

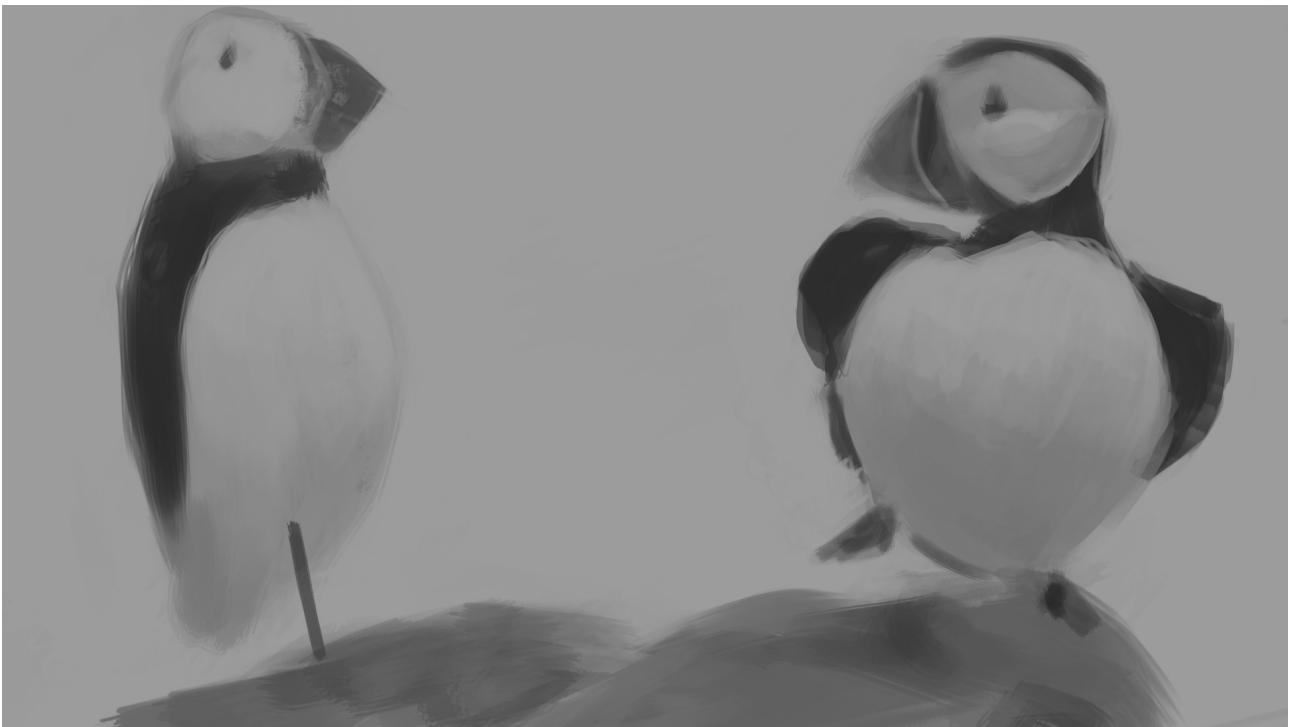
# SESAME

**Number 232: November 2020**

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AM on 28 November / YM Epistle / South Edinburgh at 50 / 'Spiritual Roots' – Woodbrooke online / Quaker Life Rep. Council / Funeral Planning / Testimonies – *a guidance note* / BDRC Update / Meeting for Sufferings / [Against] Racism – *a reading list from M.f.S.* / GM for Scotland / NFPB / Yearly Meeting by Zoom / Job vacancies / AM September Minutes / AM Dates in 2021 / & c.

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Two puffins – see page 10

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Published by South East Scotland Area Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Material for the next issue should be sent to Alan Frith (email: [ar.frith@btinternet.com](mailto:ar.frith@btinternet.com)) or by post to 10, East Parkside, Edinburgh EH16 5XJ, to be received at the latest by **Tuesday 5 January 2021**. The Editors reserve the right to condense articles. If possible, please submit articles by email sending as an attachment *and* in the body of the email. An email version of *Sesame* is available in PDF format. Contact the Editor.

## SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

The next Area Meeting will be on Saturday 28 November at 10.00 am by Zoom.

### DRAFT AGENDA

*We hope to conclude items 1-10 by 11.30 am, and to take a break of about 30 minutes. Starting at noon, we will have about an hour for the session on the revision of the Quaker Book of Discipline.*

*Friends are encouraged to come to all the meeting, or to any part of it.*

1. Worship and introductions
2. Minutes of the meeting of Wednesday 2 September 2020
3. Matters arising from the minutes
  1. *Study groups on racism and white privilege*
  2. *Dates of Area Meetings in 2021 – see page xx*
4. Report from our Area Meeting Trustees
5. News from local meetings
6. Guidance on memorial minutes and testimonies to the grace of God in the lives of those who have died – *see page 11*
7. Proposal to prepare testimonies to the grace of God in the lives of recently deceased Friends – *we need to decide in each case if we wish to prepare a testimony, and appoint Friends to do this*
8. Membership matters
  1. Membership applications
  2. Transfers of membership
  3. Resignations
9. Appointments
10. Enquirers' event(s), 2021 – *we need to decide how to run events for people new to Quakers throughout Scotland next year*
11. Revision of the book of discipline: reflection and inspiration – *This will be a working session introduced by **Jessica Hubbard-Bailey** and **Mary Woodward**, who are both members of Britain Yearly Meeting's Book of*

*Discipline Revision Committee. Friends will be encouraged to express views and ideas in break-out groups.*

## 12. Closing minute

**Alastair Cameron**  
AM Clerk

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*Epistle of Britain Yearly Meeting, held online on Sunday 15 November 2020*

To all Friends everywhere

“The human mind may devise many plans, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will be established.” (Proverbs 19:21, NRSV)

This letter of greeting comes to you in a year when so many plans have been disrupted, along with our ways of working and of meeting. We had planned a week-long gathering for up to 2000 Friends of all ages to worship and build community, and to discern leadings for our yearly meeting on “Listening, prophecy and reconciliation: allyship in a climate emergency”. We had hoped to welcome among us many Friends from other yearly meetings. Instead, due to the coronavirus pandemic and continued uncertainty over what would be possible, our Yearly Meeting is short, held by electronic means, and for only necessary business and to worship together.

Nevertheless our greetings to you all are as warm and loving as always. We have been learning again the importance of faithfulness in keeping our meetings and building our Quaker communities, whilst discovering new and unexpected ways to connect and worship together. One hundred years since the first world gathering of Friends came together to affirm a world-wide opposition to war and to building the social conditions for peace, we are thankful to belong to our world family.

The issues of privilege and climate injustice, which have been exercising our yearly meeting, are still urgent. Inequalities have been exacerbated by the pandemic and the response to it. Tackling systemic racism is a spiritual imperative. The impact of changes in the climate grows. Work and learning on these issues continues around our yearly meeting.

In these extraordinary and challenging times, we have seen that it is possible to make changes in our way of life. We have hope. We trust that the leadings of love and truth will come right.

Signed in and on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting

**Clare Scott Booth**  
Clerk

## Friends on the Move – Our First Fourteen Years

*(Based on extracts from South Edinburgh Preparative Meeting Minutes)*

**T**HE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS' AUSTERITY in having no ministers and, at the most, simple Meeting Houses, has helped to keep it viable and vigorous despite its relatively few members.

In some churches, falling numbers may force a congregation, although still larger than most Quaker meetings, to amalgamate with another – a move which, it has been estimated, leads to the permanent loss of 40 % of the original congregation.

