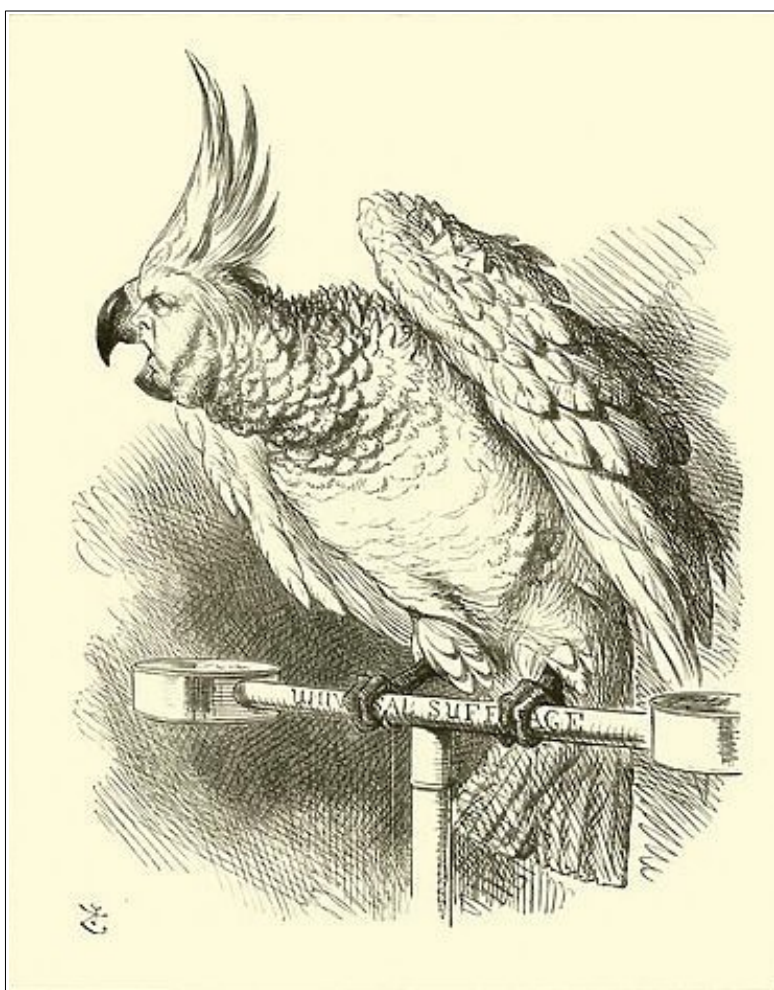


SESAME

Number 255: June 2024

Area Meeting, 22 June/GM in Glasgow/Gaza & the ICJ/Votes in principle & in practice/Hume defends himself/QiS-CG Questionnaire/Woodbrooke events & courses, July–Sept./Woodbrooke Where You Are'/At the General Assembly/BDRC/John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust/Christian Aid campaigns & resources/Finland, Sweden YM reports/Paley's criticisms of Quakers/May Minutes/&c.



The Quaker M.P. John Bright as 'The Popular Poll-Parrot', by John Tenniel, *Punch*, 20 October 1866. Bright was touring the country, addressing public meetings on universal suffrage, after a Reform Bill had been defeated in Parliament – see page 11.

Published by South East Scotland Area Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Send material for the next issue to Alan Frith (ar.frith@btinternet.com) or by post to 10, East Parkside, Edinburgh EH16 5XJ, to be received at the latest by **Tuesday 13 August**. The Editor reserves the right to condense articles. If possible, please submit articles by email. A paper copy of *Sesame* is posted to anyone who requests it (free, but normally limited to one per household). The email version, in PDF format, goes to all on the Area Meeting list whose email address is known. Contact the Editor if you wish to change how you receive it.

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

The next Area Meeting will be on Saturday 22 June 2024 at 11.30 am at Kelso Quaker Meeting House, Abbey Row, Kelso TD5 7JF, and by Zoom.

Please let me know (clerk.sesam@outlook.com) if you are planning to come with children.

We should each bring our own lunch; Kelso Friends will provide refreshments: tea, coffee, cake and biscuits. Additional home baking will be much appreciated. The afternoon session will be led by Kelso Friends: see opposite. We plan to finish with tea and cakes, and be away by around 4.30 pm.

DRAFT AGENDA

1. Worship and introductions
2. Minutes of the meeting of 7 May 2024
3. Matters arising from previous meetings
4. Decisions by between-meeting procedure
5. Membership matters:
 1. *Applications*
 2. *Reports on membership visits*
 3. *Transfer*
 4. *Death*
6. Matters from local meetings
 1. *Central Edinburgh: memorial minute to Isobel Khan*
 2. *Polmont: new meeting venue*
7. Matter from Meeting for Sufferings: *wording of marriage declaration*
[see opposite]
8. Financial matters
 1. *Presentation of annual report and accounts (from AM Trustees)*
9. Dates of meetings in 2025
10. General Meeting matters
 1. *Finding a GM trustee from South East Scotland AM*
 2. *Report from General Meeting for Scotland, 8 June* [see page 4]
11. Reports and correspondence
 1. *John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust 2023* [see page 31]
12. Appointments: from Nominations Committee
13. Closing minute

Alastair Cameron
Clerk

Marriage declarations: a question from Meeting for Sufferings

IN JANUARY'S *Sesame*, Katrina McCrea, one of our representatives on Meeting for Sufferings, told us about consideration of a change in the declaration made by a couple when they have a Quaker wedding. This will be under discussion at Area Meeting in Kelso on 22 June: we will record a minute of our views, to be submitted to Meeting for Sufferings.

At issue is whether it is essential to have a reference to 'God' or 'the divine' when the declaration between the partners is made. It seems that this is the only place within *Quaker Faith & Practice* that requires an individual to use one of those words. Some couples have had misgivings about using these words while remaining true to their personal beliefs and understanding.

The question arises, is this an essential part of our Quaker practice? There is also the question as to whether each partner must use the identical phrase – at present, this is the case.

Guidance from Friends House says that "the wording of the declaration is a Quaker matter, there is no legal reason for Quakers to keep to our current wording options for the marriage declarations".

This has arisen in the course of reviewing the Book of Discipline: since it would be a major change, the Book of Discipline Revision Committee is unable to proceed without the say-so of Britain Yearly Meeting.

The wording of the declarations as they currently stand can be found in *Quaker Faith & Practice* 16.52. Friends are asked to come to Area Meeting having given this consideration.

A. C.

The paper presented to Meeting for Sufferings in December is at pages 21-23 in <https://quaker.org.uk/documents/mfs-2023-12-agenda—papers-package>.

From Kelso Friends

WE LOOK FORWARD to welcoming Friends to Area Meeting at Kelso on 22 June. The afternoon session will be based on 'Books of Inspiration' and relates to Quaker books or Concerns. We invite Friends to read a passage from a favourite book which has inspired them and to share why. Do you have a book which has spoken to you?

It would help us to be prepared if Friends let us know in advance that they would like to speak.

Please contact **Anne Macnaughton**, Clerk of Kelso Meeting by email at kelsoquakers2023@gmail.com giving your name and the title of the book. It is envisaged that there will be a short period of silence between readings.

General Meeting for Scotland

Glasgow, Saturday 8 June

Friends met at Glasgow Meeting House for the second regular General Meeting of 2024; 19 were present in person, and 34 on Zoom. There were no visitors this time, and all but one of those attending were in membership.

Meeting Dates

The following dates and host area meetings for 2025/26 were confirmed:

2025	8 March	South East Scotland AM (<i>already agreed</i>)
	7 June	North Scotland AM
	20 September	East Scotland AM
	8 November	South East Scotland AM
2026	7 March	West Scotland AM

It was also agreed to change the date of the next meeting to **21 September** (from the 14th). The venue will be Kingussie, with North Scotland AM the host Meeting.

Families Weekend

Mary Troup, children and young persons advocate, reported on the Families Weekend at Pitlochry in May. The meeting was also reminded about the weekend at Wiston Lodge in September (see page 25).

Our Nominations Process

Zoe Prosser, Local Development Worker for Scotland, led a discussion on Friends' approach to nominations and the use of discernment, identifying five underlying principles:

1. *It is rooted in Quakerism;*
2. *It is rooted in our belief that everyone is equal before God;*
3. *It is rooted in love;*
4. *It is rooted in worship;*
5. *It is owned by the whole meeting.*

These were considered in small groups and by the meeting together. Difficulties in making the process work may be a sign of issues that need addressing in our community: that we do not know each other well enough; that we are not supporting Friends in their roles; or are not acknowledging our shared responsibility to make things work. Practical issues too may be problematic – if a meeting is not clear what it is asking of a role-holder, or if there is no training in it available. A successful nominations process becomes a joy, matching Friends to roles in which they can develop and show their potential, building the collective experience and development of all. Service is part of our spiritual journey.

It was agreed it is timely to bring together the nominations committees of General Meeting and Area Meetings to find ways for mutual support and the sharing of experience and need. Clerks were asked to arrange this.

Appointments

The Nomination Committee reported and several (re)appointments were agreed, including that of Carol Jennings to serve as our AM representative on the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group for a second triennium (until 31/12/2027). A GM trustee to represent South East Scotland AM has yet to be found.

Reports

The meeting received (for information) the Annual Report for 2023 of GM Trustees; had an update from the Quakers in Scotland Coordinating Group; and heard a report of Meeting for Sufferings of 3 March, from Ann Kerr, the GM representative. (Jane Kelly's report of this meeting was in *Sesame* 253.)

Ecocide

It had been agreed in March that the Clerk should ascertain from Quakers in Britain whether the signing on behalf of General Meeting of the manifesto calling for the criminalising of Ecocide, which had been urged in a minute from North Scotland AM, would have any adverse consequences for Friends' corporate work; Oliver Robertson, General Secretary of Quaker Peace & Social Witness, had replied saying it would not, neither for QPSW nor for the international work of the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO). This being so, it was agreed that the Clerk should sign. It was noted in the minute that "*signing is only the first step in maintaining the work required by doing so*" – Friends' attention was drawn to a two-session Woodbrooke course in September/October on *Addressing Ecocide* (see page 20.)

Racial Justice

Discussion of West Scotland's minute [see *Sesame* 253, pages 22-23] had been held over since September last year. The meeting felt that, as well as work that can be done by individuals, there were two particular areas in which General Meeting could be active: building **anti-racist communities**; and supporting the work Britain Yearly Meeting is undertaking on **reparations**. On both of these, there are relevant Woodbrooke courses in the near future: *Racial Justice Dialogues*, starting in September (see page 21), and *Faiths for Climate Reparations* in July/August (see page 19); Friends were encouraged to join them. The meeting will return to this issue in September, to consider what to do next. (Since the meeting, Mary Woodward has drawn attention to the website of Churches Together in Britain & Ireland, which has study materials on reparations at <https://ctbi.org.uk/wewillrepay/>.)

