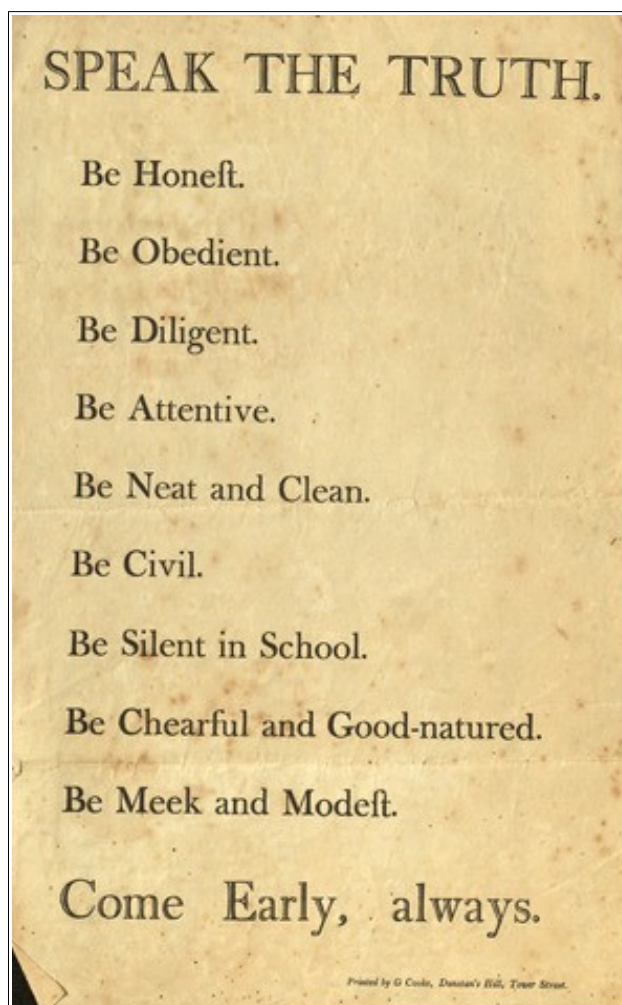


SESAME

Number 258: January 2025

WARM SPACE, Thursdays at 7 Victoria Terrace: *SEE PAGE 43*/Area Meeting, 20 January/New Year Thoughts/Quakers and Chocolate/Recommendation of a (*serendipitously related*) library book/NFPB/World Day of Prayer, 7 March/GM *special session*/Woodbrooke courses/Reports: ICAHD; EDAI/On Ministry/Andrew Farrar/M^{ts} for Sufferings/Finland YM/P&M Spiritual Review/Britain Yearly Meeting *registration open*/AM November Minutes/... &c.



Possible New Year resolutions? – see page 3

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 11 March 2025**. 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 Monday 20 January 2025 at 7.00 pm, at Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House and online. All members and attenders of Quaker meetings in South East Scotland are welcome, including teenagers; but as it is an evening meeting, there will be no care for children.

DRAFT AGENDA

1. Worship and introductions
2. Minutes of the meeting of 23 November 2024
3. Matters arising from previous meetings
 1. *Warm space at 7 Victoria Terrace*
 2. *Berwick worship group*
 3. *Scottish Parliament – Ecocide Bill*
4. Membership matters:
 1. *Application for membership*
 2. *Reports on membership visit*
 3. *Transfer*
 4. *Lost connections*
 5. *Termination of sojourning membership*
 6. *Deaths*
5. Matters from local meetings
 1. *Central Fife – clerking arrangements*
 2. *South Edinburgh – Meetings for Worship at the Peace Tree, Edinburgh*
6. Appointments: from Nominations Committee
7. *The Work that Reconnects* – report from autumn workshops
8. Financial matters
9. Reports and correspondence
10. General Meeting matters
11. Closing minute

Gaie Delap a 78-year-old Bristol Quaker is in prison, convicted as a non-violent climate activist – there is a link to the Church Times's report of her case on page 16.

Friends may wish to write to her at: GAIE DELAP, A7946FD, HMP EASTWOOD PARK, FALFIELD, WOTTEN-UNDER-EDGE GL12 8DB. (These will be censored, so should be uncontroversial.) Letters to the Secretary of State for Justice might also be appropriate: THE RT HON SHABANA MAHMOOD MP, MINISTRY OF JUSTICE, 102 PETTY FRANCE, LONDON SW1H 9AJ; tel: 0203 334 3555. ([https://contact-moj.service.justice.gov.uk/.](https://contact-moj.service.justice.gov.uk/))

New Year Thoughts

IF one man esteem a Day above another, another esteemeth every day alike; let every man be fully perswaded in his own Mind: He that regardeth a Day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the Day to the Lord, he doth not regard it.

From *A Confession of Faith, containing 23 Articles* (1673), by **Robert Barclay**: Article XX. ‘Concerning the Liberty of such *Christians* as are come to know the Substance, as to the using or not using of these Rites, and of the observation of Days.’ *The only word of Barclay’s in this passage is the italicised If at the start; all the rest is from Paul’s Epistle to the Romans (14: 5 & 6). This Confession and the accompanying Catechism are framed, as Hugh Pyper put it, “to outdo the divines whose Westminster Confession had been adopted by Parliament in 1648” in which “doctrines are set out with a formidable array of scriptural texts cited as proofs”. Barclay’s aim was “to show the impartial reader that, contrary to the calumnies of their opponents, Quakers can demonstrate their principles directly out of scripture” and so “his texts are unadorned by commentary or interpretation” – here, in respect of (not) observing holidays such as New Year. [Hugh Pyper was reviewing a new edition of Barclay’s work with modernised spelling, in Quaker Studies 8(1) (2003) [98-99].]*

LET NOT PRIDE BLIND YOUR EYES, that you should forget you are the Nations Servants, and so prove Solomons words good in your selves, That Servants ride on Horse-back and Coaches, when as Princes, such as Chose you, and set you there, go on foot: and many of them, through their love to the Nation, have so wasted themselves, that now they can hardly get Bread, but with great difficulty. I tell you this is a sore Evil, and this is truth; therefore think upon it, it is a poor mans Advice, and you shall finde weight in it, if you Do as well as Say.

From *A New-years Gift for the Parliament and Armie* (1650), by **Gerrard Winstanley**. *In this pamphlet, published a year after Charles I’s execution, the leader of the Diggers, “a lover of England’s freedom and peace” and later a Quaker, reminded the leaders of the Cromwellian revolution of the professed principles they were failing to uphold in practice.*

The exhortations on the front page come from an item dated “c. 1800” in the Quaker Broad-sides Collection at Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania. G[eorge] Cooke (fl. 1790-1810) was a jobbing printer in London, not to be confused (as the British Museum online catalogue does) with the engraver George Cooke (1781-1834). It is a fair assumption, if Quakers used his services, that G. Cooke was a Friend himself, though his business is not mentioned by Russell S. Mortimer in ‘Quaker Printers, 1750-1850’ [Journal of the Friends Historical Society 50/3 (1963) at <https://journals.sas.ac.uk/fhs/issue/view/478>] which deals only with printers of books. As well as Quaker material, Cooke produced trade cards and advertisements, for, among others, the furniture makers Morgan & Sanders, who supplied Lord Nelson and other eminent clients. The spelling Chearful was archaic by 1800, but not extinct: Jane Austen used it in 1817. (She, like Sir Walter Scott, was an erratic speller, however.)

The Editor wishes all readers of *Sesame* a Happy New Year.

From the food of the gods to the food of the masses

Helen Holt, an Attender at Tweeddale Meeting, has already written two 'Quaker Quicks' in the series of short works on Friendly themes from Collective Ink publishers. *Quakers and Science* (ISBN 978-1-80341-139-2) is, according to Professor Mark Harris of Edinburgh University, "a strikingly original contribution to the science-and-religion debate", and sets out the work of ten twentieth-century Quaker scientists from Silvanus P. Thompson to Jocelyn Bell Burnell. *Rufus Jones and the Presence of God* (ISBN 978-1-80341-342-6), praised by reviewers as "compact yet impressively comprehensive", "illuminating and engaging" and "superb", explores what may be learned today from the work of a "Quaker giant of the 20th Century" (see Sesame 250). Helen has now turned her attention to another area in which Quakers have played a significant part: chocolate making.

IN 1753, the Swedish naturalist Carl von Linnæus named the curious-looking cocoa tree *Theobroma cacao*, with *Theobroma* deriving from the Greek for 'food of the gods'. Also in 1753, the Bristol Quaker Joseph Fry opened an apothecary and a few years later started selling cocoa, extolling it for its health benefits. In a little over a century, the Fry family and their fellow Quakers—the Rowntrees in York and the Cadburys in Birmingham—would be instrumental in transforming the food of the gods into the food of the masses.

The lives of these Quaker chocolatiers were shaped by their firm belief that God could be found within all people and by an associated long-standing tradition of social reform. These twin aspects of Quakerism—looking inwards and looking outwards—shaped how they ran their businesses and how they gained and spent their vast fortunes. Both the Cadburys and the Rowntrees built factories in the countryside, claiming that this would allow their employees to develop all that was best within them. They provided free access to doctors and dentists, numerous social opportunities from camera clubs to cricket pitches, continuing education for their young workforce, and, in an age when the spectre of the workhouse haunted the elderly, old age pensions. They also built villages for their employees and others, aiming to provide an alternative to crowded, unsanitary slums in the form of pleasant, affordable houses with large gardens. These Quakers have sometimes been accused of paternalism, but they saw their employees as colleagues, and in a society without state pensions, sick pay, and the NHS, the benefits they conferred were surely a godsend to many.