To have no Meeting House at all has the advantages of enabling a Meeting, like a hermit crab, to change its home as it gets bigger, and to make it more aware that a church is its members and not a building. It also has its problems, and there were few Preparative Meetings during the first fourteen years of South Edinburgh Meeting's existence at which premises were not discussed.

### *St Ninian's*

**O**UR MEETING FIRST MET ON 27 SEPTEMBER 1970 at 10 am in the committee room of a church in Fountainhall Road. The congregation of what was originally Fountainhall Church had amalgamated with that of the nearby North Mayfield Church. The vacant building had been taken over by the St Ninian's Word and Witness Movement, founded by D.C. Thomson to "*assist in the recruiting, training and organisation of the lay forces of the Scottish Churches*". Friends agreed to contribute ten shillings [50p] each Sunday to the funds of St Ninian's. Permission was later readily given to use the church hall once a month for a children's meeting.

This happy relationship did not last long because on 4 May 1971 a letter was received from Capt. Anderson, the organising secretary of St Ninian's, saying they were moving as the site was unsuitable for their work. He added that he was authorised to give us the opportunity to buy the property at a nominal price. However, Monthly Meeting Premises Committee, after an inspection by their convenor, decided regretfully that the property was too large for our requirements and would not readily subdivide. The convenor suggested that if St Ninian's were to consider demolishing the church and rebuilding on the site, Friends might be interested in taking part in such a venture.

However, although the church *was* demolished, the site was used instead for a public library, now much appreciated by the local residents, and St Ninian's moved to a vacant site in Crieff, which they converted to a successful retreat and conference centre. When acknowledging the return of the key, Capt. Anderson wrote to us that 'it had been a great joy to know that the committee room had been used so effectively on Sunday mornings'.

### *Scottish Congregational College*

At a meeting of a group of Friends and the President and Treasurer of the Scottish Congregational College at 29 Hope Terrace, it was agreed that we could move there from 12 September 1971, at a cost of £32 a year. A room was also made available for children on the first Sunday of each month. It is interesting that at that time the Children's Meeting began with a hymn followed by a reading from the Bible and a short period of silence.

On 24 February 1974 the time of Meeting was changed to 10.15 am for a trial period of two months.

By 29 June 1975 we had heard that the Scottish Congregational Church was giving up the College in the autumn and the search was on again. Our preferences were then defined as a long let of ground floor accommodation with facilities for putting up a notice, making coffee and storing books. Failing other suitable arrangements we would advertise. A Premises Committee was formed and it considered a long list of possibilities: the German Church, Cluny Church, the homes of Friends, Watson's Music School, the Royal Bank Training School, the Churchhill Theatre or other corporation halls, Mayfield or Grange (Marchmont St Giles) Church, St Columba's Hall, the Napier College, the Jewish Community Hall and the British Council in Bruntsfield Crescent.

### *Grange Home School*

On 17 August 1975 we were told that the College had been sold as from the end of September. Most of the suggestions had been followed up, without satisfactory results. But the Principal of the Grange Home School had offered us a ground floor room for a year at £1 a week, and this was gratefully accepted. The first Meeting was held there on 21 September. A piano, which had presumably been used to accompany the hymn singing, was gifted to the Greendykes Day Nursery.

On 29 October the treasurer was authorised to pay £1 extra to the school to pay for extra electricity used by the accidental leaving on of a radiator. The culprit was not named!

We agreed to leave Grange Home School after Meeting on 25 July 1976, and, in preparation, Premises Committee again followed a number of suggestions. St Margaret's School in Newington were happy to offer us the use of their staff dining room and the adjoining kitchen facilities, but the room was considered to be hardly big enough. Enquiries at St Margaret's Convent and North Morningside Church were not successful. But the Rudolf Steiner School, through our Friend Eric Neil (whose name is spelt four different ways during the transactions!) were prepared to offer us the use of a room in their Colinton Road premises. Although it was felt that the site might prove difficult for some Friends, it was agreed that it should be visited after Meeting on Sunday 6 June. As a stand-by, another Friend, Catherine Hamilton Bruce, had offered us the use of her sitting room.

### *Rudolf Steiner School*

A satisfactory arrangement was made with the Rudolf Steiner School and our effects were transferred there on 25 July. Because of the siting of the premises Friends with cars "*asked that they might be allowed to give lifts to Friends needing transport*". A pleasant Quakerly way of expressing it! A contribution of £1 a week was agreed.

The accommodation was in a prefabricated building at 49 Polwarth Terrace. There were problems in heating, accommodating the required number of chairs, and providing a storage cupboard and a power point for our electric urn. A bright spot was the gift of a used carpet, for which Friends prudently refused to buy an underfelt, using newspaper instead. Later on, after costing lino, it was decided to enlist the help of parents and children to sand the surrounds – with what success is not recorded.

At Meeting on 5 December some Friends expressed concern that the premises were not easy to find, and ways of solving this problem – by providing notices – were discussed. It was suggested that we should expect to stay in the present place for not less than a year, although this should not deter us from "*keeping an eye of the property market*". Our attention had been drawn to an advertisement for a property in Salisbury Road, but on investigation this was found to be quite unsuitable.

### *Pleasance Meeting House*

On 16 January 1977 it was suggested that the old Meeting House in the Pleasance be considered as a possible venue and Friends were appointed to visit it. By 11 September the Meeting House and burial ground had been bought by the University of Edinburgh, who, because of its historic associations, were seeking funds to renovate it. Nothing more was reported until 17 June 1979, when we heard that the University had set aside £10,000 to make the building wind and water proof, but were unable to do so unless they could get a grant from the Historic Buildings Council.

Support from Quaker funds would probably be welcomed. But it was expected that the renovation would be in the form of one large room, rather than in subdivided rooms.

Our Meeting felt that it should liaise with Monthly Meeting to ensure that two different groups of Friends were not approaching the University separately, and on 10 February 1980 a small joint committee was formed to consider our [own] premises and Stafford Street, which had become rather overcrowded, and to take into account the Old Meeting House proposals. This was the last time the Pleasance site was mentioned as a possible home for us, to the deep regret of some Friends.

Previous to this, on 19 June 1977, our Premises Committee had become re-suscitated, initially to investigate the possibility of meeting at the University of Edinburgh Graduate Association's premises in Buccleugh Street. On 10 October, at a meeting to define our needs clearly again, it was agreed

that premises should be sought in Bruntsfield, Morningside, Churchhill, Marchmont or Salisbury.

Among those considered were the Napier College Students' Union, the Cluny Church Centre, the Dominion Cinema and the Newington St Leonard's Church in Clerk Street. None was found suitable – the last because the Scottish Philharmonic Society rehearsed in it on Sunday mornings. It later became the Queen's Hall, home of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

### *The Open Door*

Towards the end of 1979 we had begun to take an interest in the ecumenical centres planned by, respectively, the churches at Holy Corner and the Morningside churches. On 23 March 1980 our Clerk was asked to mention our interest in, and support for, the Morningside project, and to ask if it might be used for our Sunday meetings.

In reply, the Coordinator, Peggy Hunter, told us that premises at Morningside station had been offered rent-free for three years. Financial support at the rate of £3 per member per year was asked for at first, but this request was later dropped, although covenant and other forms of financial support were welcomed. We were asked to appoint a Trustee and a Member of the Board and Margaret Gibbins agreed to serve; thus began her long and valuable association with the Open Door, as it was named. Friends visited the premises on Wednesday 8 October.

Plans for renovation were drawn up. There was to be an area for coffee at the front of the shop, an office at the back, and a games room and a quiet room for confidential conversation downstairs. By 3 May, planning permission had been given.