Scottish Christian Forum

It is proposed to replace ACTS (Action of Churches Together in Scotland) with a new structure for ecumenism: the Scottish Christian Forum is envisaged as a (non-charitable) umbrella body for the existing Scottish Church Leaders Forum and Ecumenical Officers Forum, in which we participate (our representatives are, respectively, Kate Arnot and Mary Woodward). The meeting heard that the expected detailed proposals are not yet available for consideration; this matter will be brought to a future meeting.

Parliamentary Engagement Working Group

Carolyn Burch spoke to the written report from the PEWG.

An event at the Parliament on climate and health, a follow-up to Lesley Morrison's Time for Reflection last year (see *Sesame* 247), was attended by Maree Todd, Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport, who took an active part. It led to a series of meetings in the following weeks, in which Lesley and Sarah Komashko, our Parliamentary Engagement Officer, spoke to MSPs of different parties about the issues raised.

Re-energised by a meeting at which members reviewed the Group's principles – *drawing spirituality out into the political world, to testify to that of God in the community and environment around us* – its current work includes responding to the 'Call for Views' on the new Land Reform Bill, (posted at:

<https://www.quakerscotland.org/our-work/parliamentary-engagement/news/quakers-scotland-respond-call-views-land-reform>);

meeting Scottish Enterprise to discuss the agency's support for exporters of military technology; and, in collaboration with Christian Aid, giving support to Government plans for a 'Scottish Peace Platform'.

Social Witness

The meeting heard reports on three groupings with Quaker involvement, in two of which the PEWG participates, and Scottish Faith Action for Refugees, to which GM appoints a representative.

International Development Education Association of Scotland (IDEAS)

IDEAS is a network promoting Global Citizenship, with which Friends became involved at the prompting of Ellis Brooks, QPSW. It helped develop last year's *Peace at the Heart* exhibition (see *Sesame* 250), and supports peace education, conflict resolution and anti-racism training.

Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights)

With the incorporation into Scots law of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, albeit with its scope restricted (see *Sesame* 252), the focus of Together is now on supporting educators/service providers, and so the PEWG's involvement is being reduced to a watching brief.

Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees (SFAR)

Lynne Barty reported on SFAR's work in 2023, a year overshadowed by the passing into law of the Illegal Migration Act. Most of its provisions remain unimplemented; meanwhile the crisis in the system remains, and the backlog of unprocessed cases is estimated at 140,000. There are more than 5,000 asylum seekers in Scotland. The Scottish Government set aside £2m in 2023 to provide them with free bus travel (but the scheme is not yet up and running) and its New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy was published in March 2024. The Government is opposed to the arrest and detention of migrants living in Scotland, and Lynne drew attention to a (one-sided) correspondence between the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice and the UK Home Secretary – see page 8.

Other Yearly Meetings

Mary Woodward had represented Britain Yearly Meeting at Finland YM, in Tampere, 3-5 May, and Busa Cochrane-Muir represented us at Central European YM in Budapest, 16-19 May. Both spoke to written reports which will appear in *The Scottish Friend*; a short version of Mary's is on page 32.

Local Development Worker – priorities for 2025

Area and Local Meetings in Scotland, and Scottish Friends as individuals, are invited to submit suggestions **by the end of September** for the priorities of the Local Development Worker's work in Scotland in 2025. By a process agreed previously with BYM (which employs Zoe Prosser and the other LDWs), a selection of these will be brought to November's General Meeting for consideration and approval.

Zoe Prosser's current priorities, as agreed last year, are:

1. *Expanding role-holder networks;*
2. *Supporting Quaker community building – locally, for families, and for everyone;*
3. *Signposting information about available resources and materials, including videos and non-traditional resources, to help Quaker Meetings and role-holders identify what they need; and*
4. *Supporting the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group to work for change.*

Signing public statements

A paper giving 'Guidance on public support for public actions, statements, campaigns or coalitions' was adopted; it was expected that we will discuss it again.

YM Agenda Committee

The clerk of General Meeting for Scotland is regularly invited to join Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee in September, to reflect on what current issues for Scottish Friends could be usefully be brought to Yearly Meeting the following year. The meeting spent time considering this. Friends are also invited to send ideas to the clerk **before the end of June**.

Correspondence and other business

Since the last meeting, the clerk, on behalf of GM, had, with other bodies, signed statements in support of action on climate change, and against a new gas power station at Peterhead; and letters to Scottish ministers in support of the Wellbeing and Sustainable Development (Scotland) Bill and in favour of the new Land Reform Bill. An event to launch the first of the statements was attended by the Assistant Clerk on 9 May (see page 30).

Upcoming business

On 21 September we expect to return to the proposals for a single Quaker charity/body (Quakers in Scotland), particularly on ways local meetings might work together under any new arrangements. We will hear updates on our work with children, and on climate justice.

[Notes prepared by the Editor from the GM Minutes]

“Dear Cabinet Secretary ...”

SHIRLEY-ANNE SOMERVILLE, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice in the Scottish Government, wrote twice to the Home Secretary in May, expressing concern at the UK Government’s policies as they affect immigrants in Scotland. (The text of the second letter is at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/immigration-enforcement-letter-social-justice-secretary-home-secretary/>) A number of Friends are writing (each in a personal capacity) to commend her doing so, as follows:

Dear Cabinet Secretary

We are writing as a group of Quakers with a longstanding concern for the plight of asylum seekers in the UK, to express our support for the letters you have sent on 7 and 17 May to the Home Secretary, James Cleverly. We were very glad to see that you were requesting

- *confirmation that there would be no immigration enforcement operations which involve going into communities in Scotland to remove people from their homes; and*
- *information on: the cohort being targeted in Scotland; the numbers of people resident in Scotland who have already been detained; and how many people it is planned to detain.*

Given the announcement of a snap General Election since the date of your letters, it is probably unrealistic to expect a constructive reply from Mr Cleverly, but we hope that you will pursue the questions you raised, up to and beyond the General Election. We strongly agree with your view that ‘this situation is intolerable both for the individuals concerned and for the wider community.’

Even if, as we hope, the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Act 2024 is repealed or at least fails to be implemented, it seems clear that forcible detentions are still occurring, as exemplified by the case of Anne McLaughlin MP’s constituent. Such individuals are in danger of being forgotten, and their case needs to be kept in view. We know that asylum seekers live in dread of such detention, which remains a threat with or without the Rwanda scheme, since the Illegal Migration Act 2023. We hope also that you will take every opportunity to speak out against the harshness of this Act and specifically too against the practice of indefinite immigration detention: the UK is the only country in Europe to have no legal time limit placed on immigration detention.

Among the many concerns you must have to address, we hope this will remain firmly on your list.

With our warm good wishes

[signatures of Friends with home town or Meeting
(if Friends know they can sign on their Meeting’s behalf)]

If you are reading this **on or before Wednesday 19 June** then there is still time to add your name to the list of signatories; to do so, contact **Carolyn Burch** (details in the Book of Members, page 24).

Joint statement on International Court of Justice orders on Gaza

Quakers in Britain has joined 21 other charities calling on the UK government to ensure Israel complies with its obligations under international law, including immediately halting its military offensive in Rafah.

London, 26 May 2024

“As an aid worker in Gaza the current situation is deeply distressing. The feeling of helplessness and frustration is overwhelming. Our primary mission is to help those in need, but with the borders closed and no aid coming in, our hands are tied. We are acutely aware of the worsening conditions and the urgent needs of people, and it is heartbreaking to witness their suffering without being able to provide the necessary support.”

On 24 May 2024, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered additional provisional measures regarding Israel's alleged violations in Gaza of obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The court ordered that, in light of the worsening conditions in Rafah, Israel must immediately halt its military offensive, and any other action in the Rafah governorate, which may subject the Palestinian population in Gaza to conditions of life that may lead to their physical destruction, in whole or in part. The court described the conditions in Rafah as ‘disastrous’ and is ‘not convinced that the evacuation efforts and related measures that Israel affirms to have undertaken to enhance the security of civilians in the Gaza Strip, and in particular those recently displaced from the Rafah Governorate, are sufficient to alleviate the immense risk to which the Palestinian population is exposed as a result of the military offensive in Rafah.’

The ICJ reaffirmed provisional measures indicated in its orders of 26 January 2024, and 28 March 2024, applicable throughout Gaza, including Rafah, and called for their immediate and effective implementation. This includes the unhindered provision at scale of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance, and the maintained opening of land crossing points, particularly the Rafah crossing. The Court also ordered Israel to allow unhindered access for any commission of inquiry, fact-finding initiatives or other UN bodies to investigate allegations of genocide. It also reiterated calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. Israel is required to submit a report one month from today, outlining all measures taken to comply with these orders.

The UK must unreservedly accept the findings and orders of the Court. As a signatory to the Genocide Convention and the UN Charter, the UK must ensure that the Court's decisions are respected and enacted, by way of public statements and concrete policy actions. Failure to do so not only risks further loss of civilian lives, it also risks unravelling the very foundations of the international rules-based system and international justice. The

application of justice and accountability for international crimes can never be selective. Inconsistency enables impunity.

The situation in Gaza has deteriorated significantly, despite the ICJ's 26 January order that Israeli authorities must prevent and punish acts of genocide. Since 8 October, at least 35,000 Palestinians have been killed, with thousands left under the rubble, and nearly 80,000 have been injured. The population is being starved, with mass destruction of civilian infrastructure and little access to clean water, sanitation and healthcare under Israel's continued indiscriminate bombardment and deliberate and systematic deprivation of aid in Gaza.

The UK must now do everything in its power to ensure that Israel complies with its obligations under international law, including in respect of all of the measures ordered by the ICJ. The Israeli government has already failed to comply with the ICJ's orders, and the UK must urgently use every available lever to ensure its compliance, urgently halt Israel's assault on Rafah, and demand an immediate and lasting ceasefire. This includes suspending arms transfers to Israel for as long as there is a risk they may be used to violate international law. The UK must uphold its signatory obligations under the convention to prevent and punish the crime of genocide, and must ensure that it is in no way enabling, or otherwise complicit, in the commission of acts that the Court has found could plausibly be in violation of the Genocide Convention.

We urge the UK to immediately reverse its decision to pause UK funding to UNRWA, which came shortly after the issuance of the first set of provisional measures issued by the ICJ. We welcomed the swift investigation by Catherine Colonna, which found that UNRWA has in place a significant number of mechanisms and procedures to ensure compliance with the Humanitarian Principle of neutrality, and by the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). The denial of funding to UNRWA will only lead to more deaths, at a time when the ICJ has underscored the need to prevent genocide and fulfil the dire humanitarian needs of Palestinians.

The ICJ is the highest court of the United Nations. His Majesty's Government must publicly and unreservedly acknowledge the findings of the ICJ and support implementation of the measures it has ordered. Failure to do so will risk the UK falling short of its own ethical and treaty obligations to prevent the crime of genocide, and its own stated policy to prevent all mass atrocity crimes.

[The full list of signatory organisations is at:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/news-and-events/news/joint-statement-on-international-court-of-justice-orders-on-gaza>

EDINBURGH CLIMATE FESTIVAL *will be happening at the Meadows in Edinburgh on Saturday 29 June, celebrating and inspiring climate action in our communities.*

Full information from <https://edinburghclimatecoalition.org/>.