Quakers weren't the only ones involved in manufacturing chocolate in the 19th century of course. Today's familiar brands include those started by Joseph Terry in York, Henri Nestlé and Rodolphe Lindt in Switzerland, and Milton Hershey in America. Nor were Quakers the only industrialists to challenge the *status quo* when it came to the welfare of their employees. Robert Owen (1771–1858) thought all religions were false and in later life turned to spiritualism. He blazed a trail at New Lanark for his textile

workers, improving factory conditions and arguing that the current structure of society repressed the higher qualities of human nature. Milton Hershey (1857–1945) was from a Mennonite family and married a Catholic. He established the Hershey Industrial School for orphans and built a flamboyant town near his chocolate works on a grand scale: there were wide boulevards, landscaped gardens, a miniature railroad, and even a zoo.

It is interesting to ask, then, how the faith and religious concerns of these three Quaker chocolate families flavoured their business decisions and social enterprises. What, if anything, did they do differently because they were Quakers? The answer regarding the starting point of their businesses is clear enough. For the first few centuries of their existence, Quakers were severely constrained in their choice of career. As non-conformists they were excluded from studying at Oxford and Cambridge until the mid-19th century, they were restricted in what they could do as lawyers because of their refusal to swear oaths (the implication being that an oath implied a double standard of truth-telling), and they refused to enter the armed forces because of their commitment to the peace testimony. As a result, many Quakers opted for a career in industry, business, or shopkeeping, where they gained a reputation for hard work and integrity. You could send a child to a Quaker shop, confident that they would not be cheated. The first generation of all our chocolate dynasties started out as shopkeepers before moving into manufacturing. Furthermore, many Quakers were involved in the Adult School movement, giving them an intimate knowledge of the problems caused by poverty, slums, and illiteracy. George Cadbury (1839–1922) and Joseph Rowntree (1836–1925) both taught weekly classes for decades and credited the experience with informing their commitment to improving conditions for their employees.

Individuals naturally experience their faith in different ways and have different personalities, however, so we should expect some differences in the ways that these Quaker chocolatiers ran their businesses. George Cadbury took over his father's ailing business in his early twenties, aided by his brother Richard. He was driven, ambitious, thrived on struggle, embraced risk, and was open about his beliefs. Joseph Rowntree entered the chocolate business reluctantly, feeling he needed to bail out his likeable but easily distracted brother Henry, whose chocolate enterprise was facing bankruptcy. He was studious, devoted a huge amount of time and effort to collecting statistics on poverty, often proceeded cautiously, and rarely talked about his personal faith. Both George and Joseph, however, firmly believed that the purpose of money was to improve conditions for others and warned of the dangers of inherited wealth. As a consequence, both gave away significant portions of their fortunes.

While all three Quaker chocolate businesses passed to the sons and grandsons of their founders, some descendants stand out for their accomplishments outside of the chocolate factory. Beatrice Boeke (*née* Cadbury; 1884–

1976) was the niece of George Cadbury. Despite, or perhaps because of, her privileged upbringing, she denounced capitalism and tried to give away her fortune. She and her Dutch husband also refused to pay taxes because they objected to funding the military. It was a stance that would lead to spells in prison and a summer spent homeless. John Wilhelm Rowntree (1868–1905) was the son of Joseph Rowntree and widely respected as an inspirational Quaker reformer. He spearheaded the idea that formulations of faith must change to incorporate knowledge gained from science and biblical criticism, all the while living with a disease that was slowly robbing him of his sight and that would contribute to his premature death.

The beliefs of today's Quakers have evolved since those at the time of the events recounted here. The ties with Christianity have been loosened, with some members of the Religious Society of Friends now self-identifying as Buddhist Quakers or non-theist Quakers, for example. And today's competitive environment means that businesses often seek profits at the expense of worker welfare. Even so, perhaps these Quaker chocolatiers can inspire us to find creative ways to combine spiritual and business values for the good of all.

Quakers and Chocolate by Helen Holt will be published on 25 March 2025 (ISBN 978-1-80341-620-5) in paperback or as an eBook. Quakers and Science and Rufus Jones and the Presence of God are also available in both formats.

Recommendation: a book from the AM Library

***Beatrice: The Cadbury Heiress Who Gave Away Her Fortune*
by Fiona Joseph, Foxwell Press, 2012**

In 1910, Beatrice met Kees Boeke, in Birmingham to train as a missionary, after which he would go to Syria (now Lebanon) to be head of Brummana High School. They were married in December 1911 and Beatrice became a Dutch citizen. With the start of war in 1914 they reluctantly decided to return to England, where both were active in the Fellowship of Reconciliation, leading to Kees's being imprisoned and then deported in 1918. Beatrice and the children joined him, but the Dutch authorities were also hostile to pacifists and anti-capitalists. In 1920 Beatrice wrote to offer all her shares to be used by the Cadbury workers for the greater good of society. The Boekes did valuable work but lived lives of great hardship.

Rachel Frith

CORRECTION – *In November, Rachel Frith recommended Ada Salter: Pioneer of Ethical Socialism (Lawrence & Wishart, 2016), noting that **Graham Taylor**, its author, was not a Friend. However, we are happy to report that he joined the Society in the year the book was published, and attends Westminster Meeting. We thank **David Irwin** of the Library at Friends House for passing on this information. – ED.*

Northern Friends Peace Board – 30 November

Our last meeting of 2024 was online only (lest, as in previous years, storms disrupted travel arrangements), and was compressed to just a morning session. 22 members attended, and we were joined by Charlotte Colman of QPSW for part of the time.

Coordinator's Report

Philip Austin reported on his work since we last met, which continues to include a mix of outreach and networking amongst Friends and beyond, collaboration with other peace organisations, and support for the Board, its sub-groups and trustees.

Quaker Roots

Quaker Roots (formerly 'Roots of Resistance') is "a community of Friends building a creative, vibrant and radical Quaker response" to the DSEI arms fair [DSEI (pronounced 'dicey') = Defence & Security Equipment International], an event that takes place every two years at the ExCeL exhibition centre in east London (a site so vast that it is served by three stations of the Dockland Light Railway). Jayne Meadows told us of plans for actions around the next one in September 2025, with preparatory meetings starting in February – details will be made available at <https://www.quaker-roots.org.uk/>.

Quaker Peace & Social Witness

Charlotte Colman is the 'Peace lead' for QPSW; her own recent work has been largely addressing militarism and climate issues, with the first week of action on this having taken place during September, and Quakers being one of 15 bodies demonstrating against the Telford Arms Fair in November – other acts of witness were reported in the Members' Forum.

Responses to War – publication and workshops

Till Geiger reported. *Responses to War* will appear as an 80-page booklet and in an extended online version accessible on a 'pay-as-led' basis.

Philip Austin introduced a proposal for a half-day workshop that it is hoped Friends might find helpful in using the publication to stimulate reflection and thinking on the peace testimony.

Looking Ahead

Britain Yearly Meeting will have the Peace Testimony as the main focus of its sessions in late May. Board members were invited to reflect on how we might support Friends before and after YM, and how the Board might contribute to Friends' preparation. We agreed to arrange a short meeting for NFPB members to share thinking on a possible Special Interest Group meeting in advance of the YM weekend. A number of practical suggestions were made for the Co-ordinator to follow up.

We meet next, at Nottingham Meeting House and online, on 1 March.

Alan Frith



ONLY SIX LEFT !

One-person rainbow-coloured “Quakers for Peace” banner kit

The completed banner is approx 155cm (5' 2”).

The kit contains the rainbow coloured fabric and designs for the lettering. The fabric needs to be sewn together. Poles and dowels for the cross-bar are not included – tent poles, broom-handles etc. might be suitable.

It is hoped to re-stock the kit, but the price may have to be increased.

£10



ORDER FORM

Send to: **NFPB, Quaker Meeting House, 50 Silverwell Street, Bolton BL1 1PP** | 07730 070167

Name:

Address:

Email:

Phone:

- Please send one banner kit []
- I enclose payment of £10 plus £3 P&P
(for orders of more than one, contact us for postage costs) []

For **online orders**, please email the above details to nfpb@gn.apc.org and request bank details for bank transfer.

World Day of Prayer 2025 – Friday 7 March

“I Made You Wonderful”

Psalm 139:14



THE 2025 World Day of Prayer programme invites us into the knowledge that each one of us was made with care and love by God. When we can receive this profound truth, everything in our life changes: we begin to radiate and shine from within. We also learn how to treat every other person as made wonderful by God.

Too often, women and girls have been silenced and oppressed, making this year's theme from **the Cook Islands** particularly relevant. The message that we, as women and girls, are “fearfully and wonderfully” made in the image of God reinforces our movement's support of women in expressing their faith and speaking about their lives in prayer and worship before God and in community.

[The artwork, *Wonderfully Made*, is by mother & daughter Tarani Napa and Tevairangi Napa.]

The **Worship Service** invites us to notice aspects of our divinely created bodies that we often take for granted.

The **Bible Study** prompts dialogue around Psalm 139, particularly focusing on the relationship between God and each one of us.

The **Children's Programme** includes a song that is popular among children in the Cook Islands, as well as several activities for colouring and creating neck garlands and flower head crowns.

The **Country Background** gives an abundance of information about the history of the Cook Islands, with a particular emphasis on the achievements of women.

See <https://worlddayofprayer.net/cook-islands-2025.html>

For details of church services near you, see

<http://www.wdpscotland.org.uk/resources/service-arrangements/>

General Meeting for Scotland – 30 November

Eighty people, including four attenders and one visitor (Lesley Richards) were at the special online session of General Meeting on 30 November; the main business was the receiving of responses from the four Area Meetings to the document produced by the QiSCG subgroup (see *Sesame* 256, pages 31-36). Before the meeting turned to this, an error in the minutes of last time (which was reproduced in the note in *Sesame* 257) was corrected; it was *not* Jane Mitchell who presented the report of the Coordinating Group on 9 November. Also, two appointments were made for the coming triennium, 1 January 2025 – 31 December 2027: **Neil Turner** to serve as a GM Trustee; and **Gareth Rae** as a member of the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group.