The Trustees had expressed their delight that our Meeting was involved in the venture, and were looking forward to having Friends worshipping on the premises. In fact, our first Meeting for Worship at the Open Door took place on 7 February 1982. We recorded our special thanks to Margaret Gibbins, and asked the Clerk to write a letter thanking Peggy Hunter and inviting her to one of our Meetings. Gratitude was also expressed to Eric Neil for help during our five years at Rudolf Steiner School, and to the school staff for their forbearance.

At that time only the ground floor was available at the Open Door, and there were some experiments before suitable seating arrangements were devised. A donation of £3 a week towards costs was agreed. Monthly Meeting was approached for financial help and they obliged with a substantial contribution towards the cost of stacking chairs.

In September 1984, our pilgrimage was completed when we met for the first time downstairs.

**Ronald Halliday**

*Ron Halliday died in August this year.*

*An article on the succeeding 36 years will appear in the next Sesame.*

## Online Learning with Woodbrooke

As an attender, I was delighted to be included in an invitation to participate in an online course led by Stuart Masters of Woodbrooke entitled *Spiritual Roots of Quaker Ways*. Spanning eight weeks, it explored the historical and spiritual underpinnings of some key concepts in Quakerism.

The course comprised four modules, each introduced fortnightly. The first examined some salient points in Quaker practice, such as worship, vocal ministry and discernment. Module two covered the Quaker testimonies of equality and peace, while module three looked at social justice and the environment. The fourth module focused on the role of Christianity and the Bible in Quaker faith and practice.

Provided for each module were: a discussion of the relevant topics, prepared by Stuart; a book list for further reading; questions to consider (used to kickstart discussion in my study group); as well as *ad hoc* materials such as tables and lists. This meant the topics could be explored in as much detail as suited each participant. After some consternation over the precise meaning of certain very specific vocabulary, a glossary of terms was also provided. The modules were concluded with a webinar in which Stuart probed the questions to consider, followed by a general discussion where participants sought further clarity or shared their own experiences and insights, at times raising some very complex and controversial ideological issues. The liveliness and spontaneity of these discussions was always very interesting!

Throughout the course, the concepts were presented as open-ended, which encouraged interrogation on both a personal and general level. Stuart also highlighted some controversial and sometimes unpalatable realities to ponder, where Quaker principles were at odds with what is or was socially acceptable – specifically, Quakers as slave owners in the past or capitalist entrepreneurs benefitting from various types of exploitation; or, for all of us living in the UK today, whose comfortable lifestyle is largely the outcome of present and past economic injustice and relentless military action.

Extremely personable, Stuart was happy to provide further support for learning as required through emails, virtual group chats, and in person. He gave generously of his time and knowledge, not only emphasising but clearly demonstrating love as the underlying motivation for all Quaker practice, in every part of his teaching. I thoroughly enjoyed the course and I would recommend it to anyone wanting to know more about the origin and evolution of the main Quaker principles.

Lynn Mayer

*There is information about the wide range of courses on offer at*  
<https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/our-courses/>



# Reimagining our Future

## *Quaker Life Rep. Council, October 2020*

The gathering (*via Zoom*) began with this challenge:

*'True faith is not assurance, but the readiness to go forward experimentally, without assurance. It is a sensitivity to things not yet known. Quakerism should not claim to be a religion of certainty, but a religion of uncertainty; it is this which gives us our special affinity to the world of science. For what we ap-prehend of truth is limited and partial, and experience may set it all in a new light; if we too easily satisfy our urge for security by claiming that we have found certainty, we shall no longer be sensitive to new experiences of truth. For who seeks that which he believes that he has found? Who explores a territory which he claims already to know?'*

(Charles F. Carter, 1971; Q.F.&P. 26:39)

2020's global pandemic has shaken our world. Those of us lucky enough to live relatively peaceful, comfortable lives have been rudely shown that our certainties and sense of control were illusory, and those of us whose lives were already difficult have probably faced yet more struggles. Like many Quaker meetings, mine (Central Edinburgh) moved on-line during lockdown, and is now 'blended'. The Meeting House is (at the time of writing) still unable to open for room bookings.

Much of what we heard from our speakers was challenging too, and designed to make us think about fundamental questions, not least about our buildings (in which, as a member of staff, I have to declare an interest). We were encouraged to re-imagine a future for Quakerism, and to think about what is essential and what is peripheral (or even distracting), when the chips are down. Also, to consider how our experiences this year might lead to revival, and new growth.

Jonathan Carmichael, 'Simpler Meetings' Project Manager for BYM, spoke about the 'possibilities and permissions' that the pandemic has enabled: different ways of doing things, and a discovery that we can 'be together' spiritually via technology. Not that this works for every Friend or every meeting, of course. But some meetings have found that on-line worship has been welcomed by people who may have been unable to attend in person for various reasons (ill health, caring responsibilities, travel time). We've got used to seeing each others' names on screens, and some report that business meetings are better-attended, shorter and more focussed! Jonathan described on-line worship as being like wearing a new coat for the first time. It may lack some of the features of your old coat, but the deficits are often fixable, and the new features may outweigh the losses.

Some meetings have discovered that they enjoy worshipping out-doors, or at a time other than Sunday morning, for the first time. Jonathan quoted George Fox on Firbank Fell: '...the steeplehouse and that ground on which it stood were no more holy than that mountain', and we were asked what

we might do, as a Society, with these discoveries (or rediscoveries).

The day's other speakers included Robert Wilson from Orkney, who described a range of on-line meetings he had attended and how some had sprung up spontaneously to meet a need, instead of *via* traditional processes. Without the usual structures, roles developed naturally as things needed doing. We also heard from Emily, a teenager, about how on-line fellowship this year has enabled her to connect more widely to young people elsewhere in the society.

Not all changes prompted by the pandemic have been positive for meetings, of course, and in my afternoon home group there was a sense of weariness, of some people being tired and downhearted, and not ready to expend energy on new ventures. We will have to be gentle with each other, and the emotional toll of this experience must be attended to, as well as the social and economic impacts. Some will rightly want to return to familiar territory, because that suits their needs best. Others might be drawn to new explorations, and choose to 'go forward experimentally, without assurance'. There's no rush; sadly, this pandemic will be with us for a while yet. Eventually, when the time is right, I wonder whether we might ask ourselves questions like these:

- What discoveries and insights has 2020 prompted in our meetings and our wider Quaker communities?
- Has there been trauma/loss/isolation/disconnection/burnout? What might help?
- What have we learned/discovered that we might wish to explore further, and/or share?

**Sue Proudlove**

## Two Puffins

*The painting on the cover (sent to the editor in lieu of a birthday card) was inspired by a photograph. To encourage the re-colonising of former breeding sites off the coast of Maine, the [US] National Audubon Society placed dummies, like the bird on the left, where they might be seen by puffins flying overhead. With its single supporting peg, the dummy seen close up is not convincing; yet puffins were observed bringing fish to share with it, and here, the real bird, on the right, is lifting his right foot to stand, like it, on one leg – "being social and trying to fit in" according to the Audubon Society: an attitude of which St Augustine would of course have approved ('When in Rome, do as the Romans do').*

*On the other hand, the cynic who called religion "Man's attempt to communicate with the weather" might see a parallel in a bird's trying to engage with what to us is plainly an inanimate object; but then we do not know what the puffin is really doing (mockery? experimentation?). If the picture has a message, is it not (on several levels): Do not jump to conclusions about what you think you see? – Ed.*

## On being prepared for the inevitable

*If we ... have not prepared ourselves in some measure for dying, what have we been doing? To face up to the fact of death gives a fuller awareness of God-given life ...*

Jenifer Faulkner, 1982 – *Q.F.&P.* 21.57

Area Meeting Elders met together last month to make sure we all know what to do when someone dies and a funeral needs to be arranged. We were greatly helped by Laurie Naumann, who convened our AM Funeral Committee until it was laid down several years ago.