“Demand the Ballot ...!” – participating in elections

John Bright’s campaign, mocked by Tenniel’s cartoon for *Punch*, included an open-air meeting of 150,000 people in Birmingham on 27 August 1866; his message at such events, according to the caption, was essentially:

PARROT SONG: *“Pretty democra–a–ats ! Take ‘em to the poll ! Naughty Bob
Lowe ! Schgree–e–e–yx !!!”*

(“Demand the Ballot!” he *actually* said.) In March that year the Liberal Government had introduced a Bill to extend the franchise, opposed not only by the Conservatives, led in the House of Commons by Disraeli, but also by a Liberal faction compared by Bright to those who took refuge in the cave of Adullam (1 Samuel 22: 2), “every one that was in distress ... and every one that was discontented”. The most prominent Adullamite was Robert Lowe (the parrot’s “Naughty Bob”), described by Robert Blake in his 1966 biography of Disraeli as “a pugnacious, quarrelsome Wykehamist albino who sat for Lord Lansdowne’s pocket borough, Calne”. The “great parliamentary battle”, Blake says, “was dominated by Lowe and Bright”:

Lowe was fighting ... for what would now be called ‘meritocracy’. The case has seldom been better stated, nor has its answer been more splendidly made than by Bright, who supported the Bill, not for itself but as the stepping stone to better things. Gladstone, too, made a fine contribution to a debate which for sheer intellectual quality is generally agreed to have been unrivalled in any political assembly of modern times. But Gladstone was hampered by having to defend the details of a Bill riddled with anomalies. As for Disraeli, he made some clever and amusing speeches, but in general bided his time and encouraged others.

Disraeli’s tactics succeeded in bringing down the Government; Earl Russell was replaced as Prime Minister by the Tory leader, the Earl of Derby, at the end of June. However the issue of reform was not going away; what eventually passed into law in 1867 was, as Blake says, “a far more sweeping measure than the Bill rejected by the House a year earlier, and indeed more sweeping than anyone envisaged when Disraeli first expounded it on March 18.” Bright can be given much of the credit for this, despite his own dissatisfaction with what was enacted: he said rousing Parliament from its apathy over reform was like trying to “flog a dead horse” to make it pull a load: the first citation of the phrase in the Oxford English Dictionary.

SESAME READERS WILL BE AWARE that there is to be a UK General Election on Thursday 4 July. In Scotland, to register to vote you must be:

- a UK or Irish citizen, or
- a qualifying Commonwealth citizen living in the UK, or
- a qualifying foreign national who is living in Scotland and has permission to enter or stay in the UK, or who does not need such permission, including EU citizens.

You must also be aged 14 or over (but you can't vote until you're 16 years old). In certain circumstances, it is possible to register anonymously; see <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/who-can-vote/register-vote/register-vote-anonymously>

Not all registered voters, however, are eligible to cast a vote in elections to the Westminster Parliament, for which the minimum age is 18, and from which foreign nationals, including EU citizens, are excluded. (Citizens of Cyprus and Malta *may* vote, because these EU member states are also parts of the Commonwealth.) Commonwealth citizens may vote if they either have, or do not require, leave to enter or remain in the UK; this includes citizens of Zimbabwe and Fiji, despite these states having been suspended from the Commonwealth. Citizens of British crown dependencies (the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) also may vote, as may citizens of British overseas territories.

The deadline to register to vote in the General Election on Thursday 4 July is **Tuesday 18 June**, so by the time you read this it may be too late to do so. The deadline to apply for a **postal vote** is **5.00 pm on Wednesday 19 June** (and you must have been registered to vote by **11.59 pm** the previous day).

There have been recent changes to the rules about voting by post. These changes apply to UK Parliamentary general elections, by-elections and recall petitions, but do not apply to Scottish Parliamentary or council elections in Scotland.

You can apply online to vote by post; you must prove your identity when applying. You also need to reapply for a postal vote every three years.

If you have a long-term postal vote, applied for before **31 October 2023**, this will now expire on **31 January 2026**. Your local electoral registration office will contact you before your postal vote expires.

Voters in Scotland now need to show **photo ID** to vote at polling stations in some elections; the deadline to apply for **free voter ID** to vote on 4 July is **5.00 pm on Wednesday 26 June**. (The same deadline applies to applications for a **proxy vote** – see:

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/ways-vote/how-vote-proxy>)

Acceptable photo ID includes a passport, a driving licence or Blue Badge, or a Scottish National Entitlement Card (bus pass). Although it was reported when the legislation was before Parliament that the last of these would only be usable by the over-60s, the Electoral Commission website says explicitly that under-22s can also use it – see:

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/voter-id/accepted-forms-photo-id>

Students, though able to register at both a term-time *and* a home address in different electoral areas, may only vote in one of them; to vote in both is a **criminal offence** – except if voting in local government elections when the bodies being elected are in different jurisdictions, *i.e.* one in Scotland and the other elsewhere in the UK.

Election resources from Quakers in Britain

Quakers in Britain staff have produced a **guide** for individuals, groups and meetings on the Election. It gives an overview of some key issues, suggesting questions that Friends may wish to ask their parliamentary candidates. It has advice about ways to engage your meeting and wider community.

The guide can be downloaded as a 20-page PDF from

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/election-2024-a5-election-booklet>

There is also a **template email** for individuals to adapt and send to their local parliamentary candidates; it can be downloaded as a Word document (111 words, in template form) from

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/politicalengagement/general-election-2024>

where the other resources mentioned can also be accessed.

There are PDF **packs** to help adults to engage children and young people with the election and our key issues. The young people's pack is at

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/general-election-2024-young-quakers>

and the children's one at

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/general-election-2024-childrens-work>

If you have any questions about these resources, please call **020 7663 1138** or email politics@quaker.org.uk.

There is also guidance for Quaker communities on restrictions that apply to campaigning by charities and non-party groups on political issues, at

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/guidance-for-quakers-uk-general-election-2024>

Election resources from the Quaker Truth and Integrity Group (QTIG)

There is an 8-page QTIG briefing document, *The 2024 General Election – an opportunity to reset democracy, integrity, and trust*, which is at

<https://files.quaker.app/hv66yv/er65jajx1/view/1453bc7e6a79b0001572fb57441f8204>

(The individual sections of it can be viewed or downloaded separately at

[https://quakertruth.org/qtig-general-election-material/.](https://quakertruth.org/qtig-general-election-material/))

Last year, QTIG produced a 'toolkit' for Area Meetings on engaging with decision makers – of whom there will be many new ones after the results are declared, owing to the number of members of the last parliament standing down, and the likelihood of many seats changing hands. It is at

<https://files.quaker.app/fs89dw/b6kw22qgc/view/9d62f893f3ac1c7ffa3a4a3832cb5bf6>

Election Briefing from the Network of Christian Peace Organisations

The NCPO (of which the Northern Friends Peace Board and the Fellowship of Reconciliation are members) has produced a briefing for church groups and others highlighting questions for candidates on 'Welcoming Refugees and Migrant Justice', 'Nuclear Weapons', 'Human and Planetary Security' and 'Pathways to Peace'. It can be accessed here:

<https://ncpo.org.uk/ncpo-general-election-briefing-2024>

[There are also Election briefings cited in the report on the General Assembly: see page 25.]

“Justifying my Intentions” – *an author writes*

Elizabeth Shackleton (1726-1804) was the second wife of Richard Shackleton (1726-1792) the master of the Quaker school at Ballitore, Co. Kildare, Ireland. (The school had been founded by his father, Abraham Shackleton (1696-1771), and its pupils included Edmund Burke; Ernest Shackleton, the Antarctic explorer, was a descendant.)

In 1770, Elizabeth Shackleton wrote to **David Hume** to complain at the account given of Friends in the new edition of his *History of England* (see Sesame 254 for the equivalent passage in the previous edition of 1767). Her own letter does not survive, but to it she received the following reply:

Madam

I am very much oblig'd to you for the honour you have done me, in taking notice of any of my writings: and I own, that I have a great desire of justifying to you my Intentions at least, in those passages, which you seem to think exceptionable. When I said, that the Quakers may in some respects be regarded as Deists, I thought that I was doing them the greatest honour, by putting them on the same footing with Socrates, Plato, Cicero, Seneca and the wisest Men in all Ages.

As that sect has shaken off the Dominion of Priests, who are the great Corrupters of religion, and neglect all positive Institutions, they are led almost necessarily to confine themselves to natural Theology, at least where they are not irritated by Persecution: Morality and a Reverence for the supreme Being become the Basis of their Principles and scarcely admit of any superstructure.

As to my historical Account of the Origin of the Quakers, I drew it chiefly from Sewel [*The History of the Rise, Increase and Progress of the Christian People called Quakers* by William Sewel (1722)], who was of the Sect. I have indeed a great Regard for that Body of Men [*sic*], especially for the present Members: and I acknowledge that, even in the last Century, when all the different Sects were worrying one another, and throwing the State into Convulsions, they were always peaceable, charitable, and exemplary, and have in every Shape deservd well of the Public.

After returning you again my acknowledgements for the obliging Terms employd in your letter, I remain

Madam,

Your most obedient and most humble servant

DAVID HUME.

Edinburgh.

5 of July 1770.

[Taken from *The Journal of the Friends Historical Society*, Vol. xxvii, 1930, p. 39 (see: <https://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/6771/1/Vol.%2027%20-%201930.pdf>); not included in J.Y.T. Grieg's *The Letters of David Hume* (Oxford, 1931, reprinted 1969).]

Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group: sub-group on community

Questions for Local Meetings, Quaker groups and individuals to consider

THE COMMUNITY SUB-GROUP of the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group wants to find out a) how Local Meetings and other groups of Quakers throughout Scotland see themselves relating to the wider Quaker world; and b) what they require of Quaker structures to support them.

This set of questions is designed to encourage group consideration of this. The group welcomes contributions from groups of Friends and from individuals who wish to comment on their personal views.

It is helpful if you use these questions as a structure for responses. Local meetings may wish to record a minute of the deliberations, and send that to the sub-group, or may wish to respond in detail to the questions as set out below.

*A list of all those involved in the Community Sub-Group is given at the end. Any of them is willing to assist in facilitating discussion of these questions. Responses from groups and from individuals should be sent (preferably before **30 June 2024**) to **Alastair Cameron**, clerk.sesam@outlook.com.*

When responding, please make clear who has sent the response, and the name of the group or Local Meeting it comes from (or if it's your own response as an individual).

Section A

Some of the things groups of Quakers typically do are set out below; please give a flavour of where the balance in these lies within your group. What aspects do Friends feel particularly enthusiastic about; which do you see as necessary but less inspiring; which do not have relevance to your life as a meeting?

1. Learning

Do you see your group or Meeting as a place to learn about matters of faith?

Which of the following are most important?

Learning about Quakers –

Structures, roles and processes;

Quaker spirituality and testimonies;

History;

How Quakers seek to influence the world.

Learning about faith –

Understanding God / the spirit;

Living with our neighbours;

Other faith traditions.

Learning about other matters not listed above.

2. Building community

Which of these are important roles for your group in relation to community-building?