The numbering of the minutes at this session continued from GM in Dundee, where minutes 24/11/01 – 24/11/20 had been recorded. On the consideration of the proposals for our future structure we minuted as follows:

24/11/26 Quakers in Scotland: proposals for a single Quaker body

Further to minute 24/11/07, we meet today to review guidance from Area Meetings in response to the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group (QiSCG) Community Subgroup paper Possible patterns of relationship between meetings of Scottish Friends. Minute 24/06/12 also refers. Area Meetings were asked to show preference on possible patterns of relationship between meetings of Scottish Friends, with the options listed as:

- 1. Maintaining the status quo.*
- 2. The "Welsh model"- keeping AMs as they are within a single charity.*
- 3. No intermediate level between local meetings and a Scotland-wide body.*
- 4. A single area meeting for Scotland with flexible and simpler intermediate levels.*

Members of the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group and its Community Sub-Group who are present, have reminded us who they are by introducing themselves.

We receive minutes and notification as follows:

096/24 (Quakers in Scotland) of West Scotland Area Meeting held 5 October 2024, together with a letter from the clerk dated 25 November 2024 giving a nomination sent through between-meeting procedure;

49/24 (Quakers in Scotland – Alternative ways of working) and 52/24 (Nominations) of North Scotland Area Quaker Meeting [sic] held 19 October 2024;

24.11.05 (Nominations) and 24.11.07 (Quakers in Scotland Coordinating Group) of East Scotland Area Meeting held 23 November 2024;

2024/11/07 (Quakers in Scotland – possible models for the future) and 2024/11/09 (Appointments) [in part] of South East Scotland Area Meeting held 23 November 2024;

East Scotland AM and North Scotland AM endorse option 4, and West Scotland AM suggests that route also. South East Scotland AM has not been able to consider as a meeting the possible models presented, though expects to do so early in the New Year.

From the responses and previous decision, it is clear that options 1 and 3 are not acceptable.

We receive the following nominations of Friends to serve as Foundation Trustees for the Quakers in Scotland Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO):

*From East Scotland AM: **Adwoa Burnley***

*From North Scotland AM: **Brian Ashley***

*From South East Scotland AM **David Somervell and Elizabeth Allen***

*From West Scotland AM: **Chris Holmes***

We appoint our Friends accordingly, to serve from appointment to the end of 2025.

These appointments allow the registration of the new charity to go forward. We will review appointments as the situation develops and will aim to have staggered starting points for service as the Trustee body begins to take responsibility.

To help our perspective, Kate Gulliver of the Co-ordinating Group has taken us through a presentation "Quakers in Scotland: Where have we got to and what happens next". We agreed to record this for reference and to post it on the GM website.

The presentation went back to the initial concern as raised in 2015 and how it has progressed until today. 'Form' (Quaker structures) depends on 'function' (what we need as worshipping communities).

The suggestion is that, once the SCIO is registered, General Meeting for Scotland will be the first to transfer its assets and become 'Quakers in Scotland'. The four Area Meetings and the Dundee Friends Property Trust will then decide, in due time, whether to make similar transitions.

Lesley Richards, convenor of the Quakers in Scotland Co-ordinating Group, has made a presentation comparing options 2 and 4. She described the 'Welsh model', where four area meetings and Crynwyr Cymru – Quakers in Wales are forming a single charity for Wales and part of the English Marches, Lesley compared this model, as shown in option 2 where area meetings are retained, with the 'intermediate model' (4). The latter is less precise but more flexible, in that groups of local meetings can work together in various ways.

It is clear that, as we move towards a 'Quakers in Scotland', that there is much more to do in establishing how we work together as Meetings, in whichever structural model we end up. The Co-ordinating Group can help us by working further on the distinctions between options 2 and 4. We will return to the details into next year. We have heard that the Co-ordinating Group will be continuing consultation with the Recording Clerk.

We are reminded that our spiritual life and processes, the basis of our being as a Religious Society, continue the same. The structural change aims to strengthen these. Our meetings for worship, including those for business, rely on our trusting of the leadings of the Spirit. We all have work to do in coming together in our worshipping communities to become familiar with the information we have on becoming Quakers in Scotland and in identifying issues to take further.

We thank Area Meetings and our Co-ordinating Group for their timely working for us all.

(This is the full text of minute 24/11/26; complete minutes are at:

<https://www.quakerscotland.org/sites/quakerscotland.org/files/minutes/GMS%20Minutes%202024%2011%2030%20Online.pdf>.)

Woodbrooke Courses: January to March 2025

UNLESS MARKED OTHERWISE, events are online. Many are FREE or 'pay as led'. It is necessary to book (at <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/our-courses/>) as places are limited. If a price is shown, it is the **standard** fee, and a **50 % discount** is usually available to participants aged 18–35.

- Book Club: The Spirit of Freedom with Mark Russ*** £72
6 sessions: Mondays, 13 January – 27 February, excluding 10 February:
19:00–20:30 GMT Mark Russ
- The Gospel of Mary: Opening the Text Together*** £60
5 sessions: Wednesdays 15 January – 12 February: 19:00–20:30 GMT
David Curtis
- Enquiring Into: Truth, Unity and Love***
Thursday 16 January, 19:00–21:00 GMT Rosie Carnall
- Minimalism: The Joy of Less*** £65
5 sessions: Wednesdays, 22 January – 19 February 2025: 19:00–21:00 GMT
August Gawen
- Exploring Quaker Business Method***
Thursday 23 January, 19:00–21:00 GMT Rachael Swancott
- Promptings of Love and Truth: Exploring Quaker Testimony*** £48
4 sessions: Thursdays, 23 January – 13 February: 19:00–20:30 GMT
Alison Richards
- Space for Joy***
Saturday 25 January, 10:00–12:00 GMT Till flo* Krapoth, Susan Groves
- Holding in the Light: What Does It Mean?***
Monday 27 January, 19:00–20:30 GMT Rhiannon Grant
- Exploring Quaker Nominations***
Tuesday 28 January, 19:00–21:00 GMT
Elize Sakamoto, Christine Habgood-Coote
- Climate Dialogues: Finding Common Ground***
Thursday 30 January, 19:00–21:00 GMT Rob Paton
- Taking Inspiration From Biblical Lament***
Sunday 2 February, 14:00–17:00 GMT Ann Conway-Jones
- Resilient Communities: A Quaker Approach to Sustainable Design***
Tuesday 4 February, 18:30–20:30 GMT Evan Welkin
(Live Spanish interpretation will be available for this session)
- Why Go to Meeting for Worship if You Don't Believe in God?***
Tuesday 11 February, 19:30–21:00 GMT Rhiannon Grant
- Hope as a Practice*** £20
Sunday 16 February, 14:30–17:30 GMT Simonne Wood
- Revisioning Witness: Cultivating Joy in Action***
Monday 17 February, 18:30–20:30 GMT Ailish Carroll-Brentnall, Kim Harrison

Centering Prayer**£86**

6 sessions: Tuesdays, 18 February – 25 March 2025: 19:30–21:00 GMT

Rosemary Field, Dana Littlepage Smith

Conversations With Our Children: Anti-Racism

Tuesday 18 February, 20:30–21:30 GMT

Rachael Swancott

Clerking Quaker Discernment Online**£10**

Wednesday 19 February, 19:00–21:00 GMT

Richard Drake

Talking Peace**£48**

6 sessions: Thursdays, 20 February – 27 March: 19:00–21:00 GMT

Sam Donaldson

Quaker Trusteeship in a Nutshell**£40**

Saturday 22 February, 10:00–16:00 GMT

Sarah Donaldson, Linda Craig

An Adult Faith: Paul's Letter to the Philippians**£54**

4 sessions: Mondays, 24 February – 17 March 2025: 18:30–20:00 GMT

Timothy Peat Ashworth

Quaker Testimony and Economics: Faith and Practice

Monday 24 February, 19:00–20:30 GMT

Pamela Haines

Exploring Threshing and Clearness

Thursday 27 February, 19:00–21:00 GMT

Rhiannon Grant

The Mother of Quakerism: The Life and Writings of Margaret Fell**£78**

4 sessions: Thursdays, 27 February, 13 & 27 March, 10 April: 19:00–20:00 GMT

Stuart Masters

Life Reflections

Sunday 2 March, 15:00–17:00 GMT

Daniel Clarke Flynn

Resilient Communities: Cultures of Care – Inner Transformation

Wednesday 5 March, 18:30–20:30 GMT

Amanda Woolley, Kim Harrison

Spiritual Nurture and Pastoral Care Gathering [RESIDENTIAL]**£315**

Highgate House, Grooms Lane, Creaton, Northamptonshire NN6 8NN

The event begins on Friday 7 March with the evening meal,
and ends with lunch on Sunday 9 March.

Heather Rowlands, Helen Chambers, Gilly Charters

A Writing Retreat [RESIDENTIAL] FULLY BOOKED – WAITING LIST OPEN**£565**

Glenthorne Guest House, Easedale Road, Grasmere, Ambleside, LA22 9QH

The retreat begins on Monday 10 March with the evening meal at 19:00,
and ends at lunchtime on Friday 14 March.