One of the things everyone can do to help is for each of us to prepare ourselves for the death which will surely come to us by ensuring we have an up-to-date **will** and considering and recording how we want our funeral to be conducted. For those of us who have close relatives or friends, it's important, of course, to do this in close consultation with them.

If you have not yet completed a **Funeral Preference form**, you will find it a very helpful guide in considering all the aspects which need to be taken into account in funeral planning. Some Local Meetings have developed their own version of this, and the Area Meeting version is on the South East Scotland AM document web page, from which you can download it in Word or pdf format [<https://quakerscotland.org/south-east/documents>]. If you are unable to access it this way, ask a friend who is able to download and print it for you.

When your funeral preference form is complete, take a copy to keep (perhaps with your will) and send a copy to Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House in a sealed envelope marked clearly 'Funeral Preference Form of [Your Name]'. It will then be stored securely and unopened until it is needed. Tell your closest family/friends and elders in your Local Meeting you have done this.

Please don't put this off. It is good sometimes to contemplate our own mortality, as Jenny Faulkner advises, and it will certainly be helpful to those who have loved us and want to keep that love alive.

**Phil Lucas**  
from AM Elders

## *Memorial minutes and Testimonies*

### **Introduction**

This guidance is to help local meetings to follow consistent procedures for recording deaths and remembering the deceased. It does not cover the procedures for conducting funerals, which are in separate guidance. It is prepared by the AM clerking team, and has been reviewed by AM Elders. It is presented to Area Meeting on 28 November 2020 for agreement.

### **Notifying the Area Meeting of a death**

When someone dies, the local meeting clerk or other person involved will inform the AM clerk. This applies to all members and to attenders with an established connection with the meeting. It does not matter if the AM clerk receives the information from two sources, for example where someone has links with two LMs.

The information need include no more than the name of the deceased, the meeting they attended, their membership status, and the date of death. If other details are known, such as the date and place of the funeral, or the names of close relatives, these should be given. However, if they are not known, that should not be a cause for holding off informing the AM clerk.

The AM clerk will acknowledge receipt of this information and will include this note of guidance to remind the LM clerk of the next steps. Subject to the wishes of relatives, the AM clerk will post news of the death round the Area Meeting email list, and pass it to the editor of *Sesame*.

### **Recording a memorial minute**

At a local meeting for business following the death, a memorial minute should be recorded. This should be brief (guideline length: around 300 words), and should record full name; name at birth; date and place of birth if known; date and place of death; date and place of funeral; a taste of any roles carried out at local, area, or national level; and a few personal notes to revive memories. This should be passed to Area Meeting, and will be recorded in AM minutes as well.

### **Deciding whether to prepare a testimony to the grace of God as shown in the life of the deceased**

A testimony is a fuller account of someone's life, particularly as it showed how their faith was lived in practice. The processes are set out in *Quaker Faith & Practice* (5th edition) 4.27-4.30. There is useful additional guidance in the paper *Testimonies to the grace of God in lives – an enduring presence*.

It is not appropriate to prepare a testimony for every Quaker. Our commitment to equality is served by the practice of recording memorial minutes; our commitment to reflecting on and recording our history may lead us in the case of some, but not all, to prepare a testimony.

Discerning whether it is appropriate to prepare a testimony is not a task for the immediate aftermath of a death. Guidance in *Q.F.&P.* is clear that the decision lies with Area Meeting: the recommendation that a testimony be prepared may come from a local meeting, or from another group, such as elders, or a Quaker body to whose work the deceased person had contributed.

### **Preparing a testimony**

Where it is decided, AM will appoint a small group to prepare the testimony; this will usually not include those closest to the deceased person, though of course the group will consult with them. Guidance says it is not

an obituary or a eulogy: the 'Enduring Presence' paper referenced above sets out a possible approach.

### **What happens to a testimony?**

Once the testimony has been heard by AM and recorded, it may be forwarded to General Meeting for Scotland or to Britain Yearly Meeting. However, this is not an automatic process, and it may be that we decide we are content simply to have remembered our Friend in an appropriate way. A decision should be made in each case.

### **Other records of deaths**

It is our practice to maintain a folder recording the lives of all Friends. This is held and updated by the assistant AM clerk, and includes the memorial minute, photographs, a testimony if one is prepared, and other material. It may be that a local meeting decides to prepare a more detailed account of a Friend's life even where AM has not decided to prepare a testimony, and this is the appropriate place to lodge that record.

### **References**

Minutes of South East Scotland Area Meeting

2013/09/08: Request from Elders

2014/02/09: Recording the death of Friends

2017/11/12: Minute from Area Meeting Elders

2018/03/11: Recording the Lives of Deceased Friends

*Quaker Faith & Practice*, 4.27-4.30

*Testimonies to the grace of God in lives – an enduring presence*, download from

<https://quaker-prod.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/store/38633f83b4554885b4d087543ad29041bc8ee5d1f3cfb56163e30f6d2f4e>

*Prepared by the AM clerking team, and supported in a meeting of Elders,  
26 October 2020*

## **Book of Discipline Revision Committee: November 2020 update**

All four of the Woodbrooke sessions arranged to take the place of the ones planned for the Yearly Meeting Gathering were well-attended, and the feedback so far has been extremely positive. The Engaging with Friends sub-group of your committee are looking at it in detail in the coming months, and will use it to inform our next steps.

*Open to New Light* has a wide variety of posts of many kinds – the project will stay open at least till the end of the year, so I invite you to contribute in whatever way you feel led, either directly at

[www.padlet.com/bdrc/opentonevlight](http://www.padlet.com/bdrc/opentonevlight),

via email:

[opentonevlight@quaker.org.uk](mailto:opentonevlight@quaker.org.uk),

or by post to Friends House in London [*Friends House, 173-177 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ*], clearly marking your envelope *BDRRC/ Open to New Light*. We are still hoping someone will contribute in sound and/or film!

Our most recent committee meeting was held by Zoom last month, and it was really good to be together again after such a long time. We considered the questions raised by the three major pieces of work done over the last six months and how to apply them to future work. We will soon start work on other topics, in smaller groups, and with a shorter time-frame.

We looked at the work done by the Engaging with Friends group, which will merge with the Communications group. The new group will continue to reach out to those Friends who don't know much about the revision process and continue to engage with Friends already interested in our work and eager to help in whatever way they can.

Our next committee meeting will be a short one at the end of November, to set up the new working groups. Our next full weekend meeting will be at the end of January, when among other things we will consider our need to meet more regularly, with shorter sessions, for at least the first half of next year.

We continue to take part in sessions around the UK, most recently at Devon AM, Lewes LM and South Edinburgh LM. High Wycombe LM is hosting a Q&A session and Jess Hubbard-Bailey and I are leading sessions at East Scotland AM and South East Scotland AM during November. We have been invited to take part in West Scotland's AM next January and the Westerly Friends Gathering next March. I've also been told that Woodbrooke are interested in running more sessions next year. As ever, we value your prayerful support.

I enjoy taking part in these sessions and making connections with Friends around the UK. It's good to know that one of the extremely positive outcomes of the pandemic is the ease with which one can take part in gatherings all over the UK and, indeed, the whole world, while being ecologically and economically mindful.