Getting to know each other / welcoming newcomers
 Looking after one another (pastoral care) and how worship is organised (eldership)
 Building links within your neighbourhood or wider community
 Building links with other Quakers – neighbouring meetings; other Quaker groups; at a national level, either in Scotland or in GB as a whole; internationally
 Building links with other faith groups.

3. Witness and way of living

How does your Quaker group support individuals and work collectively on key matters of Quaker belief:

Living simply and sustainably
 Working for peace
 Building social justice
 Helping people achieve personal and spiritual growth.

4. Sustaining the Quaker community

How important is it to your Quaker group to sustain the 'housekeeping' needed for Quakers to function?

Maintaining rotas for the jobs needed – opening the premises, caring for children, making the refreshments *etc*
 Nominating and appointing people to key roles;
 Handling and accounting for money;
 Outreach and membership;
 Marriages and deaths;
 Children and young people;
 Safeguarding and confidentiality.

5. *What other things are important to your meeting/group that haven't been listed above?*

Section B

This section looks at how your group sees Quakers beyond itself, and how you benefit from it.

1. Area Meeting

Area Meeting (AM) is the geographical bringing together of local meetings; it has a dual function, which can be summarised as 'AM the event' and 'AM the community'.

AM the community is simply the umbrella for the local meetings in its area, and may function in helping them to feel part of a bigger whole. There are four AMs in Scotland: North brings together seven local meetings and three worship groups; East comprises three local meetings; West has twelve local meetings; South East has nine local meetings and two worship groups.

AM the event takes place a certain number of times a year, concentrating on some of the housekeeping matters listed at 4 above – admitting new members; recording deaths; making appointments; hearing from local meetings. Each AM also has a

set of trustees who are responsible for the legal side of Quaker life – handling money, looking after property, reporting to the charity regulator.

Some Quaker groups, such as Young Friends General Meeting, have a Scottish presence as part of GB activities, but no particular link to the Area Meetings.

1.1 Please try and locate on this continuum your Quaker Meeting or group's connection with the relevant Area Meeting:

- | a | b | c | d | e |
|----------|---|----------|----------|----------|
| (a) | <i>We don't have a relevant AM</i> | | | |
| (b) | <i>We have a relevant AM and have very little contact with it</i> | | | |
| (c) | <i>Some of our members attend but most don't feel much connection with it</i> | | | |
| (d) | <i>We see AM as a necessary part of our current structure but its meetings don't inspire us</i> | | | |
| (e) | <i>We see AM as an important part of our Quaker life.</i> | | | |

1.2 Please give an example (or examples) of where your group has found AM **particularly helpful** in relation to your group.

1.3 Please give an example (or examples) of where you have felt AM has **failed** to deliver something you needed of it.

2. Quakers in Scotland

*To date, Quakers in Scotland have taken the form of **General Meeting for Scotland**, a body which brings together all the meetings in Scotland. Its main roles are to link Quakers throughout Scotland; to represent Quakers at a national level with other faith groups and with political bodies; to link Scottish Quakers with Britain Yearly Meeting.*

The current proposal is to set up a single Quaker charitable body for Scotland; this means many of the trustee functions of AMs will be carried out at a national level, and we are finding out what will be the best ways of carrying out the other functions, such as pastoral care and looking after the health of our meetings. We are considering matters in terms of 'levels of group': local level equating to local meetings or other groups; middle level equating to our current area meetings; and high level equating to the national (Scotland or GB).

Please think about the implications of this for your worshipping group.

2.1 Does it make sense for the new body to become Area Meeting for Scotland; or do you feel a need for some middle level between the local meeting (or other Quaker group) and a national body?

2.2 At which level would it make sense for people's membership to be considered and approved?

2.3 At which level are pastoral care and eldership (the maintenance of worshipping arrangements) best situated?

2.4 What level is best for taking forward issues and concerns in the political arena?

3. What a wider Quaker body can offer your group

Quakers have never been a 'congregational' church; from the earliest days, Quakers saw the benefits of being part of a movement. Please consider in the present circumstances, how this can benefit your local meeting or Quaker group. Besides the above issues, what is best done at a local level; what can achieve more for individuals & the worshipping group if it is shared with or supported by others; at what level are these functions best done?

4. Further thoughts

Please add anything else you'd like to contribute to this discussion.

Please return your response to **Alastair Cameron**, clerk.sesam@outlook.com. If possible, these should reach him by **30 June 2024**; if you are unable to do this but intend to respond, please let Alastair know by then. Alastair can also be reached by telephone [*see the Book of Members*].

The membership of the QiS CG Community Sub-Group is:

Piers Voisey	North Scotland AM
Edmund Holt	"
Pamala McDougall	East Scotland AM
Robert Rayner	"
Rob Claxton-Ingham	West Scotland AM
Marilyn Higgins	South East Scotland AM
Alastair Cameron	"
Zoe Prosser	Local Development Worker, Scotland
Lesley Richards	Convener, QiS CG

Peter Christy, who died suddenly last month, also served on the sub-group – he was a member of West Scotland Area Meeting (Ayrshire LM). The funeral at Mauchline was on 20 May. We hold Peter's family and loved ones in the Light.

THE BOOK OF MEMBERS AND ATTENDERS

lists all those known to be associated with the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Scotland, either as Members of the Society or as frequent participants in its worship and other activities (Attendees). Copies can be bought from Local Meetings but it is a **confidential document**, not available to those whose names do not appear in it. It is assumed that readers of *Sesame* will have access to it.

Woodbrooke Courses, July to September 2024

For details of events or courses commencing or taking place before the end of June, see *Sesame* 253. Unless marked otherwise, events are online; many are FREE or 'pay as led' (*i.e.* participants are asked to pay what they can afford). It is still necessary to book (at <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/our-courses/>) as places are limited. Where a price is shown, it is the **standard** fee for the event or course, and a **50 % discount** is usually available to participants aged 18–35.

Business Method Surgery

Tuesday 2 July: 19:00-20:30 BST

Rachael Swancott

The Heart of the Quaker Way [IN-PERSON EVENT] **£30**

Liverpool Quaker Meeting House, 22 School Lane, Liverpool L1 3BT

Saturday 6 July 2024: 10:00-16:30 BST

'Ben' Pink Dandelion

Enquiring Into: Answering That of God

Thursday 11 July: 19:00-21:00 BST

Rosie Carnall

George Fox: The Quaker Peace Testimony

Saturday 13 July: 16:00-17:30 BST

Douglas Gwyn, Stuart Masters

Faiths for Climate Reparations **£24**

Thursday 18 July & Monday 12 August: 19:00-20:30 BST

Shanon Shah

My Soul Looks Back and Wonders: **£48**

An Introduction to Black Liberation Theology

5 weekly sessions: Thursdays, 18 July – 15 August: 19:00-20:30 BST

Xavier Johnson

How Can We Talk About Israel-Palestine?

Monday 22 July: 18:30-20:00 BST

Marigold Bentley, Tanya Hubbard

Embodying Quaker Wisdom Through Chant

Monday 22 July: 19:00-20:30 BST

Paulette Meier

Business Method Surgery

Tuesday 6 August: 19:00-20:30 BST

Rachael Swancott

Renewing Quakerism: embracing change with hope **£60**

6 weekly sessions: Tuesdays, 6 August – 10 September: 19:00-21:00 BST

Sam Donaldson

Linking Climate Justice and Demilitarisation **£24**

Wednesday 7 August & Tuesday 10 September: 19:00-20:30 BST

Charlotte Cooper, Kim Harrison

George Fox: nontheist Quaker perspectives

Saturday 10 August: 16:00-17:30 BST

Rhiannon Grant

Being a Quaker Grandparent **£48**

4 weekly sessions: Tuesdays, 13 August – 3 September: 19:00-20:30 BST

Harriet Heath

An Infinite Ocean of Light: Awakening the Creative Spirit **£40**

Thursday 15 August & Thursday 22 August: 19:00-20:30 BST

Diana Luther Powell

- Get Your Quaker Studies Book Published*** [RESIDENTIAL] **£365**
The Briery, 38, Victoria Avenue, Ilkley, West Yorkshire, LS29 9BW
 16-18 August 2024 (Friday evening meal – Sunday lunchtime) Rhiannon Grant
- Composing Chants To Lift the Spirit***
 Monday 19 August: 19:00-20:30 BST Paulette Meier
- The Quaker World: Inclusion***
 Wednesday 21 August: 19:00-20:30 BST Rhiannon Grant
- Conversations With Our Children: Privilege***
 Tuesday 27 August: 20:30-21:30 BST
- Trustee Update: New Handbook***
 Wednesday 28 August: 19:00-21:00 BST Rhiannon Grant
- Approaching the Gospels: a Quaker introduction*** **£36**
 30 – 31 August: sessions are at 19:00-20:30 on Friday 30 August;
 09.30-10.30, 11:30-12.30, 14:30-16:00 on Saturday 31 August
 Timothy Ashworth
- Life Reflections***
 Sunday 1 September: 15:00-17:00 BST Daniel Clarke Flynn
- Business Method Surgery***
 Tuesday 3 September: 19:00-20:30 BST Rachael Swancott
- Courage and Companionship: Spiritual Nourishment for Men*** **£48**
 4 weekly sessions: Wednesdays, 4 September – 25 September: 19:30-21:00 BST
 Will Johnson
- Faithfulness Groups To Support Witness*** **£48**
 7 fortnightly sessions:
 Wednesdays, 4 September – 27 November: 19:00-20:30 BST / GMT
 Lia den Daas, Rachel Krishnaswami
- Quakers and The Archers: Tales of Everyday Folk*** **£42**
 3 weekly sessions: Wednesdays, 4 – 18 September: 19:30-21:00 BST
 Jacquie Cole, Simonne Wood
- Addressing Ecocide: Quaker Contributions*** **£24**
 Thursday 5 September & Tuesday 8 October: 17:30-19:30 BST Hilary Saunders
- George Fox: A Universalist Quaker Perspective***
 Saturday 7 September: 16:00-17:30 BST Rhiannon Grant
- Galatians: Paul's gospel of liberation*** **£54**
 4 weekly sessions: Mondays, 9 – 30 September: 18:30-20:00 BST
 Timothy Ashworth
- Pendle Hill Seminar: Better Than Good***
 Monday 9 September: 19:00-20:30 BST Elize Sakamoto, Windy Cooler
- Enquiring Into: Spoken Ministry***
 Thursday 12 September: 19:00-21:00 BST Rosie Carnall
- Parenting: A Spiritual Quest*** **£48**
 6 weekly sessions: Thursdays, 12 September – 17 October: 20:00-21:00 BST
 Carolyn Baynes

Refugees, Migration Rights and Climate Justice

£24

Thursday 12 September & Thursday 3 October: 19:00-21:00 BST

Sadie DeCoste, Nick Cullen

Orienting to Joy

Saturday 14 September: 10:00-12:00 BST

Susan Groves

Quaker Eco Church Network: Steps to Accreditation

6 sessions: Monday 16 September–Thursday 13 February 2025, 19:00-20:30

Session dates: Monday 16 September; Monday 14 October; Monday 11 November; Monday 2 December; Thursday 16 January and Thursday 13 February.