John Gray, 'Ben' Pink Dandelion

Being Alongside and Supporting Palestinians and Israelis in the UK

Tuesday 11 March, 19:00–21:00 GMT

Judith Baker, Ivan Hutnik

Quaker Eco Church Network: Support for Sustainable Meetings

Wednesday 12 March, 19:00–20:30 GMT

Gordon Benson, Kim Harrison

The Start of the Quaker Way

4 sessions: Friday 14 March, then Thursdays, 20 & 27 March and 3 April:
19:00–20:30 GMT

'Ben' Pink Dandelion

In the World but Not of It? The Challenge for Quakers in Wider Society £48

3 sessions: Tuesdays, 18 March – 1 April: 19:00–20:30 GMT

'Ben' Pink Dandelion

Going Inside: Quaker Prison Chaplains Training £76

3 sessions: Tuesday 18 March 19:30–21:30; Saturday 22 March 10:00–12:30;
Thursday 27 March 19:30–21:30 GMT

Denise Renshaw, Carol Harper

Resilient Communities: Cultures of Care – Community Transformation

Wednesday 19 March, 18:30–20:30 GMT

Amanda Woolley, Kim Harrison

Enquiring Into: Forgiveness and Grace

Thursday 20 March, 19:00–21:00 GMT

Rosie Carnall

Space for Joy

Saturday 22 March, 10:00–12:00 GMT

Till flo* Krapoth, Susan Groves

Clerking in a Nutshell

Saturday 29 March, 10:00–16:00 GMT

£40

Chris Skidmore

By Sweet Experience: Reflecting With Isaac Penington

Saturday 29 March, 14:00–17:30 GMT

Phil Dahl

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

The Editor welcomes participants' reports for possible inclusion in Sesame.

Christian Aid – news and forthcoming events

New Blog: *Climate Campaigning in a Time of Crisis*

Lucy le Roux (who spoke at General Meeting in March last year) reflects on COP29, and there are reports with pictures of protests at Holyrood and outside the Court of Session, at:

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/news/news-and-blogs/climate-campaigning-time-crisis-disappointed-not-deterred>

Prayers for Peace in the Middle East – Monthly Zoom Meeting

Join Christian Aid and their partners at **7.00 pm on 24 January** as they continue to pray for peace in the Middle East. In January they welcome Katherine Fitzsimons from the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI). Katherine has recently returned from the region and will share her experiences. Learn more and sign up:

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/prayers-for-peace>

Christian Aid Anniversary Service – 26 January 2025

2025 will mark 80 years of Christian Aid. We will be remembering our his-

tory, looking towards the future and celebrating the unstoppable power of hope throughout the year. Our first event will be a special service at Paisley Abbey on Sunday, 26 January from 3.30 pm. The Rt Rev Dr Shaw Paterson, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, will lead our worship, with music led by The Heart & Soul Swing Band.

If you plan to attend, please email edinburgh@christian-aid.org.

Prophetic Activist Bootcamp

Saturday 1 February, Augustine United Church, Edinburgh EH1 1EL

Christian Aid is running a one-day introduction to the Prophetic Activist scheme, which is open to 18-30 year olds. It's completely free with lunch provided, and we can even help with travel expenses! Sign up at:

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/prophetic-activist-bootcamp-sign>

The Gathering 2025

Our flagship supporter event The Gathering will return on **Tuesday 25 February**, on Zoom. The event will run from 10:30 am to noon, and we'll be hearing directly from Christian Aid partners. We'll also launch Christian Aid Week 2025 and will be revealing our plans for marking Christian Aid's 80th anniversary. Register at:

https://www.christianaid.org.uk/events/gathering-2025?utm_source=ca-magazine&utm_medium=offline&utm_campaign=scotland-events&utm_content=gathering-25

Climate Justice and the Rule of Law – recent news items

THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE at the Hague (ICJ) held hearings in December prior to giving an advisory opinion “*on the obligations of States in respect of climate change.*” The ruling, to be delivered later this year, was requested in 2023 by the UN General Assembly; such opinions are non-binding, but are legally and politically significant. The United States argued against countries being legally obliged to combat the climate crisis, a stance shared by Australia, China and Saudi Arabia, but fiercely contested by Pacific nations and by climate activists; see

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/dec/04/us-climate-crisis-legal-court> and also

<https://www.theguardian.com/law/2024/dec/11/international-court-of-justice-icj-forced-to-listen-to-climate-victims>

MEANWHILE, in America itself, the first climate accountability lawsuit against an energy company has been launched by the town of Carrboro, North Carolina; it accuses Duke Energy of mounting a “deception campaign” on the environmental effects of fossil fuels.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/dec/04/carrboro-north-carolina-duke-energy-lawsuit>

On the other hand, states' use of ‘critical infrastructure’ laws to criminalise climate activists (see *Sesame* 257) continues; concern has been expressed by

Mary Lawlor, the UN special rapporteur on human rights defenders; see <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/dec/04/un-human-rights-expert-cellist-climate-protester>

THE UK IS THE SECOND-WORST place in the world for repressing activists, according to a report in *The Guardian*; between 2012 and 2023, only Australia arrested climate and environmental protesters at a higher rate. One in five Australian eco-protests led to arrests, compared with about 17 % in the UK. The global average rate is 6.7 %. The countries with the lowest arrest rates were Brazil at 0.6 %, Peru at 2 % and Uganda at 2.2 % – but these were also the countries with the highest levels of police violence.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/dec/11/britain-leads-the-world-in-cracking-down-on-climate-activism-study-finds>

The article cites the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 and the Public Order Act 2023 as having “transformed the relationship between protesters and the state” – neither law extends to Scotland in respect of public protest, and it would be interesting to know whether there is a significant cross-border difference in terms of arrest rates.

There is more on the global crackdown on climate activists here:

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/dec/12/down-to-earth-climate-protest-new-york>

– and there is more on the state of affairs in the UK here:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/dec/20/record-number-of-protesters-will-be-in-uk-prisons-this-christmas>

and here, highlighting the case of our Friend Gaie Delap:

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2024/20-december/news/uk/quakers-call-for-protestor-to-be-freed-from-prison-after-electronic-tagging-failure>

[See the Clerk’s note on page 2 about letter-writing in her support.]

THE SUPREME COURT OF MONTANA ruled in December by 6-1 that the state’s constitution guarantees a right to a stable climate system; and it invalidated a law which had barred regulators from considering the effects of greenhouse gas emissions when permitting new fossil fuel projects.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/dec/18/montana-supreme-court-climate>

Both parts of the decision have European parallels: the claim to a right to a healthy environment, invoking a 1972 amendment to Montana’s constitution, had been brought by sixteen young people aged between five and 22, similar to the – unsuccessful – case under the European Convention on Human Rights, *Duarte Agostinho & others v. Portugal & 32 others* (see *Sesame 250* and *254*); and the striking down of the ban on regulators’ considering downstream environmental effects means that authorities in Montana are permitted to do what is mandatory for their British counterparts following the UK Supreme Court’s decision in the ‘Surrey’ case (see *Sesame 255*).

Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD)

ICAHD held a one-day conference at Edinburgh Meeting House on Saturday 26 October; unfortunately, as it was organised by ICAHD UK, it clashed with the annual fundraiser for Medical Aid for Palestinians, and even though Edinburgh is a compact city, timings made it impossible to attend both, which was a sore disappointment for many.

It was a very rich day with much information, some complex, some distressing, and some that to me was new and radical. Jeff Halper, the founder of ICAHD was the keynote speaker, preceded by Daoud Ghoul, a Ph.D student in Human Geography at Newcastle University.

In the afternoon the first speaker was Marian Pallister, a well-known Scottish journalist and author who is the current chair of Pax Christi Scotland. She was followed by Livnat Konopny Decleve, a political anthropologist and an Arab Jew, and Misha Vides, a student and a founder of Kehillah (an anti-zionist Jewish student group). The final speakers were two people relating their experience of the study tours ICAHD provides.

Jeff Halper's presentation began with the need to change terminology from "Israeli/Palestine conflict" to "Anti-Colonial Struggle against Zionist Settler Colonialism". He detailed three stages of Zionist colonialism. Stage 1, from 1882 to 1947; Stage 2, 1948 to 1967; and Stage 3, to the present. All stages involve the intent of transforming an Arab country into a Jewish one (Judaisation). The foundational violence was the military suppression of the great revolt of 1936–39; this was conducted by the British Army (Britain then having a mandate from the League of Nations to control Palestine). After the founding of the state of Israel, there was organised state violence and ethnic cleansing, with territory allocated to Palestine by the United Nations taken by the now Israeli government. In Stage 3 he sees Israel becoming an apartheid regime with increasing number of settlements leading to Bantustans for Palestinians. A dispiriting scenario.

In contrast he outlined an optimistic One Democratic State (ODS) possibility in which there would be one democracy for all of Israel/Palestine (the only democracy in the Middle East) which would have a single constitution, allow the right of return for Palestinian refugees, ensure both individual and collective rights in a new shared civil and political community and society. I found this to be inspiring, perhaps now only a dream but dreams can become a reality. It would meet the aim of peace and justice for all Palestinians and Israelis which, under current reality, cannot come about. ((This part of Jeff Halper's talk was a summary of his book *Decolonizing Israel, Liberating Palestine* (Pluto Press, 2021) and takes account of events since 7 October 2023).

I have also recently been much encouraged by reading *Three Worlds: Memoirs of an Arab-Jew* by Avi Shlaim who was born in Baghdad to Jewish parents and into a Jewish culture of 3 millenia. The three worlds are Iraq, Is-

rael and Britain. What I most learned from his book was that Zionism is a response by European Jews to their experiences, oppressions and tragedies. The establishment of Israel resulted in the mass exodus of Jews from Middle Eastern and North African countries and ended cultures which had existed for thousands of years.

Finally can I commend Prayers for Peace in the Middle East on the 24th of each month at 7.00 pm organised by Christian Aid Scotland [see page 14]. There is a brief period of silence which ends with

May our silence speak the peace of God.

May our silence sing the peace of God.

May our silence bring about the peace of God.

Kate Arnot

Edinburgh Direct Aid International (EDAI)

AGM, 21 November, 2024

EDAI, NOW A Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, delivers aid to people in desperate need. Currently it is working in Lebanon and Ukraine, and attempts to deliver aid to Gaza when it can. EDAI is an all-volunteer charity with no paid workers except for local staff in the destination countries. It keeps costs to a minimum by avoiding expensive advertising and fund-raisers who take a percentage. It tries to deliver aid with a friendly hand and in person whenever possible.