**Mary Woodward**

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*We shall never thrive upon ignorance. Our Creator would have us cultivate our understandings in matters of a religious as well as civil nature. The great rule is, that all should be subordinate to the highest object, all ... 'for the glory of God'.*

**Joseph John Gurney (1748-1847), 1831**

# Meeting for Sufferings, 2-4 October 2020

All the papers for the meeting are available online at

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/mfs-2020-10-agendapapersv2-1>

The minutes and other follow-up material are available from

<https://quaker.org.uk/documents/mfs-2020-10-follow-up-package>

This would normally have been a weekend-long residential meeting at Woodbrooke, and it was very frustrating to miss the opportunity to spend informal time together.

We met online from Friday evening through to early Sunday afternoon. My report below covers only some of the sessions, and I refer Friends to the links above for topics **not** covered, marked with a dagger [†] below. The bracketed reference in each case gives the item number which can be used to find relevant material in both the papers in advance and in the follow-up package (although N.B. minute numbers do not correspond: thus the QCCIR report is document MfS 2020 10 12, but the relevant minute is MfS20/10/14).

## *Session list*

Sustainability and the Climate Crisis (MfS 2020 10 06)

- *Report from the Sustainability Monitoring Group* †
- *Update on the project: 'Climate crisis: spiritual nurture and learning'*
- *Preparations for COP26*

BYM Trustees (MfS 2020 10 08)

Responding to racism (MfS 2020 10 09) † [*see note below*]

Review of Quaker Stewardship Committee (MfS 2020 10 10)

Quaker Recognised Bodies (MfS 2020 10 11) †

Annual report from Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (MfS 2020 10 12)

Update on minutes received by Meeting for Sufferings (MfS 2020 10 13) †

Report from the Book of Discipline Revision Committee (MfS 2020 10 14)

Yearly Meeting 2020 (MfS 2020 10 15)

## *Update on the project: 'Climate crisis: spiritual nurture and learning'*

Maud Grainger, Woodbrooke's Faith in Action Programme Coordinator, introduced the work of this new project. Its three main aims are :

1. Supporting Friends to explore, understand and become more confident in articulating the spiritual underpinning of Quaker commitment to caring for the earth and creation.
2. Providing advice, guidance support and encouragement to enable Friends to make practical changes to individual lifestyles and to take community-level action, particularly around the use and management of property.

3. Building community to support and strengthen our individual and corporate response.

Maud described a brilliant set of plans for achieving this goal, including a wealth of suggestions for concrete action. Woodbrooke's web page for this work is here:

<https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/learn/climate-crisis/>

but as yet, it has less detail than is in the MfS papers in advance.

### ***Sustainability***

Livvy Hanks, Britain Yearly Meeting's Programme Manager for Economics and Sustainability Project Development and Programmes, reported on plans for BYM involvement in COP26 in Glasgow. The QPSW item in the papers in advance gives lots of detail on how Friends can get involved in our input to COP26.

Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) have also launched the 'Build Back Better' campaign "for a green and just recovery from the pandemic", appointing three people to work on this.

The *Quaker Faith in Action* newsletter (back copies available at

<https://us7.campaign-archive.com/home/?u=7506c29d95944ba554b4871f8&id=b525b532da>)

contains information about both of the above.

### ***Review of Quaker Stewardship Committee (QSC)***

A big change is coming: QSC, which was established nearly 20 years ago to oversee Trustees' responsibility for compliance with Charity regulations, both at Yearly and Area Meeting levels, is to be laid down, and its responsibilities transferred to Quaker Life Central Committee and Meeting for Sufferings.

Lots of details on how this will work in practice remain to be worked out ...

### ***Book of Discipline Review Committee interim report***

The co-Clerks, Catherine Brewer and Rosie Carnall, gave an encouraging report on the committee's work to date. Although the group is still mostly getting to know each other, working out procedures and generally laying the foundations for the effort ahead, the co-Clerks were able to share some of the early results:

Seven key themes are emerging:

- Spirituality, worship and discernment – individually and collectively with God
- Quaker community – life in our meetings
- Testimony and faith in action – in the world
- Stages of personal life journeys and close relationships
- Church government – how we organise ourselves
- Our story – where we have come from and where we are going
- Advices & Queries



Along with these, five key insights have been discerned:

1. We can all have direct access to God/Spirit/the Divine. This experience/encounter/relationship can transform us.
2. We live under guidance from God/Spirit/the Light/the promptings of love and truth in our hearts
3. We recognise and seek to address that of God in each human being – each of us is unique and precious
4. There is a dynamic Spirit bringing continuing revelation
5. We hold the whole of life sacramental and so we do not divide the sacred and the secular

There is a webpage

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/resources/quaker-faith-and-practice/revising-quaker-faith-practice>

which gives details of how to be in touch with the committee, including a link to the collection tool where ideas (both general and specific text) can be offered.

Several vacancies have arisen, and nominations suggestions (of others, or oneself) are invited to be sent to [nominations@quaker.org.uk](mailto:nominations@quaker.org.uk)

The committee is planning to coordinate an activity at Yearly Meeting Gathering 2021 in Bath: *Open to New Light – an invitation from BYM's Book of Discipline Revision Committee*. There is a website where contributions can already be made: <https://padlet.com/bdrc/OpenToNewLight>

**Henry S. Thompson**

South East Scotland AM representative

*[The session on responding to racism produced a list of books and other materials which Friends may find useful; it is given overleaf. – Ed.]*

**T**HE INTELLECTUAL FORMS IN WHICH RELIGION FINDS EXPRESSION are always inadequate to the reality with which they deal; and processes of reasoning by means of intellectual concepts in this region of experience are always liable to imperfection and error. God Himself is conceived as a Person like ourselves but greater; His grace is thought of as a quasi-mechanical force predestining and compelling the wills of men; the consciousness of self-abasement and nothingness in the presence of the 'Holy' is intellectualised into a dogma of total human depravity, and so forth. All this does not mean that theology is useless. It is inevitable and necessary, just because men are compelled to think out and express their experience as best they can; and real progress can be and has been made in reaching conceptions more adequate to the subject-matter of religious experience, closer in coherence with one another and therefore nearer to the truth.

**Edward Grubb (1854-1939)**

## ***Racism – books and other resources suggested at Meeting for Sufferings, October 2020***

### **Non-Fiction**

- Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire* – Akala (2019), Two Roads, ISBN 9781473661233
- A Portrait of English Racism* – Ann Dummett (1973 – *out of print*), Pelican, ISBN 9780140216073
- Brit(ish): On Race, Identity and Belonging* – Afua Hirsch (2018), Vintage, ISBN 9781784705039
- Tribes: How Our Need to Belong Can Make or Break Society* – David Lammy (2020), Little, Brown, ISBN 9781472128737
- Black and British: A Forgotten History* – David Olusoga (2020), Pan, ISBN 9781447299769;
- [Also in a version for children aged 12+ / young adults: *Black and British: a short, essential history*, Macmillan Children's Books, ISBN 9781529063394]
- Afropean* – Johnny Pitts (2020), Penguin, ISBN 9780141987286

### **Fiction**

- Girl, Woman, Other* – Bernardine Evaristo (2019), Penguin, ISBN 9780241984994
- Home Fire* – Kamila Shamsie (2020), Bloomsbury, ISBN 9781408886793

### **Autobiography**

- Red Dust Road* by Jackie Kay (2017), Picador, ISBN 9781509858392
- My Name is Why* by Lemn Sissay (2020), Canongate, ISBN 9781786892362
- The Life and Rhymes of Benjamin Zephaniah* – Benjamin Zephaniah (2019), Simon & Schuster, ISBN 9781471168956

### **TV/Video**

- The School That Tried To End Racism* – 2 x 60-minute episodes, Channel 4 (2020)

Also:

*Churches Together in Britain and Ireland – Black Lives Matter and Racial Justice* – a collection of reflections, articles, videos and more.