Gordon Benson, Kim Harrison

Friend, Guest, or Family? Deep Hospitality in Quaker Communities

£54

5 Sessions: Tuesdays, 17 September – 15 October: 19:30-21:00 BST

Windy Cooler, Rhiannon Grant

The Gospel of Mary: An Introduction

Tuesday 17 September: 19:00-20:30 BST

David Curtis, 'Ben' Pink Dandelion

Becoming Friends

£54

7 fortnightly sessions: Wednesdays, 18 September–11 December:

19:00-20:30 BST/GMT

Rachael Swancott

Exploring Quaker Business Method

Thursday 19 September: 19:00-21:00 BST

Rachael Swancott

How Can We Respond to the Israel-Palestine Conflict?

Thursday 19 September: 18:30-20:00 BST

Tanya Hubbard

Voices of the Earth [RESIDENTIAL]

£255

Glenthorne Guest House & Conference Centre, Easedale Rd, Ambleside LA22 9QH

20-22 September 2024 (Friday evening meal – Sunday lunchtime)

Philip Gross, Zélie Gross

Racial Justice Dialogues: Implementing Anti-Racism in Meetings

£36

Saturday 21 September & Saturday 18 January 2025: 10:00-16:00 (UK time)

Nim Njuguna, Jonathan Doering

Meeting for Worship Through Dance

Monday 23 September: 09:00-10:00 BST

Robin Bowles, Ann Bettys

Paths Towards Transformative Justice

£54

6 weekly sessions: Mondays, 23 September – 28 October: 18:00-19:30 BST/GMT

Nishma Jethwa

Changing Face of Quaker Community

£25

Tuesdays 24 September & 1 October: 19:00-20:30 BST

'Ben' Pink Dandelion

Exploring Threshing & Clearness

Thursday 26 September: 19:00-21:00 BST

Rhiannon Grant

Bursary help with the cost of participating in events may be available from Area Meeting; speak to a Pastoral Friend, or email sesamtreasurer@gmail.com for more information.

What Happens in Meeting for Worship

'Woodbrooke Where You Are' – 11 May, Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House

WHAT DOES HAPPEN in Meeting for Worship? Fifty years after I attended my first Quaker meeting (in a carry cot) I'm not sure I can give a clear answer; and so, along with 28 others from Central Edinburgh and other meetings in South East Scotland, I attended the second in this year's series of five Woodbrooke Meetings for Learning at Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House.

Over three sessions, our facilitator Simonne Wood helped us to consider three questions: *What is Worship?*; *How do we Worship?*; and *Who Speaks in Meeting for Worship?* We also considered how we could deepen our meetings for worship.

We learned that the word *worship* derives from Old English (literally "worth-ship") and could apply to people: "*the condition (in a person) of deserving, or being held in, high esteem or repute*" (OED). We (or certainly I) think of worshipping God (or the divine, or something beyond nature), but perhaps we should also think of Meeting for Worship as a time to consider our own and each other's worth – a time to hold each other in the Light.

After hearing four readings from *Quaker Faith & Practice* about worship (2.01, 2.47, 2.08 and 23.32) we broke into groups to discuss what meeting for worship means to us. I felt that it was about making sense of the paradox of our own tininess and unimportance compared to the vastness and majesty of creation, and yet our huge importance to each other within the miniscule fraction of space and time that we inhabit (akin to *QFP* 2.01). Another Friend felt it was about Love (more *QFP* 2.47) – and I wondered how I'd missed the obvious.

To help us think about how we worship, Simonne gave us the task in groups of classifying a large pile of prompts on slips of paper as "Essential to worship", "Helpful to individuals", "Helpful to the worshipping community", "Social convention" and "Less helpful/distracting". All groups agreed that *the divine presence* (and/or a shared focus on it) were essential to worship. *Waiting in silent anticipation* and *being in a safe and accessible place* were regarded as "essential" by all groups who had time to classify those prompts. *A Friend welcoming individuals before Meeting starts* was either "essential" or "helpful to the worshipping community".

There were differing views on other prompts. Some felt that looking around at other Friends was essential, whereas others felt it was helpful to have their eyes closed. As a sometime closed-eye worshipper, I reassessed how important the connection to other Friends in the room (or online) is in connecting with the divine; for me, it is important to know that other Friends are trying to do the same as I am, but I don't feel the need to see them doing so all the time. Some felt silence among participants was es-

sential, but we were reminded of the programmed tradition of meetings, and that our all-age meetings for worship are not held in absolute silence.

After a delicious catered lunch, we considered who speaks in meeting for worship and how we are called to speak. Is it always the same Friends who minister, and does whether we minister depend on how confident we are at public speaking? Although we should beware of ministering too frequently and predictably, we also don't want messages not to come through because we are unduly inhibited. Letting Friends know that their ministry was helpful is one way of nurturing it. Personally, I find it difficult to know whether I am being truly called to minister, and I find it difficult to prevent the intellectual part of my brain drowning out the "heart". However, I left the day feeling that I should perhaps be less worried: meeting for worship is bigger than me: ministry from me, however imperfect and unhelpful to some, may lead on to ministry that is more helpful.

Like exercise, I feel that discussing worship – both our shared and differing views – is good for us and that we don't do it enough. The Woodbrooke day offered a spiritual gym. I look forward to the next one.

David Sterratt

*The next 'Woodbrooke Where You Are' event at Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, EH1 2JL, is on **Saturday 29 June** from 10am to 4pm: **Rhiannon Grant** will lead a session entitled*

Telling Your Spiritual Stories.

*Booking closes on **20 June**; numbers are limited, so to avoid disappointment sign up now at www.woodbrooke.org.uk/sescotland. The password is **Cented24**.*

The Life and Times of George Fox and his relevance today

Saturday 5 October: Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House

Ben Pink Dandelion from Woodbrooke has agreed to deliver a half-day event at the start of 'Quaker Week' in October. There will be two 90-minute sessions (1.15 – 2.45 and 3.15 – 4.45) with a simple lunch beforehand from 12.30 (soup/bread & cheese), and "birthday cakes" for George Fox during the afternoon tea break. **Places are limited to 60 participants** – the deadline for registering will be 5 September.

[For other courses and events related to the Fox quatercentenary, see pages 19, 20, 26 and 27.]

General Assembly of the Church of Scotland

18-23 May 2024, Edinburgh

THIS YEAR'S Assembly was attended on Friends' behalf by Susan Mitchell, Assistant GM Clerk, Katrina McCrea, GM Treasurer, and myself as the Quaker representative on the Ecumenical Officers Forum of the Scottish Christian Forum (formerly ACTS). Our full report will appear in the next issue of *The Scottish Friend*.

Saturday's opening worship included a hymn with the refrain *All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place*; and we felt we were.

The General Assembly said goodbye to its retiring Moderator, Sally Foster-Fulton, and welcomed her successor, Shaw Paterson. The Lord High Commissioner, representing the King, was the Duke of Edinburgh (a.k.a. Prince Edward); he too was welcomed, and a letter from his brother was read out. Ecumenical and overseas guests at the Assembly were individually introduced to the Moderator: at a formal lunch on the Sunday we had the opportunity to get to know each other a little better.

Saturday afternoon's main business was consideration of the wide-ranging report of the Ecumenical Relations Committee (which I recommend). [*It is available online, as are all the papers for the Assembly – see the link opposite.*]

The Moderator's theme this year is *Building Together* and it's both heartening to see what *is* being done, and disappointing to see what is taking long to achieve: as Mark Slaney, Chair of the Methodist Church in Scotland, put it, we are moving at "*an agreed common pace ... so that we travel side by side.*"

Katrina attended the Sunday service in St Giles, and she and I were at the visitors' lunch, where I found my enjoyment of Korean drama series on Netflix enabled me to have an informed and interesting conversation with the representative from one of the Korean Presbyterian Churches.

Monday's service was warm and welcoming, and the silence, during and after the communion, very comfortable. The day's business was long, and some of it rather dry – but it included discussing the Church of Scotland's attitude to transgender people, and hearing about the progress of the working group set up last year to consider Assisted Dying. Both subjects were dealt with respectfully, focusing on the fact that real people with real feelings are being talked about.

Susan's day at the Assembly had the reports from the Social Care Council, the Guild – the voluntary organisation for women and men within the Kirk which "*enables them to express their faith in worship, prayer and action*" – and the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team. The social care sector is in a bad way; the Guild had raised a huge amount of money for the projects it's currently supporting; the Church's period of transition continues (working out how to carry on with too few people and too little money) but there are hopeful signs that preparation for growth might be on the way.

Susan had hoped to speak in support of a motion asking that the Kirk reinstate its grant to EAPPI (the Ecumenical Accompaniers Programme in Palestine & Israel, which is largely funded by British Quakers), but time ran out. The matter was brought back on Wednesday, so I was able to use her prepared words – and am glad to report that the Assembly voted to reinstate its grant and to record its thanks to BYM for supporting EAPPI.

Other business that day included the thanking of armed forces chaplains, with an address by one of the top brass from one of the services – this year it was the Air Force and I found it somewhat less rage-inducing than in previous years. We heard from many other committees – mercifully brief reports, mostly, but still somewhat dry – making me so glad we don't have huge numbers of properties, salaried ministers, retired ministers, and investments to worry about!

During the afternoon, we heard of the announcement of the date of the General Election: those present were urged to use the resources prepared by both the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office (SCPO) and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI); to assist where we could with voter registration; and to consider applying for a postal vote, since the election will take place in the first week of the Scottish school holidays...

And that was the end of Quaker attendance at this year's General Assembly, which we all enjoyed. Even if the business is a little tedious at times, the people we meet and the relationships we develop make the time hugely enjoyable, and I look forward each year to finding out how people are and how the Church's work is progressing.

If you think YOU might find this interesting too, do let me know: Quakers in Scotland are being invited to an increasing number of events and it's good if it's not always the same few people who attend and report back.

Mary Woodward

[All the documents for the General Assembly, including the King's letter, are at:

<https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us/general-assembly/general-assembly-2024/reports-and-additional-documents>;

The CTBI election briefing is at <https://churcheselection.org.uk/>; the SCPO one is at:

https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/122619/SCPO-UK-General-Election-Briefing.pdf.]

Wiston Lodge Weekend: 13 – 15 September

Every year, Quakers from South East Scotland hold a community-building weekend at Wiston Lodge, near Biggar, in the lovely Clyde valley countryside. All are welcome, and you are encouraged to invite people from elsewhere in Scotland. Details and the booking form are here:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfRstDYqqkfs9pCoulCXW3ehECyYTYeoMQWr_kI0NKMKIjbLQ/viewform)

[1FAIpQLSfRstDYqqkfs9pCoulCXW3ehECyYTYeoMQWr_kI0NKMKIjbLQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfRstDYqqkfs9pCoulCXW3ehECyYTYeoMQWr_kI0NKMKIjbLQ/viewform)

Yearly Meeting 2024

YEARLY MEETING takes place at Friends House and online over a long weekend, from Friday to Tuesday, 26–30 July. Children and young people are an integral part of Yearly Meeting: activities for them include the Children's Programme for 0-11s, Young People at Yearly Meeting for 11-15s (non-residential), and Junior Yearly Meeting, for 15-18s, accommodated nearby.