This remarkable organisation is led by its founder, Denis Rutovitz, now 95, and Prof. Jeanne Bell; it has a team of dedicated volunteers whose energy and commitment were very much in evidence at its AGM in Edinburgh.

May, 2024 Ukraine

Maggie Tookey, who has worked with EDAI for many years, described her visit to Kharkiv during which she helped convert a basement into a school. Because of the extreme danger posed by missiles and glide bombs, the Ukrainian government has ruled that no child in East Ukraine can attend normal school above ground. All education must take place either online or in underground shelters – often damp gloomy spaces, barely fit for purpose.

On arrival in Kharkiv, Maggie met with a local group through a Ukrainian NGO with which EDAI collaborates. They discussed the project to convert a deep basement area in the liberated town of Studenok into a safe underground school. Around 110 children are currently without schooling. She found Studenok to be relatively peaceful, certainly nothing like Kharkiv, but the main school building was a wreck. Occupying soldiers had looted everything valuable and a missile had badly damaged the roof. The large basement, however, was intact. The NGO had already completed a similar conversion elsewhere and this one would be a mirror image.

Maggie agreed that EDAI would supply much of the flooring, strong metal

doors, and all the furniture and IT equipment needed to give the basement the facilities the school had once enjoyed. She then returned to Kharkiv to buy these supplies. In her own words: *“It was a horrible day. The sirens began at 5.15 am and continued most of the day. It was too dangerous to move anywhere – I spent much of the time sheltering with the staff in an internal corridor inside the hotel. There were a number of deaths, mostly from the complete destruction of a famous printing factory called Vivat.”*

However by early evening the shops had re-opened and she was able to get everything needed for the project. Team volunteers with expertise in different trades carried out the conversion work and the school has now opened. See: <https://edinburghdirectaid.org/Ukraine/Ukraine.htm>

Edinburgh Direct Aid and Gaza

Denis Rutoviz described EDAI 's long association with Gaza, beginning in 2009 when, working with Scottish Parliament volunteers and the Glasgow Central Mosque, it took a small convoy of medical supplies through Sinai into Gaza. Since then it has enjoyed an association with medical schools, setting up palliative care training in cooperation with the University of Edinburgh and with the Al Jazeera Club for disabled athletes.

Another organisation with which it has had a long association is the Palestine Medical Relief Society (PMRS) which runs clinics in Gaza and for which EDAI funded a supply of local first aid kits.

A truckload of aid to Rafah

An opportunity arose early in 2024 to liaise with another UK charity, 'Refugee Biryani & Bananas' (RBB) to make direct deliveries of food and other essentials from Egypt into Gaza via the Rafah border crossing while it was still open. EDAI have known RBB and its director, Ruhi Akhtar for over a decade and have previously discussed cooperation in the region.

RBB had been able to establish working parties both in Gaza and in Egypt and had succeeded in delivering 10 tons of food and water bought in Cairo. To do so their truck had to negotiate six check points in Sinai, taking three weeks to make the 120 km journey from Cairo to Rafah.

Although the truck itself was able to enter Gaza, the driver had to remain on the Egyptian side and a Palestinian driver took over. It was formally consigned and delivered to the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, who then handed it over to RBB's team in Gaza for distribution. EDAI agreed with RBB to work together on another delivery. Buying supplies in Cairo, however – the only way to get them – is an expensive business: the full cost of a food delivery is about £37,000, EDAI paying half of this.

June 2024: Aرسال

EDAI volunteer and retired Professor of Music, Nigel Osborne set off for Lebanon with many reservations and concerns: first there was a real and immediate threat of an all-out Israel-Hezbollah war which would have a massive impact in the region. Also the situation for Syrian refugees in Leb-

anon, and particularly in Arsal, had worsened dramatically, with summary arrests and deportations. The economic situation was also deteriorating and there were changes of date for the end of the school year which would impact any planned performances.

Despite these and other impediments, such as delays in gaining permission to enter the country, everything finally worked out, and he arrived in Arsal in time to help Nabil Khalouf, EDAI's project manager, with the final stages before the launch of a wonderfully successful event.

Nabil had organised the unveiling of EDAI's Arsal Levant Children's Orchestra and Choir at a large venue – Al Mukhtar – in Arsal with an audience of over 500 people from both the Lebanese and Syrian communities and leading figures in local government, education and welfare. In addition to the music there was food, soft drinks and coffee. The orchestra currently has twelve players performing on ouds, santurs, boozouks and percussion. Although some players have recently been lost through the expulsion of families to Syria, nothing deters them. The choir consists of 40 children, with back-up and augmentation from the EDAI school, where all 200 children learn the repertoire. At the event they played eight songs from the traditional and contemporary Levant canon.

Nigel said: *“When I think of the impossibly difficult journeys the children continue to have (bombed out of their homes and still living in flimsy tents on mountainsides), and of the difficulties we have had making this happen, with just over a year’s preparatory work and many unexpected hiccups, we have ended up with nothing short of a miracle. The standard, given the circumstances is fabulous.*

“The work is actually tour-able. I can only express profound gratitude to Nabil and our great professional team (certainly the best that could be assembled in the region) - Sahar, Ayman, Samer and Noor.”

As if this amazing level of human grace were not enough, Ayman proceeded to invite the children from Balsam special school onstage, to join in percussion and to lead the dancing. Nigel concluded: *“As an inclusion-nut and lover of special needs work, I could not have been happier or more impressed.”*

Listening to these three dedicated humanitarians describe their work was both inspiring and humbling: this is outreach at its very best.

Lynne Barty

Two Torchlit Processions and a Growing Hope

ON 10 DECEMBER I joined a torchlit procession that wound its way from the Scottish Parliament to Queen Elizabeth House, the Edinburgh HQ of the nuclear-armed United Kingdom, mirroring the huge procession in Oslo that day celebrating the award of this year’s Nobel Peace Prize to the atomic weapon survivors group Nihon Hidankyo. The citation is for *“tireless efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and*

for demonstrating through witness testimony that nuclear weapons must never be used again." The Nobel Committee said: "We all have a duty to fulfil the mission of the *Hibakusha*. Their moral compass is our inheritance. It is now our turn. Disarmament efforts require insistent public appeals and sustained pressure." In accepting the award, Terumi Tanaka said "It is the heartfelt desire of the *Hibakusha* that, rather than depending on the theory of nuclear deterrence, which assumes the possession and use of nuclear weapons, we must not allow the possession of a single nuclear weapon."

When discussing the risks of nuclear war commentators will often argue about whether a threat is a bluff or not. In this they forget two things. So-called nuclear deterrence depends on the credibility of the threat, making it impossible to make sense of the bluff factor. Secondly they do not appear to realise that the most likely causes of nuclear conflict are technical failure (as in a warning system giving false information), miscommunication within and beyond command structures, and general confusion. They also tend to miss the fact that such triggers are very much more likely at a time of high international tension. Right now we have all the elements of high tension – the rolling back of arms control measures, the modernising and enlarging of nuclear arsenals, two major conflicts involving nuclear armed states or alliances, tit-for-tat escalation, and the growing impact of the climate emergency. If you doubt that what we are risking is catastrophic beyond our nightmares do read Annie Jacobsen's *Nuclear War – a Scenario*.

While those in charge of the deadly arsenals give every indication of being completely stuck in a snarling and bristling mode, we do know from previous crises that sustained public mobilisation and pressure can break the log jam. There is however a new factor these days, as Jessica Mathews has pointed out:

"Attention needs to be paid to public opinion as well. The major steps to wind down the first arms race began under heavy public pressure that influenced leaders and legislators. Today, the climate crisis has replaced nuclear war as the main existential threat in the public mind, and funders of nongovernmental research and analysis have redirected their resources heavily in that direction even while the reasons for fearing nuclear war are, if anything, greater than they once were."

On the plus side there is a growing understanding that the two threats are interlinked. Addressing both threats requires a substantial decrease in international tension and a new level of global co-operation. Climate related disasters will increase desperation, conflict and war. Nuclear war would bring its own version of climate catastrophe in the form of nuclear winter. A recent meeting of the Nuclear Disarmament Cross Party Group at Holyrood was attended mainly by young people, all of whom had clocked the connection.

Our short procession was enlivened by the Protest in Harmony choir and when we reached the UK HQ they sang Jane Lewis' sensitive setting of Arundhati Roy's beautiful words: "*Another world is not only possible, she is*

on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing." As regards nuclear disarmament, and in a quiet moment, the breathing is strong and persistent. Without the testimony and advocacy of the atomic survivors we would not have the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) which continues to grow in credibility and influence. To date 93 states have signed it and it regularly has the support of around 130 states when it is on the agenda of the UN General Assembly. There will be a Scottish civil society delegation at the Treaty's third Meeting of States Parties in New York in March next year.

Previous waves of popular action on nuclear weapons have served to lessen the risk temporarily by pressure for detente and arms control. The aim of the TPNW wave is the complete elimination of these weapons, recognising that until we are rid of them we will return time after time to a fresh crisis, any one of which could prove fatal. Let's get behind the TPNW wave here in Scotland and ride it to their expulsion from Scotland, the UK, and the whole world.

David Mackenzie

Annie Jacobsen's Nuclear War – a Scenario, was published in March and short-listed for the Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-fiction 2024. It is still only available in hardback (ISBN 978-1-911709-59-6), but will appear as a Penguin paperback in July.

On Spoken Ministry

I THOUGHT it was a joke to say I was a Quaker who had lost his 'quake'. But the fact remains that it has been a long time since I felt thrust to my feet trembling with the compulsion to speak out in the manner we call 'ministry'.

There was a period of about two and a half years when, living in the north of Scotland, I was only able to attend meetings via Zoom. Since we were all sitting comfortably in our own homes, this brilliant technology did not for me represent a 'gathered meeting'. When I said as much, I was heartily disagreed with. So I kept my notions to myself.