CTBI's website also has recordings of several recent webinars including:

- The Windrush Scandal*
- Immigration, racism and Brexit*
- The Hostile Environment*
- The Grenfell Tower Fire Tragedy*
- Impact of Covid-19 on BAME communities*

[Friends will already be aware of *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Racism* – Reni Eddo-Lodge (2018), Bloomsbury, ISBN 9781408870584.]

## General Meeting for Scotland, 31 October 2020

*Quaker Faith & Practice* 12.01 reminds us that every contact we have with one another “can increase our loving and caring and our knowledge of each other” – I would add “when we are open and listening”.

### *Parliamentary Engagement*

We were delighted to hear from the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group (PEWG) that they have appointed a Parliamentary Engagement Officer (PEO); Andrew Tomlinson previously worked for the Church of Scotland as associate secretary of the Faith Impact Forum, and has already made a positive impact on our advocacy.

Members of PEWG are attending meetings of Stop Climate Chaos; Just and Green Recovery [*a coalition of 80 groups led by Friends of the Earth Scotland*]; COP26; the [Scottish Government’s] Community Climate Asset Fund; and Children’s Rights. They share information and spell out our concerns, remembering and reminding others that the basis of our work is spiritual.

Following a review, the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office (SCPO) has been laid down, to be replaced by a Parliamentary Monitoring Group, meeting monthly. Andrew Tomlinson will attend these meetings, as will Rosemary Hartill, who was Quaker representative on the SCPO Advisory Group. They will eventually report back to us on discussions and the hopes for the future.

The next General Election for the Scottish Parliament is due to take place in May 2021; our PEO and Grace Da Costa from Friends House are working on materials for us to engage with candidates.

### *Meeting for Sufferings* [see also *Henry Thompson’s report, pp. 15-17*]

Ann Kerr reported on Meeting for Sufferings, held over the weekend 2-4 October, by Zoom instead of at Woodbrooke: it had worked well. The report of the Sustainability Monitoring Group told of hard work by its members and many others, including preparation for the delayed COP26 conference by Quaker Peace & Social Witness. Rather than seeking to cover all concerns, QPSW is to focus on Peace and Sustainability.

BYM Trustees are working on making the Society ‘a simpler church’. Acting to support staff and the Quiet Company (responsible for catering at Friends House, and for running Swarthmoor Hall) has meant a revised plan to achieve a balanced budget.

Racism and the role of William Penn in slavery were discussed in small groups; information outside the William Penn Room at Friends House has been modified. We are reminded that slavery has *always* been morally wrong.

The last session was an update from the co-clerks of the Book of Discipline Revision Committee. The five key insights [see p. 17] were welcomed.

### ***Scottish Churches Housing Action***

A report from Richard Howat of SCHA told us that the Scottish Government and COSLA are working together with third sector organisations to end homelessness in Scotland. It is hoped to provide COVID-secure rapid rehousing welcome centres for people who would otherwise be sleeping rough. The overall emphasis continues to be on prevention, with a drive to ensure people are rehoused as swiftly as possible.

### ***GM Treasurer's Report***

Nigel Dower presented the budget. There are a couple of points I would like to mention: the Alternatives to Violence Project, AVP Scotland, has now been absorbed into AVP Britain, having ceased operating due to COVID [for information, contact [info@avpbritain.org.uk](mailto:info@avpbritain.org.uk)]; and secondly, since the Northern Friends Youth Event (i.e. Shindig) was held by Zoom in 2020, and the £2,000 we sent was therefore not spent, the organisers have not requested our further support for the 2021 event. There was a report of the online Shindig of 2020 at General Meeting in September.

**Alison Burnley**

## **Northern Friends Peace Board, 7 November**

The meeting scheduled to be held in Preston on this date took place instead by Zoom, inevitably; 27 Friends were present.

We were updated on recent activities. The Board hosted an online Meeting for Worship on Hiroshima Day, and has been having monthly “meet-ups” for members and others [see page 35.] Philip Austin, the co-ordinator, contributed to the Woodbrooke course, *Living the Peace Testimony*, and to the QPSW Summer series of workshops, including some on Black Lives Matter. He participated on our behalf in various online events, from international meetings under the auspices of FWCC [*Friends World Committee for Consultation*] to one of Quaker Roots, planning actions at the time of DSEi 2021 – the arms fair (ostensibly a conference) scheduled to take place in London in September next year. Philip is on the outreach group of Rethinking Security [see <https://rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/>] an initiative to which the Board is affiliated, set up to challenge different aspects of the current approach to national and global security and support practical alternatives. He and other Board members attend meetings of ICAN [*International Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons*; see <http://uk.icanw.org/>] and are involved in the UK group for the Global Campaign on Military Spending, founded in 2014 and based in Barcelona, which is hoping to raise the profile of this concern in 2021 and has funding to do so – see

<http://demilitarize.org/global-campaign-on-military-spending/>.

The Board appointed a new Treasurer, Deryck Hillas, who will take over in 2022 from Phoebe Spence, after a year's handover beginning in January. I

was appointed one of two new trustees, for the triennium beginning in January 2021; Mary Alice Mansell (Glasgow) and Janet Fenton (Lanark) were co-opted to continue as NFPB members, both for two years.

The members' forum, as ever, brought news of a wide range of interests and concerns: white poppies and Black Lives Matter were mentioned more than once, as was the fiftieth ratification of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which thereby became international law, coming into effect on 22 January 2021.

Church & Peace, an ecumenical campaign based in Germany, which unites more than fifty groups in 14 countries, has run conferences on racial justice and human rights which were commended by one participant. Further information is at

<https://www.church-and-peace.org/en/2020/10/onlineconversation-dismantling-white-privilege/>

and

<https://www.church-and-peace.org/en/2020/11/conversation-human-rights-in-europe/>

We also heard how QPSW is challenging advice from the Department for Education to exclude from schools [in England] organisations deemed to be promoting unacceptable ideas, see

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/blog/9-voicesthe-department-for-education-would-ban-from-schools>

The main business of the meeting was discussion of a paper on 'Vision and Strategy' for the Board: "*not intended as a detailed work-plan ... [but] as a platform on which to build our activities in the next few years*". We looked at the document in small groups, and then together. One of the points raised was a need for "more emphasis on the dynamics of change"; in particular, "engagement, harnessing, and being aware of the broadening of Peace issues in current public concerns". (In my small group, I had raised the concern that peace issues are not so much broadening as diverging across the area served by the Board: in Scotland, we may be interested in, and supportive of, the struggles of those affected by attacks on the very notion of peace education such as we heard about earlier – but they do not impact on us directly, when our schools are not under Whitehall's jurisdiction. Nevertheless, it was generally felt that there is enough that we do have confronting us in common to give a basis for shared work.)

After the trustees' report the meeting closed with worship. In the notices afterwards, Philip Austin observed that September had seen the thirtieth anniversary of his appointment as co-ordinator. His predecessor Robert J. Long served as what was then called Secretary, from the Board's foundation in 1913 until his retirement in 1942 (having started as the only Quaker employed as a full-time peace worker); his is the only period of service Philip has not overtaken.