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee, saw the long weekend as an opportunity to experiment. On Sunday, we will have a Celebration evening to mark the 400th anniversary of George Fox's birth. Additionally, we'll have Exploration sessions for sharing discernment as a community of all ages. These are facilitated activities offering ways to engage creatively with the themes of Yearly Meeting in all-age and age-specific groups. Some of these will be based in Friends House, others close by in Woburn House and there will also be some outdoor activities. This shared discernment will be an adventure, and we ask friends to join these experiments with open hearts and minds.

This year, we will ask Friends to consider **Integrity and Truth** and we will discern Yearly Meeting's formal role in steering the Society of Friends and how this is best kept continuous and relevant.

Preparation sessions and Special Interest meetings will be held online from Friday to Wednesday, 5-10 July, 2024.

The Swarthmore Lecture is to be delivered by Ben Jarman, and will focus on imprisonment and punishment, exploring what Quakers distinctively have to say today about these topics. It will be available to watch on the Woodbrooke YouTube channel. Also usually at the time of Yearly Meeting – last year it was a week early, to coincide with the mass action by Extinction Rebellion – is the Salter Lecture, organised by the Quaker Socialist Society; this year's lecturers are Paul Ingram and Jeremy Corbyn.

Registration for YM is online at <https://www.quaker.org.uk/ym/bookings>.

Note that the deadline for booking to attend is **Sunday 7 July**.

The Yearly Meeting team can be contacted Monday to Friday, 9.00 am – 5.00 pm, by email at ym@quaker.org.uk or by telephone at **020 7663 1040** to answer any questions.

If you are planning to attend Yearly Meeting, in person or online, the Editor would greatly appreciate it if you could make notes of your impressions which could be shared with others in the next issue of Sesame – the deadline is 13 August. Pictures would also be welcome.

Books of possible interest

Luke Howard, whose work in classifying clouds was referred to in the last *Sesame*, was the subject of a well-reviewed 2001 biography (shortlisted for the Samuel Johnson Prize, 2002), still in print in paperback and available as an eBook: Richard Hamblyn's *The Invention of Clouds: How an Amateur Meteorologist Forged the Language of the Skies*, Picador, ISBN 978-0-330-39195-5.

The Cambridge Library Collection of Cambridge University Press offers a few of Howard's own works in paperback. Other Quaker writers available in the series are Hannah Kilham, John Coakley Lettsom and George Fox (Nickalls' edition of the *Journal* and the 'Short' & 'Itinerary' Journals).

AN INVITATION – TUESDAY 25 JUNE

LATER THIS YEAR, Quakers are to appear in an episode of *Songs of Praise* on the theme of equality, and to mark the 400th anniversary of George Fox's birth. This will be filmed at Swarthmoor Hall on **Tuesday, 25 June**; Siobhan Haire, deputy recording clerk, will be speaking about Margaret Fell in the morning, and in the afternoon the TV crew will be recording Friends, both group shots and possibly more interviews. It is hoped that as many Friends may be filmed as possible, so all are invited to be at Swarthmoor Hall (Swarthmoor Hall Lane, Ulverston, Cumbria, LA12 0JQ) from 12 noon – 5.00 pm on the day. (By train, departing from Waverley at 08:12, the trip takes three and three-quarter hours with one change at Lancaster and a half-mile walk to the Hall from Ulverston Station.)

The **NORTHERN FRIENDS PEACE BOARD** will be meeting at Glasgow Meeting House (38 Elmbank Crescent, Charing Cross, Glasgow G2 4PS) and online, on **29 June**, starting at 11.00 and with an afternoon session after lunch. Friends and attenders who are not Board member are welcome to come to either or both sessions, either in person or by Zoom; email the coordinator, Philip Austin, at nfpb@gn.apc.org, for login details.

On **Sunday 30 June** there will be Meeting for Worship at **11.00 am** outside the **FASLANE NAVAL BASE** (HMNB Clyde, Helensburgh G84 0EH) as an act of witness against nuclear weapons – in particular, Trident missiles and the submarines that carry them, which are based at Faslane. On the same day, at **10.30 am** in Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh, there will be a Meeting for Worship, in solidarity, at the Peace Tree, between the Ross Fountain and the bandstand. In both places, you should bring something to sit on. For more details of the Faslane meeting, contact **Mary Alice Mansell** or **Daphne Wassermann** (Glasgow LM); regarding worship in Princes Street Gardens, contact **Esther Shreeve** or **Alison Burnley** (South Edinburgh LM)

Book of Discipline Revision Committee

Hinsley Hall, Leeds: 26-28 April 2024

As usual we began with a Zoom session on the Wednesday before our in-person weekend committee meeting. One task was to appoint buddies for new members – Lucy Faulkner-Gawlinski, Michael Long and Antonia Swinson – as well as for those prevented from attending at Leeds. We look forward to getting to know our three new colleagues as we work together.

We received short reports from those of our working and topic groups whose work we did not need to consider at length this time. As the list of them now goes up to 'q', you can see we are tackling a great many things!

On the Friday evening, we spent time sharing a little about ourselves and our involvement with the committee, before talking about our experience of using the anthology sections of *Quaker Faith & Practice* to help us as we consider the purpose of anthology sections in the new Book.

Saturday was very full-on! Looking again at our project plan and timeline, we were glad to see we are on schedule, and hope this will encourage us as we continue to labour mightily on your behalf. An important part of this is keeping track of everything we have agreed 'to revisit at a later stage ...'

Once we are ready for the consideration of the full draft by Britain Yearly Meeting, we will, among other things, be engaging with Friends around the country, encouraging them to read the text and submit comments on it.

We continue to work on the structure of the book. Seeing how the texts we have already written fit together will help us detect any missing bits that we need to produce. We continue to work on our writing guidelines as we start on topics which have less 'nuts and bolts' content and include much more 'anthology' material. We can't put in every single extract we collect – which ones do we use, in which order, and why? What do we *not* include?

Various texts were agreed 'good enough' and banked for now, including the one I've been working on, Quaker Approaches to Dying and Death. The Structure group continues to make progress, and we are all happy with the 'tree' concept: there are, however, continuing challenges where topics overlap – particularly Close Relationships (one of mine) and Personal Journeys. We need to ensure that texts reflect a Quaker perspective and how that guides us in our life while also covering the full diversity of our Quaker community.

We continue our work on diversity and inclusion, and wonder whether having a "sensitivity reader" might be helpful. We also keep in mind how and where we might share more text with Friends. We welcomed the progress of our Theology topic group's work, which aims to reflect the different theological perspectives that make up our British Quaker community.

For Yearly Meeting 2024 next month, the Communicating with Friends group is planning two online sessions in the week of preparation for BYM.

New topic groups were set up: *Friends and other churches/faiths; Friends and secular bodies; and World Family of Friends/Quakers in the world*. I was both delighted and challenged to be appointed to the third of these: it's a topic I'm interested and involved in, but another thing to juggle in my busy life.

There is to be a conference in October on *The Future of British Quakerism*, which members of the committee will be leading.

We agreed our pattern of meetings for 2025 – online at the end of January, and – we hope – in person in July and October (BYM is in May). Our next meeting this year will be at the University of Warwick in October.

Please continue to uphold us in our work on your behalf: we are all working hard, and at times finding it difficult to balance the many demands on our time – we can't do this work without your prayerful support, for which we are very grateful.

Our key messages:

We continue to make progress in drafting further topics for the new book and are looking ahead to the tasks we will need to undertake to bring all the topics together as a whole.

We are working to include the diversity of Quaker voices in Britain, reflecting the unity and diversity of our shared theology.

Ideas for a bold and imaginative structure of the new book are unfolding.

We are planning two special interest groups for YM 2024, and thinking about the next phase of engaging Friends with our work as we progress towards having a complete draft of the new book ready for Friends for YM 2027.

Mary Woodward

ACCOMMODATION URGENTLY NEEDED

THE REFUGEE FAMILY sponsored by Failte Edinburgh since 2022 has still to find new accommodation, needed by the **end of August 2024**. There is currently an unprecedented shortage of housing in Edinburgh, both Council rented and privately let. Benefit claimants are particularly vulnerable. In view of this and the lifting of rent restrictions imposed during COVID, the family will struggle to find anything suitable or affordable, which could mean uprooting and starting again somewhere new.

The family, whose three children are aged 14, 10 and 6 are seeking a three-bedroomed flat, preferably in South Edinburgh where the children are settled and well-supported in local schools, and where they have access to a nearby medical centre, halal food shops and the Mosque.

Do you know of anyone with a suitable flat who would be willing to rent it out at the Local Housing Allowance rate (£316.44 per week in 2024/25, equivalent to c. £1,370 per month) or thereabouts?

Please contact Lynne Barty (Central Edinburgh) or Esther Shreeve (South Edinburgh) if you can help and/or would like to know more. Thank you.

Christian Aid

Screening of *The Tinderbox* – Monday 24 June, 6.30–9.30 pm.

(Augustine United Church, 41 George IV Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1EL + online)

Join Christian Aid for an evening with BAFTA-winning film maker Gillian Mosely, as we screen her recent film *The Tinderbox* and explore the issues it raises, examining both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, its roots and what needs to happen for it to stop.

For more about the film, see <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt12836378/>.

Register for the screening online at

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/events/screening-tinderbox-and-qa>

For more information please contact edinburgh@christian-aid.org.

New Christian Aid Schools and Campaigning Resources

Just Peace is a new resource to help you and your community learn more about the situation in the Middle East. It and other resources are at:

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/just-peace-campaign>

Creative for Climate Justice – In partnership with SCIAF and Oxfam, and supported by Stop Climate Chaos Scotland, we're inviting schools to be part of our *Creative for Climate Justice* exhibition at the Scottish Parliament later this year. You can find more information at

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/creative-climate-justice-scotland-resources>

or email schoolsscotland@christian-aid.org.

General Election

There are now crib sheets and short videos on our website with key points for engaging with candidates for the General Election or your newly elected MP on debt, climate and peace. *Breaking Bread* – a guide on hosting a newly elected MP at a coffee morning or meal to build a relationship with them and discuss justice issues – is coming soon! See

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/general-election-landing-page-campaigns>

Scottish Politics Climate Briefing

In April, the Scottish Government dropped its 2030 emissions target, and so this is an important moment to engage with MSPs to show them that we care about climate action. Use our new May 2024 briefing to get started.

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-05/scottish-politics-climate-briefing-may-2024.pdf>.

See also the material relating to the Scottish Faith Leaders' event on 9 May:

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/news/climate-change/scottish-faith-leaders-unite-climate-action>

For more information on any of our resources or campaigns, contact
scotlandcampaigns@christian-aid.org.

John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust: Annual Report 2023

The John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust does indeed bring enjoyment. Four applications were made to the Trust in 2023. All were successful.