Occasionally I was able to attend an in-person meeting at the WASP Studios in Inverness. This experience was something of a relief though I don't recall being moved to give Ministry all that often if at all.

I did once go to London to attend Britain Yearly Meeting at Friends House in the Euston Road. This did seem to immerse me more deeply into the Quaker spirit, so that when I returned to Edinburgh I found that I was in some way transformed, and that ministry came to my lips unbidden, inspired I think by my experience at Friends House.

A thought occurs to me, which is, why should it bother me one way or the other, whether I speak out at a Quaker meeting or not? I can still perfectly well uphold the meeting in silence. Now with some hesitancy I move to

hint at a possible darker motive. Could it be that the very act of giving Ministry has come to flatter my ego?

The development of a healthy ego may be a necessary stage we undergo as we grow up. But as we reach adulthood the task reverses, maturity invites us to gradually relinquish our egos. For some this is more difficult than for others. And at my age, and I am now old, the ego is always an obstacle to spirituality. The mind can be full of tricks. At least mine is. But I should not presume that the minds of others are necessarily as tricky my own.

If there really is an element of ego at work here, Then so be it. Quakers too have egos.

Where egos go, so too does the tendency to be judgmental. This allows a person such as myself, to think, 'Is that really true Ministry?' 'Did they really stay sitting for as long as they were able until the force of truth rose up through their supposedly trembling body till they was compelled to stand up and speak? Isn't this the kind of thing that gave us our name? That and the broad brimmed hats we are said to refused to doff.

I went to Meeting today and heard Ministry that to my ear and mind was as authentic as any I have heard previously. I don't know, but so far as I was able to observe, no-one appeared to be trembling before or while they spoke. Of course it is entirely possible that I am wrong. I may make too much of this 'quaking' thing. Although I do remember quivering with the pressure of emotion in the past. Perhaps this may not be entirely necessary.

We must remember that in the early days Quakers were violently persecuted. This itself was reason enough to those in the past tremble or quake.

I suppose I am by nature something of a sceptic. Not ideal in matters of faith. Faith is surely a matter of trust. A lack of trust is I suppose the beginnings of scepticism. I know there are reasons for this in my past.

This thought reminds me of a Quaker joke. After Meeting one Sunday one Friend said to another. 'Friend, I thank you for your Ministry today; I would think you to be truly inspired, were it not for the fact that you are inspired quite so often'.

Simon Jackson

Andrew Farrar died on 8 January, peacefully at his care home in Edinburgh. Andrew was born into Quakers, and was very active at Local, Area, GM and YM levels. He looked after our records, and worked for many years on Venue 40 activities during the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. On retiring from Napier University, he worked for the Headway charity for people affected by brain injury.

The family has organised a private funeral. A Memorial Meeting will take place later in the year. Andrew will be remembered fondly by many; we hold in the Light his sister Emma, brother-in-law Roderick, and all who were close to him.

Alastair Cameron

Violence Disarmed

William Gandy, with whom George Fox stayed several times at his house at Frandley, near Warrington, told him this story of an encounter between a magistrate given to abusing his authority and an unnamed young Friend. It is included in the Journal in the account of a visit Fox paid in 1669, immediately before going to Ireland. Some ten years later, "Jeffrey Shakerley K^{nt}" was one of two "officious justices" who, as recorded in Joseph Besse's *Sufferings of the People called Quakers* (1753), had a visiting Friend imprisoned for two months, on the slender grounds, stated in the warrant, that "we do suspect that the said Roger Longworth is a Papist".

IN CHESHIRE one Sir Geoffrey Shakerley that had been a cruel persecutor of Friends lit upon a young man about eighteen or nineteen years old that had been at mill with a loaded horse or two. And the young man could not get the loaded horses soon enough out of his way, upon which he beat him with his cane, and the young man took it out of his hand and laid it down by him; and then he took out his pistols, and the young man took them out of his hands also, and laid them down by him the way being narrow; and then he drew his rapier at him, and he took it out of his hand also, and laid it down by him.

And he called to his man who was a little behind him (they were both full of drink) and said, 'This Quaker hath disarmed me'; and his man would have the Friend give him his weapons again, which he was loth to do lest he should do mischief with them. And so at last the man desired the Friend to give him the arms again, and the Friend said if he would promise to keep them from his master that he might not do mischief with them he would deliver them to him.

So Shakerley sent away his man to fetch the constable and to bring a book to tender the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy to him [*knowing that a Quaker would not swear and so could be arrested*]. And he sat on his horse's back and kept the young man's horses loaded all the while till his man came back again.

So when his man came back again, he told his master he could not find the constables. And they were poor people and he could not get a Bible.

Then after the Friend gave the man his master's weapons, they went both away to look for a constable. And his man was more civil than his master, and bid the Friend stay at a smith's shop a while till they were gone and passed away. And so the Friend stayed there a while, and seeing they came not, he passed away over a common with his loaded horses; and there Shakerley, after he had ridden up and down for a constable a long while and could not find any, espying of him, he followed the young man to the town. And there came the priest and the constable to him, and there Shakerley would make a mittimus [*warrant*] to send him to gaol for disarming him.

And then the constable and the priest dissuaded him to send him forth-

with, seeing the Friend was in his old clothes. And the priest said that his father was a very honest man, though his father was the veriest drunkard in the town, and used to beat his son in his drunkenness; and his son had been used to disarm his father of his weapons in his drunkenness, which made him so expert in that work. But after this Shakerley rode away and gave no mittimus to the constable. But it made such a noise in the country that Friends persuaded the young man to go up to London to live, to put him out of this Shakerley's way.

There is a biography of Sir Geoffrey Shakerley – who at the time of this incident was M.P. for Wigan, as well as a magistrate “zealous in hounding nonconformists” – at:

<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1660-1690/member/shakerley-geoffrey-1619-96>

It would be interesting to know what became of the young Friend in London, but I have not been able to identify him. – ED.

Meeting for Sufferings: 7 December 2024

Our representative Katrina McCrea was prevented from attending the December meeting; however you can read the papers for it at

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/mfs-2024-12-agenda-papers-package>
and the minutes are at

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/mfs-2024-12-follow-up-package>

As well as an oral report from BYM trustees, the meeting heard from the Book of Discipline Revision Committee (BDRC), Quaker World Relations Committee (QWRC), and Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA); the written versions of these reports are in the first package above. The QWRC report includes reports from the Yearly Meetings of Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.

*The report of the BDRC included an exercise, **Reflecting on Advices & Queries**, which the Meeting commended to Friends:*

“What do Advices & Queries mean to you?”

Use this as the prompt for a go-round, giving each person the opportunity to share some thoughts. A listening circle, not discussion!

Then take some time to write, draw, collage or otherwise create some new advices and queries. This could be as a group or an individual activity.

You might want to think about:

- What you want to keep from the current ones
- What's missing that you want to include
- How you create something clear and simple, flexible and welcoming

*The AM Nominations Committee is looking for a successor to **Mary Woodward** as our representative on the Edinburgh committee of the World Day of Prayer (see page 9); a role Mary thoroughly enjoyed and recommends to anyone interested.*

Finland Yearly Meeting Autumn Gathering, AitO, and travelling in the ministry around Finland

23 September – 7 October 2024

Having represented Britain Yearly Meeting's at this year's Spring Gathering of Finland Yearly Meeting (FYM), I was delighted to be able to return for the Autumn Gathering at the end of September.

My visit began in Helsinki, where I met up with Friends, then Jyväskylä, to stay with my niece and her partner, and on to Tampere, to meet up with Lari, then travelling with Toni and Leena to AitO centre for the Gathering, which had the overarching theme: *UBUNTU – care of creation*.

Two business sessions on the Saturday covered admin. and financial matters. Feedback from the newly-established communications group led to discussion of the whole issue: the FYM website, and ways to reach out to seekers and enquirers. Could the Tampere Friends' Facebook page be a way to publicise what's going on in other areas too? Would it work to pay someone to update the website, and to deal with the archive and the library, which has no home since the Helsinki Quaker flat was sold?

How do we care for each other? Many Finnish Friends are isolated. It was decided to have an online discussion in October for Friends to share thoughts on this, and another, quarterly, to discuss one of BYM's Advices & Queries. Aino had attended the World Plenary Meeting in South Africa this August. Preparatory material had been circulated in the months leading up to it, and there had been online preparation sessions on two of the WPM's three themes. At AitO we focused on the *care of creation* aspect of Ubuntu, sharing in pairs, on the Friday evening, our thoughts on *What sort of relationship do I want to have with the land I live on?* before a worship-sharing session about *What will nourish my soul and the earth?*

On Saturday we were again in pairs, listening without interrupting while one person spoke their response to, firstly, *I exist because you exist, and because creation exists* and then *What is my calling/what concern is closest to my heart?* On Sunday, after joining together in worship, Aino read out the tapestry document produced by those at the World Plenary. We focused on the part of it asking us to look at the causes of injustice in the world and listen to that of God in others before speaking out. "*As Friends we are called to action in the world, as individuals and as communities... we are reminded of our brokenness, and we are challenged by the spirit of Christ to take action in the world*". We shared our responses to the question *What might we, as a community, be called to do together?* [The full text of the tapestry document is at:

<https://fwccemes.org/news/world-plenary-meeting-epistle-and-weaving-document.>]

A highlight of the weekend for me is the Saturday night sauna, and this time was no exception. Instead of using the sauna inside the main building, we used the one on the lakeshore – which meant that, instead of cool-

ing off in the swimming pool, we could go outside and straight into the lake... it was *cold* ! I don't think I could have got myself under the water without the encouragement of the women already there – but I did, three times in all, and felt very proud of myself.

