead by example, by providing money itself; the UK can force polluting fossil fuel companies to pay up; and the UK can use its diplomatic influence to encourage other countries to act.

But in order to act and to champion loss and damage, the UK government needs to see that the people they represent (us) care about this issue.

Will you meet with (or write to) your MP and call for action on loss and damage?

Further information at:

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/climate-change/loss-and-damage-back-fund>

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 10.30: 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 **Marriot 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.