A computer

This replaced one which was increasingly slow and unreliable. It is used for attending Meetings for Worship and Pastoral Care meetings by Zoom. The recipient wrote: *“the difference between it and my old one is quite amazing to me....I can truly say that I am enjoying using it. It has made such a difference that using my laptop is no longer a chore but an enjoyable experience.”*

2023 GalGael trip to Iona for fifteen people

—*“It was sheer laughter. So much that we cried. To see xxx laughing after all he’s been through, that made me happy.”*

—*“I don’t regard myself as a spiritual guy but there’s something about going to that island – we each take something away from it.”*

—*“I had the best three nights’ sleep I’ve had all year.”*

Trees for Life course

“I requested financial help to go on this course because I was finding it difficult to find joy and hope in the world with so much destruction of the natural environment and felt that immersing myself in nature may restore a sense of hope and positivity. Meeting with other people in such a positive project has had that effect. Thank you, John Wigham!

A four night break for a mother and her teenage daughter

This was their first trip away together in seven years; it was hugely beneficial for them to spend time in a relaxed manner, away from the many stresses that plague their everyday lives. It was *“... amazing. Absolutely brilliant.”*

A further enquiry about funding was received, which appeared to Trustees to be appropriate to the Healing Fund, now administered by Friends Fellowship of Healing; the FFH Treasurer confirmed this. The enquirer was invited to apply to FFH; we hope the application has now been made.

At the start of 2023, available JW(E)T funds stood at **£5,364.04**, augmented during the year by Friends’ earmarking and generous donations totalling **£2,775.27**, for which we are very grateful. This is almost twice the income received in 2022, and we appreciate this increased giving which we hope reflects that Friends feel it worthwhile to contribute to so much happiness. After the payment of grants totalling **£3,270.00**, the sum in hand stood at **£4,869.31** at 31 December 2023.

As noted in the 2022 Annual Report, our capital sum, John Wigham’s bequest of £42,000, is depleted. In the past, accumulated interest helped to keep the Trust afloat. Our request to South East Scotland Area Meeting for a supplement is to be reconsidered in September 2024.

Carol Dean

Convener, John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust

FINLAND YEARLY MEETING: 3 – 5 May, 2024

FINLAND YEARLY MEETING gathers twice each year, in spring and autumn. I was delighted to be appointed to represent Britain YM at the May Gathering. Sue Glover Frykman, of Sweden YM, and Ethel Livermore, Clerk to Europe & Middle East section of Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC EMES) also joined the Finnish participants; about twenty Friends were present for all or part of the time.

The theme of the Gathering looked forward to the FWCC World Plenary Meeting in South Africa in August: *ubuntu* – I am because you are. Zoom preparation and discussion groups were proposed, and mention was made of the resources on the FWCC website, including a study guide. [See <https://fwcc.world/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Study-Guide-ONLINE.pdf>] The suggestion was made of an EMES-wide group coming together on the Sunday. Time differences might make joining some sessions difficult for Finnish Friends, but they are keen to be involved: “We want to give more time and depth as a community, not just receive the epistle and that’s it”.

Two members of the Ecumenical Council of Finland joined us for part of Saturday. Established in 1917, it is a forum for co-operation between Christian communities on social issues – peace and human rights, sustainable future, international responsibility, freedom of religion and belief, and refugees and integration. (It is to be hoped that the slowly emerging Scottish Christian Forum can develop into something as active and positive.)

Most of the day was spent on the business of the Yearly Meeting, conducted in Finnish, with whispered translations for some of us. Greetings from the visitors’ YMs, the accounts, the progress of the translation into Finnish of Thomas Kelly’s *A Testament of Devotion*, the annual report and appointing representatives to events in Finland and abroad were all dealt with.

Sue Glover Frykman and I were asked to present a session on “How does Eldership support our Quaker community?” to introduce the concept of Eldership to those Friends who might not know much about it, and show its relevance to Finland YM.

Saturday night was the opportunity for sauna, swimming pool, and social time for those who wanted: always one of my highlights of the weekend.

Sunday morning began with Meeting for Worship, after which we went outside to sit in the sunshine surrounded by trees and gazing at the lake, while Aino invited us to reflect in pairs on our understanding and experience of *ubuntu*. It wasn’t a conversation but an internal exploration voiced in the presence of a witness – a deep internal listening which was new to some of those present.

I was enriched by my time with Finnish Friends old and new, and am hoping to attend the Autumn Gathering in September.

Mary Woodward

SWEDEN YEARLY MEETING: 9 – 12 May, 2024

THERE ARE ONLY ABOUT 130 QUAKERS (plus a small number of attendees) in Sweden, mostly within the areas around Stockholm or other main cities. This year, Sweden's 90th Yearly Meeting was held in their Stockholm premises, an old house in a quiet area of town with a meeting room, a library and a small kitchen, and a rather nice little garden which was well used during the fine sunny days that Kerstin and I were there.

About thirty Friends attended, but for the first time all sessions were "blended" – even though the technical side of the Zoom links was at times rather frustrating. Nevertheless, the links did enable about another six to twelve Friends to take part. Kerstin and I had some difficulty in obtaining information before the meeting, but fortunately the generous Friend who saw to most of last year's YM did her best to keep us updated about the programme, and about the related domestic arrangements.

The theme of the YM was around the effects of climate change and associated environmental campaigning on Quaker witness. The lengthy introduction, with plenty of detail from Greta Thunberg's early demonstrations outside the Swedish Parliament through to feelings about making a pilgrimage to COP26 in Glasgow in 2021, stopped short of all today's political angles. Persuading countries to make serious changes to their energy policies, coping with changes to local environments caused by the rise of seawater, the shrinkage of glaciers, and the consequential impact on so much of the world's food production, and the likely mass movements of affected communities did not really feature. Friends' contemplation was more focussed on local witness, life within local communities, Swedish awareness arising from forest fires and the difficulty that they had in appreciating the speed of change.

Time was rather short for the Meeting's business issues. How hard it is to find Friends to undertake various sorts of work for the Society is scarcely a new issue, as those who are struggling with BYM's simplification of Meetings know well. Probably most significant was considering the impact of online Quakerism – both in terms of the conduct of Meetings for Worship, and the handling of items that come before business meetings when one is not within the same room as others who are struggling to find solutions to current issues. My own thought was: "could an AM set up a Local Meeting for a group of Friends who never meet each other except through their computer screens?"

As ever, these matters will no doubt rumble on for some time. However, we were made very welcome at this Meeting, and we enjoyed long chats over meals, or with plenty of coffee, outdoors in the early summer sunshine.

John Phillips

[Longer version of both these reports will be in the documents for Yearly Meeting.]

“Placing Christianity upon wrong foundations”

WILLIAM PALEY (1743-1805) was an Anglican clergyman. He is remembered for ‘Paley’s Watch’— a supposed proof of the existence of God, based on its being inconceivable that the complexity of the Universe might have arisen by chance – alluded to in the title of the 1986 pop science bestseller *The Blind Watchmaker*. (Its author Richard Dawkins has called himself a “neo-Paleyan”.) Paley’s collected works, edited by his son in 1825, run to seven volumes, including writings on theology and on moral and political philosophy, and sermons.

From 1788, Paley was “strenuously” involved in the campaign for the abolition of slavery, and in 1789 wrote a treatise “against the unjust pretension of Slave dealers and holders, to be indemnified by pecuniary allowances ... in case the Slave trade should be abolished” which was sent to Members of Parliament to counter the claim that the cost of compensating the participants in the trade would make ending it unfeasible. Unlike abolitionists such as Clarkson, however, he did not also oppose the death penalty, but held that the main consideration in assessing its appropriateness was not the magnitude of the crime, but the ease with which it could be committed and the difficulty of detecting it. Thus, he argued, hanging for petty theft was right, because “the property being more exposed requires the terror of capital punishment to protect it.” Paley himself was a Justice of the Peace.

The anonymous author of the article on Paley in Chambers’s *Encyclopædia* (1901) says of his philosophy, which anticipated the utilitarianism of Bentham,

Objection may be taken to the principles on which Paley rests his system, but the lucidity and appositeness of his illustrations are beyond all praise; and if his treatise cannot be regarded as a profoundly philosophical work, it is at any rate one of the clearest and most sensible ever written, even by an Englishman.

Of Paley’s *View of the Evidences of Christianity* (1794), the same writer says that “able as it is”, by the end of the nineteenth century it was no longer regarded as an adequate defence of the historicity of the New Testament, “even at Cambridge”; although according to Wikipedia it remained on the exam syllabus there until the 1920s. (At Oxford, A.V. Dicey was recommending it to his law students, as a model of legal reasoning.)

The following passage (pages 420-422 from the Appendix to Volume I of the Works: extracts from surviving manuscript notes for lectures, probably from the 1780s), is part of a defence of the principle of conformity, that “though he be dissatisfied, ... just as a man may live under a state, though its civil constitution he thinks might be altered greatly for the better ... this alone is not a sufficient or justifiable cause of separation from any established church.” It follows a similar critique of Methodism.

Quakers

we find fault with principally for

- I. Laying aside the Sacrament;
- II. Misunderstanding the agency of the Spirit;
- III. Having no clergy, or order of men set apart for the service of religion.

I. It is inconceivable how men, who believe the Scriptures, and profess obedience to Christ, should think the Sacrament may be dispensed with: for,

1. It appears that Christ instituted this rite, and commanded it to be repeated. Luke xii. 19.
2. That the apostles and first Christians, in pursuance of this command, did repeat it; which shows how they understood it. Acts ii. 42; xx. 7. Still more expressly, 1. Cor. 11 [sic – *1 Cor. xi. (verses 23-34).*]
3. Lest it should be thought to be a temporary institution, intended only for the for the first ages of Christianity, St. Paul adds, 1 Cor. 11–26 [*1 Cor. xi. 26*], *i.e.* to the end of the world.

This being so, it is no longer a matter of discretion but of duty, of propriety but of obligation, to observe it; nor are we at liberty to lay it aside because we think we can do as well without it, or that it is of no use, or has been misunderstood or misapplied, or abused to foolish or superstitious purposes, or has outlived the reason of the institution.

II. Misunderstanding the agency of the Spirit. The Quakers contend, with the Methodists, for the perceptible operation of the Spirit, and therefore the same answer and observation will, in a good measure, serve for both. In two respects, however, they go beyond the Methodists, as –

1. That the proof and evidence of our religion consists in the witnessing of the Spirit within us, and that religious faith is produced, not as conviction in other matters, by argument, reason, or probability, but is shed through the heart by the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Which is contrary, as well to common sense and experience, as to the whole tenor of Scripture, and the constant conduct of Christ and his apostles; who did not rest the faith of their converts in any inward illumination, but addressed themselves to the understanding, used arguments, produced proofs, appealed continually to the evidence of prophecy or miracles. John xiii, 37, 38.

2. That the Holy Ghost inspires their speakers in their meetings.

Now though we allow that this might oftentimes have been the case in the apostolical ages, 1 Cor. xiv. 29–33, yet it was miraculous, and ceased with other miracles; and at this day it gives occasion to great wildness and indecency, as it can no longer be distinguished whether it be the Spirit of God that moves them or the spirit of folly.