On Sunday we heard from Antti, who had attended Britain Yearly Meeting in July. He had started off thinking 'it's so long before they do anything' – but by the end of the YM, he came to see that 'yes, they *do* do things', although our big structural reorganisation didn't particularly interest him. He was greatly struck by a session on climate choirs and by the power of the silent protest for peace outside Friends House, and impressed by the Swarthmore Lecture – "every Quaker has to listen to this". His report led to discussion on whether to appoint someone new for BYM 2025, or have someone go a second time. This led into a general sharing of our thoughts from the weekend, before we said goodbye and went our separate ways.

Taina lives in Oulu and has recently come to Friends. I see her at the online worship, and we first met in person at the Spring Gathering. She had invited me to stay with her for a few days. It's a long drive north from Tampere, so we broke the journey at an Airbnb house where we were joined by her friend Soile – whose dog Sylvi came with us into the wood-fired sauna. Afterwards we had a long conversation about business meeting which Soile found most interesting. The drive northward enabled yet more wide-ranging conversation, and more Finnish language lessons.

In Oulu, Taina and I met up with Raimo, an enquirer. James, an American with a long acquaintance with Friends, and Jane, who hosted me on my first visit to FYM, also joined us. It was a deep discussion, to which, as 'a real Quaker from outside Finland' I was able to contribute my perspective.

Then south by train to Hämeenlinna, to visit Aino, the only Quaker in the area. She introduced me to a wonderful forest park – Aulanko – and I explored the castle. There was a fascinating and moving textile exhibition on the local flax industry, once enormous and flourishing but now defunct.

From Hämeenlinna I went north again to Tampere, for lunch with my daughter Ruth, on her own trans-European trip. We explored the city a little before returning to the railway station to meet up with my niece Kate, with whom Ruth was to spend the weekend, and Leena, my host for the rest of my time in Finland.

At last I was able to worship with Tampere Friends, which I've been wanting to do for years. There were familiar faces from various Gatherings, including my very dear friend Ville-Pekka, in whose lakeside sauna house I have stayed more than once.

The warmth of their welcome had me musing in Meeting: how much warmer is God's welcome any and every time I show up to spend time with God. This is something I need to remember every day.

Mary Woodward

A Spiritual Review 2023

The voices of Portobello & Musselburgh Quaker Meeting

[This is a slightly shortened version of the Review report; the full text – with pictures – can be accessed at:

https://www.quakerscotland.org/sites/quakerscotland.org/files/documents/P%26M%20Quakers%20Spiritual%20Review%202023-24_0.pdf

Introduction: the idea of a Spiritual Review

“Whether elders and overseers are appointed or not, local meetings should regularly review their spiritual life and its expression in caring. A meeting might like to compile and use a series of queries for this purpose. Such a review could take place every two or three years and might in itself be a form of pastoral care. The process might start in small groups, in which unmet needs could be revealed and confidentiality respected, then move on to an occasion drawing all together. Special attention might need to be given to involv-ing those associated with the meeting who take little part in its regular life because of youth, age, disability or disaffection.”

Quaker Faith & Practice 12.16

Following a Pastoral Friends, Elders and Convenors (PEC) meeting in March 2023, the three Elders from our Meeting were tasked to look at the idea of a Spiritual Review.

Elders reflected on their individual perspectives of the spiritual life of our Local Meeting and why now might be a good time for our meeting to review its spiritual life. We have all been through a pandemic and the Meeting has grown in number and is now a medium sized Meeting. We do not have Meeting for Worship (MfW) every week but two mornings a month and one evening, with Children’s Meetings running at the same time in the morning, plus a Young People’s Meeting once a month. We have a good working PEC group and energetic Members and Attenders.

Elders felt it was important that this is our Meeting’s Spiritual Review and not something which PEC undertakes and reports to Area Meeting: Elders would like all to feel involved and able to participate. Elders hoped all Friends will take the matters of community, worship and faith to heart and do what they can as together we can achieve much.

An invitation was sent out asking for Friends to consider becoming part of the Spiritual Review Coordinating Group and in August the eight members of that group met to create the process for the review.

The group wanted to create safe spaces for listening to one another, as we all have different needs to enable spiritual growth, and to be inclusive and hear all voices from the meeting equally, including of those who do not attend.

The aim was to undertake the review on different levels, listening to how the Spirit was working among us:

- *A questionnaire would be developed*
- *A Conversation with Friends session around these questions would be held*
- *The Young People’s Group would explore the questions together*

- *Two quiet, reflective sessions would be organised*
- *A fun and games session held*

Lots of information on the spiritual life of our Meeting was gathered over a period of three months. The summary which follows is part of the ongoing process of our evolving spiritual life as Portobello and Musselburgh Quaker Meeting. From this summary, actions will be taken, more listening done with further reflection and review.

The process has been an interesting, enlivening, joyful and challenging process for us as individuals and as a Meeting for Worship.

What follows cannot have every word written in each questionnaire, nor everything said during our conversations, worship and games. We hope to reflect the themes which emerged, celebrate the joys and richness of our meeting and look at how we can do better as a community and how each of us can be involved in the life of our Quaker Meeting.

It is hoped that you can hear the spirit in this written word for, as the early Quakers remind us:

*“things... may be fulfilled in the Spirit not from the letter for the letter killeth,
but the spirit giveth life”.*

Advices and Queries 1.01

The Process: what we did

The same four questions explored throughout the Spiritual Review were used:

- *What do I value in our Meeting?*
- *What is my experience of meeting for Worship?*
- *What is missing in our Meeting?*
- *What can I contribute to the life of our Meeting?*

The Sessions: how we did it

1. The Questionnaire was created and could be completed online (Microsoft forms) or using a physical copy. This was done anonymously unless the person chose to identify themselves.

Thirteen forms were submitted – seven online and six hard copies posted into our ‘Voice Box’, available at Meeting from October to early December.

2. The Young People’s Group had a session of lively discussion and reflection. They considered the four questions and came up with actions some of which could be implemented quickly, with others requiring more reflection.

3. Conversation with Friends Session

Thirteen people attended the Spiritual Review Conversation with Friends on 22 October.

Following a brief silence before and after each question (including an opening question on the notion of spirituality), Friends paired up variously to share their thoughts, which were recorded on post-its and submitted anonymously. Fifty-three post-it notes were added to the flipcharts and later transposed into a document.

4. Two reflective, quieter two-hour sessions were held: one in Portobello and one in Musselburgh.

Three Friends attended in Portobello and considered the first three questions; the fourth was not covered due to time. This reflective meditative process of quiet discernment was much appreciated adding to our spiritual growth. Ten Friends participated in this session at the Fisherrow Centre, Musselburgh, one of our Meeting's previous homes.

The group was led in meditation and silence with candles representing our wider Quaker community as the first three questions were considered. Participants chose images to help describe the experience of Meeting for Worship.

A Friend read from *Quaker Faith & Practice*, 10.2

"We know the power of God's Spirit at work in the lives of people within the community of our meetings. These people may have been drawn into the community by a sudden con-vincement, a long period of seeking, or have grown up within it from childhood. We also know that we are engaged in a life-long growth into faith, and experience a continuing irruption of grace into our lives which demands and sustains a commitment to a life of discipleship. We recognise this power at work in people of all ages, races and creeds: a transforming power which can issue in lives of joy, humility and service."

5. An all-age Creative Fun Session was held using dance, art and drama and involved over twenty people. We danced our 'Quaker dance', we laughed and sang, and with the light shining we drew around the shadows of our bodies, in response to the review questions, creating a marvellous mural.

A timeline of the meeting's journey so far was created and we all then took a step back from the mural and learned more about the experiences of the group in that time, to view our artwork afresh. We particularly reflected on the role of the places it has been held, and the role of Bellfield in shaping our meeting.

6. Follow-up conversations

Another source of information came from correspondence and follow-up conversations with Elders and Pastoral Friends.

The Voices: themes and reflections

The message that came through most powerfully was that people see our Meeting as a precious and important place in their lives where they can come together in silence and stillness, feeling a sense of connection, shared spirituality, common purpose, friendship, belonging and community. There is a strong sense that the regularity of Meeting for Worship (MfW) provides an immensely valued fixed point in busy lives and the turbulent world around us, an opportunity to stop, be still and engage in more profound reflection.

Many responses reflected a feeling of being engaged during Meeting for Worship in a collective endeavour to explore spiritual questions and think deeply about how we live our lives. Friends celebrate the mystery and energy of Meeting for Worship and the way it can feel like a place of safety while at the same time challenging us.

Ministry is seen as a valuable part of this. The priesthood of all believers was mentioned several times. Friends enjoy the surprise of a sudden insight from an unexpected source and the way different people may provide different perspectives on a particular theme. We respect each other as searchers for

truth, welcoming both ministry that speaks to us and ministry that doesn't.

There was also widespread and honest acknowledgement that we are human and from time to time we can be distracted by noise, uncomfortable chairs and our own sometimes mundane thoughts, so that it can be challenging at times to reach a sense of the spiritual.

Diversity and inclusion

Many people valued the diversity of our Meeting and especially the range of ages. Families feel accepted, loved and cared for and there is a very clear sense that we are blessed to have so many children and young people. The variety of activities offered for children and young people is appreciated.

At the same time, other Friends questioned the lack of diversity in our Meeting in terms of the absence of people from a range of ethnic backgrounds or different social groups and classes. There was also a clear perception that Friends can feel excluded due to disability and other support needs. It is very dispiriting to have to keep asking for help and to feel unheard.

A lack of inclusiveness was expressed that can lead to a feeling of alienation. Some people felt that there was a lack of deeper friendship and that if they left their absence would not be noticed. The importance of engaging with visitors and befriending newcomers was highlighted.

Some concern was expressed about a perceived inability to deal with difficulty and conflict in our Meeting. At the same time it was pointed out that we are a relatively young Meeting and it can take time to develop the confidence as a Meeting to deal with difficult issues.