**Alan Frith**

## Britain Yearly Meeting by Zoom 15 November 2020

Yearly Meeting Gathering was to have been held in Bath last August, but COVID-19 put paid to that. Essential business still needed to be done by Britain Yearly Meeting in full session, so the first-ever Yearly Meeting by Zoom was held on Sunday 15 November, with 959 Friends registering to take part, including 120 non-members and 18 overseas visitors.

I was greatly impressed by the size and smoothness of the enormous operation – instead of maybe three screens there were at least 28 screens showing 25 pictures on each, and it was a challenge to try to find familiar faces among all those present: I found quite a few, but think there may well have been many others.

Yearly Meeting was clerked by Clare Scott Booth with the assistance of Siobhan Hare and our former GM [for Scotland] Clerk, Adwoa Bittle. Behind Clare as she spoke to us was a picture of the large hall at Friends House, known as The Light. It wasn't quite the same as being physically present in that wonderful space, but it was a superb reminder of where we usually gather, and an invitation to us to enter into that deeply worshipful space to conduct our necessary business.

She began by reading part of the Epistle to all Friends from Aotearoa New Zealand, which reflects on the changes brought about by the current pandemic, and asks:

*Can we learn from the disruption we have experienced, and take the opportunity for all of society to rethink how we care for others and the earth? How can we, as Friends, offer witness and service to build a better future?*

We approved the minute appointing our new clerks – and encountered the first challenge of a Zoom involving such huge numbers of people! We had been reminded of the instructions contained in the documents in advance – everyone was muted by technical staff behind the scenes, and those wishing to minister would have to raise their electronic hand and wait to be called, whereat they would be given the facility to unmute themselves. Of course, one person wishing to signify acceptance of the first minute (naming the clerks) raised an electronic hand – not because of a wish to speak, but to show agreement; which in Zoom has meant a chorus of 'hope so's' has had to be replaced by thumbs up, head nods, or 'Quaker applause' (which looks like 'jazz hands' to the uninitiated).

Having appointed our clerks, the Recording Clerk, Paul Parker, and the YM Elders in turn said 'hallo Friends', giving us an opportunity to see them all. There then followed about half a minute of orchestrated bedlam! We were divided into breakout rooms and exhorted to wave and say 'hallo Friends', resulting in a rapid succession of people all smiling and saying hallo – none of whom I knew, but who were delightful to see and hear.

We then settled down to business. I would strongly recommend looking at the papers sent in advance: they may appear daunting on first sight, but they are extremely interesting and give a very good picture of the work done in the name of Quakers in Britain – *i.e.* you and me! The clerks of Meeting for Sufferings (MfS), YM Trustees, and the YM Treasurer gave us brief spoken introductions to the papers, which are in the documents in advance. When the matters were laid before the Meeting for comment, there was an inspiring contribution from a Friend who has experienced first-hand the transformative effect of having a Local Development Worker (LDW) in her area: it is good to know that GM for Scotland will be getting its own LDW and that although the appointment process has been delayed by the pandemic, it will prove to have been worth the wait when the LDW is appointed. Friends offered thanks for the work, and expressed great appreciation for the reports' emphasis on discernment and listening to the Spirit that underpins all the decisions made by MfS and Trustees.

Had we been physically present together, the clerks would then have asked us to uphold them as they wrote the minute at the table: as it was, they asked us to uphold them while they went into a breakout room to do this. I wondered what we would see on our screens while this was happening: the words Technical Suppo... appeared in white on a black screen – a fitting reminder to us of what we had been asked to do.

Having received and accepted these two major reports, the other main task before us was to approve changes that have arisen from the review of Central Nominations Committee and the Committee on Clerks. The review took a lot of time and discernment to complete, but everyone is happy with the outcome: that Central Nominations Committee will take on board the work that the Committee on Clerks had been doing, enabling the latter to be laid down. Two further draft minutes were approved and the first part of our business was concluded, only slightly later than planned.

We were then invited to take a shuffle break or remain in worship during a half-hour period, simply being asked to turn off our cameras if we were getting up/moving around, and to rejoin the meeting sufficiently in advance of the re-start time to enable us all to settle and gather again.

The period of worship that followed was begun with the reading of part of the Testimony to the Grace of God in the Life of Clare Watkins. (If you have never read these Testimonies, I urge you to do so: they are both fascinating and inspiring.) Various Friends then ministered when called: I particularly resonated with the Friend who reminded us that *the Light doesn't want perfection. All the Light is asking of you is that you do your best to the best of your ability – the best you are able to do today: and be assured that, no matter how you do that, the Light loves you all the same very deeply.*

It was a joy to hear from Friends in Cape Town and Zurich, and one from Canada YM; and a further joy to have each ministering Friend called by

name – so much more personal than “the Friend in the red jumper on the back row of the upper block” – another unexpected bonus of Zoom!

Normally the YM Epistle would be written over the course of the weekend or week in which it was held: this was obviously impossible, so our Clerk offered a piece written by Agenda Committee and available on the BYM website, along with all the documents in advance. [ – *and also on page 3. Ed.*]

We received Epistles from other Yearly Meetings and bodies – 39 in all. They are all on the website of Friends World Committee for Consultation (<http://fwcc.world/epistles-from-quaker-groups-from-around-the-world>); again, I would exhort you to read them. We received all the Testimonies, gave thanks to everyone who made YM possible, named the clerks for Yearly Meeting Gathering 2021, heard (unusually brief) Notices from Adwoa, and entered our closing worship, during which the closing minute was read and signed – *hoping to meet again 31 July – 5 August 2021, should nothing occur to prevent.*

I was very glad to have had previous experience of both AM and GM by Zoom, so I was in some measure prepared for the intense concentration necessary fully to take part in Yearly Meeting. I was also very glad to have spent time reading the documents in advance, and to have two ‘devices’ – both the result of grants from Quaker trusts - enabling me to see what was going on *via* my laptop while also consulting the agenda and documents in advance on my tablet!

It was somewhat peculiar to have to refrain from nodding, thumbs-upping or Quaker-clapping my agreement of minutes, and refreshing and inspiring to experience superb Quaker discipline from all present, just as it is at ‘live’ YM. I missed all the random brief encounters with Friends as one walked round Friends House or a university campus, but it was good occasionally to spot a well-kennt face and know we were all joined in Spirit.

It was a most impressive technical feat! I have no idea how many fingers were crossed, and how many technical people were beavering away behind the scenes ensuring that everything flowed smoothly, and also providing speech to text subtitles for those wanting them. All thanks to them!

Worshipping together was a joy, and a visible reminder of the world-wide web linking ‘all Friends everywhere’.

Above all it was a delight to see our clerks in action: three extremely competent, deeply spiritual and most definitely human young (to me) women speaking directly to us, making me feel that they spoke personally to each person present and that each individual presence was both essential to the business and something to celebrate. Yes, it wasn’t the same as being gathered in person, but it was very special. Of course it will be wonderful if we can meet in person in 2021, but if not, we can do a pretty good job of joining together in Spirit in a way unimaginable even a few years ago.

**Mary Woodward**



## JOB OPPORTUNITIES

*AM Nominations Committee is currently seeking people to nominate for the following roles. If you wish your name to be considered by the Committee in a process of discernment, please contact Fiona Paterson (details in the Book of Members).*

### **Assistant Clerk for Area Meeting**

**Role:** To work with the other members of the clerking team to take forward the work of Area Meeting, both as an event (six meetings a year) and a community of local meetings.