III. Their having no clergy.

To say nothing of the odds there are against a person who has never been used or prepared to speak in public acquitting himself with tolerable propriety;

To say nothing of the practice of every age and sect of Christianity besides the Quakers;

To lay these considerations out of the question, now that the Scriptures are

written in a dead language, remote age, and distant country, it requires the aid of human learning to understand and explain them; – the very evidence, moreover, of Christianity being historical, depending upon records and researches, it is absolutely necessary for the keeping up a knowledge of those Scriptures in the world, for collecting, preserving, and perpetuating the proofs of the religion, that a number of people should be set apart, with leisure and opportunity, for the purpose; and whose only office and business it should be to cultivate those studies.

The Quakers may do well enough where they are but a few, and while they subsist in countries where such an order is established, of whose labours they have in the main the benefit; but it is a very different question what would have become of Christianity if no such order had ever been founded or continued in the church – possibly the very language in which the Scriptures are written might have been lost; the helps we have for interpreting them by contemporary authors, travels into the country, knowledge of customs, manners &c. would have been wanting; and above all the very evidence upon which it stands, for want of a succession of writers and people to consult and preserve these writings, might have decayed to nothing.

The Quaker meetings and discipline may possibly enough resemble the meetings of the first Christians, where many were under the immediate and extraordinary guidance of the Holy Spirit, and yet be very unsuitable for these times, when that extraordinary inspiration is withdrawn.

As to their other fancies, their affectation of singularity in dress, speech, and behaviour, their allowing women to speak in their churches, in opposition to 1 Cor. xiv. 34, their not going into mourning for the dead, their refusing to pay tithes, take up arms, or take an oath, they have either been considered elsewhere, or do not deserve consideration.

Only as to paying tithes, if they would consider it not as a divine right, which we [*the Anglican clergy*] no longer pretend to, but a civil institution, they would soon see that the law and parliament had as good a right to lay on that tax as any other, and that there is the same reason for paying it.

Paley was critical of theories of divine right, and offended George III by comparing the Divine Right of Kings to a 'divine right of constables'; it is suggested in Chambers's that such "homely sarcasms" hindered his advancement. Nevertheless, as well being vicar of Dalston, in Cumberland, Paley became the archdeacon of Carlisle, a canon of St Paul's, subdean of Lincoln, and rector of Bishopwearmouth (in what is now south Sunderland). His income from these offices amounted to several thousand pounds a year, so he had a substantial interest in the payment of tithes.

Acknowledging that Quaker worship and discipline (i.e. church government) was – if only superficially – like that of the early church was a notable concession. By Paley's time, the Society of Friends had formalised three particular roles: Elders, Ministers and Overseers. Eldership plainly existed in the early church; there is frequent mention of elders (πρεσβύτεροι [prebyteroi]), in the New Testament, and

although the English priest is derived from the Greek word, most Protestants did not see them as equivalent. As early as the 1650s, Quakers were giving responsibility for the supervision of the spiritual life of their meetings to “one or two most grown in the Power and the Life, [and] in the pure discerning of the Truth” (William Dewsbury); the lengthy ‘advice’ from the meeting of elders at Balby in 1656 was one of the first statements of Quaker discipline. Similarly, the position of minister was originally the recognition of a gift rather than an appointment; but, after a controversy in 1722 when one Friend’s right to call himself a minister was denied, it became the practice for Monthly and Quarterly Meetings to certify whom they had recognised, and this continued until 1924 when London Yearly Meeting abolished the status of ‘recorded minister’ (although some American YMs retain it still). Overseers, having charge of pastoral care, were made a requirement by a Yearly Meeting minute of 1755 which said that two or more Friends in each meeting should be appointed specifically to be responsible for such care. It was later clarified, in 1789, that, their duties being distinct, overseers might not attend meetings of ministers and elders.

Friends were clear that these provisions amounted to ‘Gospel Order’ and did indeed restore the structure of the church as originally constituted. (The Epistle to the Philippians is addressed “to all the saints ... in Philippi” σύν ἐπισκόποις καὶ διακόνοις [syn episkopois kai diakonois], which English Bibles usually render “with the bishops and deacons” but which literally means, according to The Englishman’s Greek New Testament (1877), “with the overseers and those who help”, and so might reasonably be translated – as the Quaker Anthony Purver did, in his English Bible of 1764 – as “with the Overseers and Ministers”, thus giving a scriptural basis for Friends’ form of leadership that could not credibly be claimed for the hierarchies of other churches.) The outward differences between the holders of these Quaker roles and members of the clergy was that the former were without formal training, and unpaid – and could be women. More fundamentally, the nature of the authority of elders, ministers and overseers was different. As John Punshon wrote of the elders’ letter from Balby:

The postscript is well known – ‘Dearly beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule of form to walk by, but that all with the measure of light which is pure and holy may be guided, and so in the light walking and abiding these may be fulfilled in the Spirit – not from the letter, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.’ The use of this text, 2 Corinthians 3:6, summarises the whole approach to church order. The appeal is not made on the authority of the elders as if issuing instructions. The appeal is from the light in them to the light in Friends. Their words are to be followed because they express Truth, not obeyed because they are written from the meeting. The question of disagreement will, therefore, not arise.

Portrait in Grey (2nd edn, 2006), page 92

For Paley, on the other hand, the working of the Holy Spirit was not to be looked for, and certainly not relied upon in this way:

Quakers and Methodists refer you ... to the motion and witnessing of the Spirit in your own breast. Now a man who hears this, and can feel no such motions or witnessing, has nothing left for it but to turn infidel.

Although there might be some plausibility in Paley’s contention that religion needs

scholarship and only a clergy can provide it, this is undercut by his strictures on other established churches holding to doctrines rejected by the Church of England:

[There is a] universal propensity in mankind to reject a whole system for the folly or falsehood of particular parts of it. This cause alone accounts for the many unbelievers to be found in popish countries, How should you get a Voltaire or a Rousseau [sic – Rousseau was a citizen of Geneva, brought up a Calvinist] or people of sense and spirit, to believe Christianity, whilst they regard transubstantiation, the infallibility of the Pope, or the power of absolving sins, as so many parts of it?

Catholic priests are particularly blamed by Paley for propagating

... lucrative tenets ... which induce the suspicion of craft and design in the whole; such as purgatory, prayers for the dead, the efficacy of offerings and donations to the church.

*Needless to say, in their religious writings and teaching, Friends have, at times, followed non-Quaker authorities; Paley's own arguments, indeed, had "a milder, weaker replica" in J.J. Gurney's evangelical writings of the 1820s, as Rufus M. Jones points out in *The Later Periods of Quakerism* (1921). But aside from its implication of a sort of spiritual parasitism, the suggestion that Quakers "do well enough ... in countries where such an order [i.e. a learned and conscientious clergy] is established" is highly questionable, in that England was not such a country when Quakerism arose. On the contrary, the encounters George Fox describes in the first chapter of his *Journal* are with parish priests who were incapable of engaging in theological discussion, and who, if not as illiterate as many of their predecessors had been a century before in the time of Henry VIII, were servants of a national church which by its neglect of swathes of the country had left "a great people to be gathered". Similar shortcomings were not widespread in Scotland, which was a factor in Friends' never establishing themselves as strongly here as south of the border. The final chapter of George B. Burnet's *The Story of Quakerism in Scotland* (1952) is provocatively entitled 'Why Quakerism failed in Scotland' (i.e. by 1850), and ascribes this alleged failure to the fact that Friends*

disagreed fundamentally with the Scottish people in the very heart of their national life – their Presbyterian faith and institutions.

Burnet does not make the point that this faith and these institutions were least entrenched in the north-east of Scotland, notoriously a centre of both Episcopalianism and Roman Catholicism in the 17th and 18th centuries, and the area where Quakers too were most numerous in the same period – though whether this was owing to local shortcomings in Kirk organisation, or to a tendency of Aberdonians in particular to reject conformity with established authority, is an open question. – ED.

We do not have a report this time of **Meeting for Sufferings** on 1 June; but the papers for the meeting are at

<https://quaker.org.uk/documents/mfs-2024-06-00-calling-letter-agenda--papers-package>

and the minutes are at

<https://quaker.org.uk/documents/mfs-2024-06-follow-up-package>

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

**Minutes of Area Meeting held on Tuesday 7 May 2024
at Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House,
and by remote videoconferencing**

2024/05/01 Worship and introductions

During opening worship, we have heard read an excerpt from *Quaker Faith & Practice* 10.03, which reminds us that our meetings “will only live if we develop a sense of community. If all those who belong to our meeting are lovingly cared for, the guidance of the spirit will be a reality”.

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

...

[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]

[*Redacted*]

2024/05/10 Closing minute

39 Friends (35 members and 4 attenders) have been at all or part of this meeting, either in person or by Zoom.

Local meeting attendance is indicated below:

Central Edinburgh 19	Central Fife -	East Lothian 3	Kelso 2	Penicuik 1
Polmont -	Portobello & Musselburgh 4	South Edinburgh 10	Tweeddale -	Visitors/Others -

We record our thanks to meeting house staff for hosting us today.

We next meet on Saturday 22 June 2024, at Kelso Quaker Meeting House and online; time to be notified. This will be an all-age meeting; children and young people are welcome.

(Signed)

Alastair Cameron, Clerk

Esther Shreeve, serving as Assistant Clerk

Recommendation: a book from the AM Library

Grounded in God: Care and Nurture in Friends Meetings

Edited by Patricia McBee – Articles from *Pastoral Care Newsletter*

The *Pastoral Care Newsletter* began in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in 1993, and now circulates “throughout North America and beyond” according to the introduction. This collection was published in 2002 at the suggestion of (and by) the Quaker Press of Friends General Conference, and is obviously of special interest to members of the Pastoral Care team, but is for all Friends. It gives the experience of how various meetings have tried to help a friend in difficult circumstances, with comments from the friend concerned on how helpful this involvement has actually been. I enjoyed it very much and found useful the list on page 305, ‘Adapting a House or Apartment for an Elderly or Disabled Resident and Good Ideas for Everyone ...’ – even though it does not include my own main standby: the presence of a son and grandchild to solve problems of technology and give help with a multitude of tasks.

Rachel Frith

Mark Bitel’s introduction to ‘Time for Reflection’ at Holyrood can be watched at <https://www.scottishparliament.tv/meeting/time-for-reflection-may-28-2024>

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 & 11.00 am. Tea & coffee afterwards; 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 10.45am. 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 – 4th Sunday in the month at 7.00 pm, meeting in Friends' homes. Contact **Tony Gross** or **Rufus Reade** for further information.

Penicuik – For confirmation of the venue, contact penicuikquakers@hutcheson.org.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 **Mariot 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.

Contact **Robin Liebmann**, **Sarah Martin** or **Marian Willoner** for further information, portymussclerks@gmail.com.

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 7.30 pm, and 4th Sundays at 10.30 am, meeting in Friends' homes. For further information contact **Lesley Morrison**

MEETING BY ZOOM

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

Every Sunday at 9.30 am ONLY (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

Penicuik – available if requested in advance – for details contact **Mark Hutcheson**

South Edinburgh – for login details contact sedclerks@gmail.com.

Sundays at 10.30 am, blended with meetings in person.

1st Thursdays at 7.30 pm (online only). Meeting for worship (30 mins) followed by chat.