Practicalities and structure of Meeting for Worship

There was much discussion of the tasks that need to be done for our Meeting to function. Some people find it stressful and feel too much falls on too few shoulders. Some would like to help but lack the confidence or feel intimidated by the feeling that others are more experienced or that there is insufficient guidance. There was an acknowledgement that, as our Meeting grows, so do the responsibilities both logistically and pastorally.

In terms of things people feel are missing, there were numerous comments on the structure of Meeting for Worship and how it works. These included not being sure how to know when MfW starts and ends, not being sure who the elders and pastoral friends are and what their roles are and thinking about the possibility of having more structure in MfW, with ideas such as regular readings from *Advices & Queries* to bring the Meeting together. There were also queries about ministry and how to develop confidence in giving it.

This discussion of MfW leads into wider questions about the structure of our Meeting, in particular a clear desire to explore options for Meetings for Worship on a weekly basis, at different times of day and for a regular Meeting for Worship in Musselburgh to ensure that we embrace and uphold the fact that we are Portobello *and* Musselburgh Meeting.

While the opportunity to chat and eat together was voiced by many as a valued part of our Meeting, several people wondered about ways to ensure a smoother transition from silence and reflection to noise and chatter. The wish

was expressed by several Friends for a space after Meeting for Worship where deeper, spiritual conversations could be held.

Spiritual growth and learning

Indeed, the Spiritual Review has revealed a real thirst to learn more about Quakerism outside Meeting for Worship and for opportunities for discussion and exploration of the spiritual life, as well as the chance to engage in radical action together. The existing offerings of evening and daytime meetings to explore subjects more deeply is appreciated and interest in more shared spiritual and creative activities was clearly expressed. The Spiritual Review was welcomed as an opportunity to explore spiritual aspects outside the Meeting for Worship space, as it can sometimes feel as though the focus outside MfW is more on business and practical matters.

In addition to the desire for more opportunities for spiritual exchange and growth, many people expressed a readiness to be involved in contributing to the Meeting in many different ways, from helping with rota tasks, to helping to organise events, offering to run creative activities or lead worship at other times.

Young people's views

It seems worthwhile to focus separately on some of the points raised by the discussion held by the young people at their Meeting for Worship – not to set them aside from the wider Meeting, but because they had some interesting perspectives that didn't come out in the other sessions or the questionnaires.

As in the Meeting more generally, they expressed similar appreciation for the opportunity to come together with space for reflection and for the balance between serious topics and fun.

Of particular note is the fact that they are very conscious of the dynamic of their Meeting, where the participants constantly get older and their needs and participation are continually changing. They are very clear-sighted about the need for succession planning, as older members of the group will be moving on and there will be younger people moving up from Children's Meeting. They recognise the importance of Area Meeting, although they find the amount of time spent on the business side less interesting. However, they enjoy visiting other Local Meetings and receiving visitors at our Meeting and are keen to promote our young people's meeting more widely within Area Meeting. It's notable that there was far more mention of Area Meeting and interaction with people in other Local Meetings from the young people than from the adults.

The young people also expressed the wish to move their Meeting for Worship so that it coincides with Meeting for Eating, providing more opportunity for socialising after MfW and this has already been implemented. They also raised the issue of communication and have now set up a Whatsapp group to address this.

Creative session

It's also worth separately mentioning the creative fun session, where many of the thoughts and ideas written down elsewhere during the Spiritual Review

process were expressed physically through dance, movement and art. A timeline of Portobello and Musselburgh Meeting was illustrated by members with longer memories and was appreciated by some people who have arrived more recently. The event could perhaps be summed up in this quote:

“A desire to be more welcoming to a more diverse group of people was expressed, to have more sparkle, colour and music, to hold space for grief and challenge, and to be quietly radical.”

The Voices: in Friends’ own words

This is a selection of quotes given by Friends in the different sessions. It is not intended to be comprehensive but just to provide a flavour of the richness of the responses to the Spiritual Review.

“Holding a moment”

“A grounding anchor” “A sense of common purpose”

“I live better coming to Meeting for Worship and feeling the energy of people”

“I could leave tomorrow and not be particularly missed”

“Who closes the Meeting?” “Range of ages” “Support”

‘Simple, unpretentious, a still point’ “**Uncomfortable chairs**”

“LISTEN WITH LOVE” *“More biscuits especially chocolate ones”* “Daring”

“Holding a moment” “Time to stop and listen” “**Lack of intimate friendship**”

“The love and care within which our children are held” “Stillness, openness to receiving”

“Edgy and safe at the same time” “Balance of fun and serious sessions”

“Missing groups of people – people of colour, tradespeople, people from deprived areas”

“**Commitment to activism**” “Delight”

“Aspiration to a contemplative life” *“As we grow there’s more work”*

“Alienation, lack of inclusiveness, exclusion” “I value the mutual respect”

“More opportunities for spiritual conversations” *“Value acceptance of children’s quiriness”*

“**Friendship**”

Conclusions: a new beginning not an end

The Portobello & Musselburgh Spiritual review has been an enriching experience, reviewing the spirit among us and the care for Friends. We hope all feel included and feel their voice has been heard. We are presented with challenges, which we hope we can rise to as we continue seeking together.

“Our life is love and peace and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another and not laying accusations one against another, but praying for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand”

Isaac Pennington 1667, Quaker Faith and Practice 10:01

The final question asked by the Spiritual Review was *“What can I contribute to the life of our Meeting?”* In response Friends expressed the will and desire to be involved in the further development of the life of our Meeting. We therefore commend the following topics for reflection and action.

We recognise that it may often be more appropriate for Meeting for Business to agree which groups of Friends are best placed to take forward an action

rather than necessarily discerning the precise steps required. We do not wish this to become a 'to do list' of tasks but a way to deepen our spiritual lives and the seeking of the divine in our worship together.

Exploring spirituality beyond Sunday meetings

How can we create opportunities to discuss and share our experience of the Light outside Sunday morning meeting?

How do we deepen friendships outside the Meeting?

How do we develop opportunities to engage in radical action together?

Considering the running of our Meeting

How do we improve the accessibility of the meeting, so all can attend and participate?

How can Friends develop confidence in giving ministry?

Who closes meeting?

How do we improve the transition from worship to refreshments and make space after Meeting for Worship for deeper spiritual conversations?

Should we have readings of Advices & Queries during Meeting for Worship?

How could the roles and membership of the PECS team be more visible?

What could ease the succession of young people into and from the Young People's Group?

How could more people feel empowered to be involved in rota tasks so these jobs don't always fall on the same shoulders?

Welcoming everyone to our meeting

How do we make sure everyone, especially someone new, feels welcome at our meeting?

How can we increase the diversity of those who attend meeting?

REGISTRATION FOR YEARLY MEETING 2025

Yearly Meeting will be a blended meeting at Friends House, London, and online, taking place Friday to Monday, 23–26 May 2025.

Our focus will be on our peace testimony exploring how we as Quakers address violence and conflict in our local communities and across Britain, and identify ways we could do more. How do we nurture the radical peacemakers among us? There will be time to agree, in a spirit of worship, the next steps from Yearly Meeting 2024's decision to move to a continuing Yearly Meeting in 2026.

To register to attend, go to <https://www.quaker.org.uk/ym/bookings>

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

**Minutes of Area Meeting held on Saturday 23 November 2024
at Bellfield, 16B Bellfield Street, Portobello, Edinburgh
and by remote videoconferencing**

2024/11/01 Worship and introductions

During opening worship, we have heard read from *Quaker Faith & Practice* 19.22: George Fox reminds us that there is an underlying truth that will hold us in unity, whatever our 'church-made faiths'.

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]

2024/11/13 Closing minute

68 Friends (57 members, eight attenders and three children) 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 1	East Lothian 4	Kelso 5	Penicuik 2
Polmont 7 + 1 child	Portobello & Musselburgh 21 + 2 children	South Edinburgh 6	Tweeddale -	<i>Visitors/Others</i> -

We next meet on Monday 20 January 2025, at 7.00 pm at Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House.

We thank all involved at Portobello & Musselburgh LM for hosting today's meeting. We thank Edinburgh Youth Theatre for the use of their wi-fi, without which our online participation, so essential today in particular¹, would not have been possible.

(Signed)

Alastair Cameron, Clerk
Cath Dyer, Assistant Clerk

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1. *On the day of the meeting there was heavy snow and Lothian Buses had suspended all services, so that many who had intended to attend in person had to do so on Zoom. (ED.)*
-

Warm Space, Winter 2025

As in previous years, Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, will be open as a Warm Space, on Thursday afternoons between 2:00 and 4:00 pm, for the rest of January and throughout February.

All are welcome for hot drinks and warm conversation, or just to sit quietly. Children too are very welcome. We have games, puzzles and more!

A Book of possible interest

The Quaker World *co-edited by C. Wess Daniels and our Friend Rhiannon Grant*, appeared in paperback at the end of last year. It is a substantial work – at 520 pages it has over sixty chapters – organised in three parts: 'Global Quakerism'; 'Spirituality' and 'Embodiment'. The publishers, Routledge, describe it as "essential reading for students studying world religions, Christianity and comparative religion, and it will also be of interest to those in related fields such as sociology, political science, anthropology and ethics". It is available as an eBook – the cheapest format, but still over forty pounds. The ISBN for the paperback edition is **978-1-032-55293-0**.

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.

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 1st, 2nd & last Sundays of the month at 10.45am. Worship on 1st Sundays is all-age; there is a children's meeting on the last Sundays. Contact **Phil Lucas** for updates.

Kelso – QMH, Abbey Row, Kelso TD5 7JF

Sundays at 10.30 am. Contact **Anne Macnaughton** for updates, & see **2024/11/08.3**, p. 35.

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 – Trinity Church, Manse Place, Falkirk FK1 1JN

Sundays, 10.30. Contact **Denise Marshall** if bringing children; **Anna Levin** for updates.

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.

3rd Sundays: Hollies Community Hub, 183 High St, Musselburgh EH21 7DE, 7.00 pm

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.

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.