The roles of the clerking team include: preparing the agenda and draft minutes and clerking the meetings; making necessary decisions between meetings; keeping in touch with Britain Yearly Meeting and General Meeting for Scotland; liaising with AM trustees, elders, overseers and local meeting clerks; developing the way we work. Division of duties between members of the team is done by agreement.

**Requirements:** Access to a computer and email; experience of leading Zoom meetings is an advantage. This is a job for someone reasonably experienced in Quaker ways.

**Background:** The present clerk will finish his first 3-year term in a year, and will probably serve for a further term. The present assistant clerk has indicated she does not want to take on the role thereafter. A clerking team of three works well in terms of sharing tasks. We are looking for someone who shows willingness to become Area Meeting Clerk in due course.

Other team members: Alastair Cameron (Clerk) and Cath Dyer (Assistant Clerk).

**Time commitment:** Fairly high, probably a couple of hours a week in the first instance; and long-term.

*Clerking training at Woodbrooke is available (either online or face-to-face, depending on preference and current restrictions). Plenty of support will be available from the existing clerking team.*

### **Assistant Editor of *Sesame***

**Role:** As the current editor of *Sesame* (Alan Frith) does not often require help with editing, at the moment this role consists of updating the *Sesame* mailing list and printing out address labels to be sent to the printer before each print run. Division of tasks would have to be negotiated with any future editor, although Alan does not envisage stepping down soon.

**Requirements:** Computer with Excel and Word; a printer. Instructions on how to print the labels are provided.

Other team members: Alan Frith, long-standing editor of *Sesame*.

**Time commitment:** Low. *Sesame* has six print-runs a year, to coincide with Area Meeting.

# SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

Minutes of Area Meeting held on Wednesday 2 September 2020  
by remote videoconferencing

## 2020/09/01 Worship and introductions

During worship, we have heard read from *Quaker Faith & Practice*, 14.02. Written by Christine Davis, this reminds us that along with meticulous accounting skills, stewardship demands knowledge of what our money does, and imagination in devising what it can do.

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]*

## 2020/09/10 Closing minute

36 Friends (33 members and three attenders) have been at all or part of this meeting. Local meeting attendance is indicated below:

Central Edinburgh 13	Central Fife 2	East Lothian 7	Kelso 1	Penicuik 1
Polmont 4	Portobello & Musselburgh 5	South Edinburgh 3	Tweeddale -	

We next meet on Saturday 28 November 2020, by Zoom at 10.00 am.

(Signed)  
Alastair Cameron  
Clerk  
Cath Dyer  
Assistant Clerk

## DATES FOR AREA MEETING IN 2021

Monday 18 January, 7.00 pm, 7 Victoria Terrace

Saturday 20 March, all-age, all day, [hosted by East Lothian LM]

Tuesday 11 May, 7.00 pm, 7 Victoria Terrace

Saturday 19 June, all-age, all day, [hosted by South Edinburgh LM]

Wednesday 8 September, 7.00 pm, 7 Victoria Terrace

Saturday 27 November, all-age, all day, [hosted by Central Edinburgh LM]

## UNIVERSITY CHAPLAINCY

**Nicola James** (*a.k.a.* Nicola Maharg) is Honorary Quaker Chaplain for the University of Edinburgh; see <https://www.ed.ac.uk/chaplaincy/about/staff-and-team/honorary-chaplains/quaker> The Quaker belief contacts for the University, and also for Heriot-Watt, Edinburgh Napier and Queen Margaret universities, are **Rachel Howell** and **Bridget Holtom**; their contact details are in the Book of Members, and soon, we hope, on the Chaplaincy website.

## NORTHERN FRIENDS PEACE BOARD

The NFPB will be having an “online meet-up” on Saturday 19 December at 10.00 am by Zoom. It is open to all; if you are interested in participating, please contact Philip Austin, the co-ordinator: email [nfpb@gn.apc.org](mailto:nfpb@gn.apc.org) or telephone 01204 382330.

***Blended worship at Edinburgh Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace*** is planned for 6 December (All Age); 20 December; 3 January 2021; 17 January (All Age); and 31 January. Places are limited owing to social distancing. Tickets (for individuals or couples) may be requested from: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/meeting-for-worship-tickets-123670916039> For more information, email the Meeting House or call 0131 225 8425.

## ***Quaker Meetings for Worship in South East Scotland***

South East Scotland Area Meeting has nine 'Local Meetings' (formerly Preparative Meetings: worshipping groups which meet regularly and conduct some of their own business). Seven have been meeting by Zoom in 2020. Friends are welcome at any of these; for login details, please contact the **named person** – details are in each case in the Book of Members – or [centraledinburgh@quaker.org.uk](mailto:centraledinburgh@quaker.org.uk) for Central Edinburgh.

<b><i>Meeting</i></b>	<b><i>Time (Day, if not Sunday)</i></b>	<b><i>Contact</i></b>
Central Edinburgh	11.00 am	<a href="mailto:centraledinburgh@quaker.org.uk">[centraledinburgh@quaker.org.uk]</a>

*(Some meetings are now 'blended' with a limited number of Friends gathered at the Meeting House. Friends wishing to attend have to request a place in advance. See page 35 for more. On some Thursdays there will be an 'Epilogue' by Zoom (worship at 9.00 pm followed by blether) – contact the office for dates, etc.)*

Central Fife	10.30 am	<b>Laurie Naumann</b>
<i>(Meeting in person at The Old Kirk, Old Kirk Wynd, Kirkcaldy K1 1EH on Sundays, but NOT the 1<sup>st</sup> &amp; 3<sup>rd</sup> in the month; access by Zoom is still available.)</i>		

East Lothian	7.30 pm (Wednesdays)	<b>Di Simcock</b>
<i>(The experiment of Sunday meetings out-of-doors has been discontinued.)</i>		

Penicuik	11.00 am	<b>Mark Hutcheson</b>
<i>(1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in the month ONLY, and still only by Zoom.)</i>		

Polmont	10.45 am	<b>Mariot Dallas</b>
<i>(Zoom Meeting preceded by Children's Mtg, 10.00-10.30. Also Weds., 8.00 pm)</i>		

Portobello & Musselburgh	11.00 am	<b>Mary Jane Elton</b>
<i>(Meeting in person at Bellfield, 16B Bellfield Street, Portobello EH15 2BP on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays in the month; with a simultaneous (not blended) Zoom meeting. On 1<sup>st</sup> Sundays at 7.30 there is a half-hour evening meeting at Bellfield; no Zoom.)</i>		

South Edinburgh	10.30 am	<b>David Somervell</b>
<i>(Weekly as usual, by Zoom only for the moment.)</i>		

Kelso Meeting House is open, but please contact **Marianne Butler** beforehand if you wish to attend: places are limited to NINE ONLY. Meeting for worship is at 10.30 am on Sunday. Evening meetings are also being held at 7.00 pm on alternate Wednesdays – contact Marianne for further details.

For information on Tweeddale LM, contact **Anna Lawrence**.

### ***Distribution of Sesame and Scottish Friends Newsletter***

The current practice is to distribute one copy of *Sesame* and the *Scottish Friends Newsletter* to every Member and Attender household. Contributions to the costs of *Sesame* are always warmly welcomed by the Area Meeting Treasurer. An email version of *Sesame* is more ecological and is free; if you would prefer to receive it this way, or to change the address to which a paper copy is sent, or if you would like to get one by post and currently do not, please contact the Editor. A large print version is also available on request. Published by the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, South East Scotland Area Meeting, Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2JL. Scottish Charity No. SC019165. Printed by Footprint UK, Riverside Works, Edinburgh Road, Jedburgh TD8 6EE.