

SESAME

Number 196: August 2015

*A Quaker Martyr / QLRC Conference / Meeting House Manager /
Wool Against Weapons/ NFPB / Venue 40 / AM Minutes /*



Howard Pyle, c. 1905: Mary Dyer's last day. *Online, courtesy Library of Congress.*

Published by South East Scotland Area Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. (Material for the next issue should be sent (N.B.) to the assistant editor, Alan Frith, at 10 East Parkside, Edinburgh EH16 5XJ, (email: ar.frith@btinternet.com), at the latest by Tuesday 6 October, for distribution week commencing 18 October. The Editors reserve the right to condense articles. If possible please submit articles by email, sending as an attachment as well as in the body of the email, or on CD-ROM typed in Word accompanied with hard copy. Email versions of *Sesame* are available in PDF and Word™ format. Contact the Editor.

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

Saturday 29 August 2015, at Belhaven Parish Hall, Dunbar

I look forward to seeing many of you in Dunbar. Belhaven Parish Church, which has a small steeple, is on the left as you approach Dunbar on the A1087, Belhaven Road, about half a mile before the town centre. (EH42 1NH if you have satnav!) The hall is next door; there should be plenty of on-road parking. From Edinburgh by bus, there are two services: the Perryman's 253 leaves the Bus Station at 12.10 (arriving early for our 2 pm start) or 13.10 (arriving late – but we'll forgive you); the First Bus X6 leaves Haymarket at 12.13, Princes Street at 12.20, and London Road at 12.27, arriving 13.30 at the bus stop after the church. Train is also possible: a Crosscountry service leaves Waverley at 13.09, arriving at Dunbar at 13.28, allowing time for the 20-minute walk from the station. Max Marnau is also offering lifts – contact details in the Book of Members.

Phil Lucas

Draft Agenda

1. Worship
2. Introductions
3. Minutes of last meeting, 30 May
4. Matters arising: a) Militarisation in society:
 action by Local Meetings?
 Armed Forces Day, 17 June, Edinburgh (*report*)
5. Sharing the life of East Lothian Local Meeting
6. AM Treasurer's report and accounts for 2014
7. AM Trustees' update
8. Membership matters
9. A Concern of Polmont LM
10. Report on our Social Responsibility Working Group
11. Reading *Quaker Faith & Practice* – a request
12. Appointments
13. Quaker Life Representative Council, October 2015:
 What is the ground and foundation of a gathered meeting?

Mary Dyer: a Colonial Execution

When Mary Dyer returned to Boston, in protest at the harsh laws against Quakers, she was arrested again. Once more, she was sentenced to hang.

On the morning of her execution – 1 June 1660 - Mary was led to the great elm tree amidst armed guards and beating drums. Captain Webb, charged with overseeing the process, [told her](#):

Mary Dyer, you are here under sentence pronounced upon you by the General Court. It is my duty to carry out your execution upon order of the court. Justice, however, is not without mercy. In their wisdom the court has instructed me to inform you that even now you may give assurance of your repentance and intention to leave and remain outside this jurisdiction. Upon such assurance you shall be permitted to descend from where you now are and save your life. ("To Try the Bloody Law: The Story of Mary Dyer," pages 4-5.)

Mary would not give in to the demands of the colony's leaders. Captain Webb continued:

You have been here before, Mary Dyer. You have been banished upon pain of death. In returning you have broken the law, as you have done several times before. If you force us to carry through the order of the court, it is you, and you alone, who are guilty of spilling your own blood. (ibid., p. 5.)

Ignoring all commands, including an order to repent by her former pastor, John Wilson, Mary said:

I do only what the Lord God requires of me. Do not mourn my passing, for I am filled with happiness. I am already in Heaven. (ibid. p. 6.)

This time, there was [no reprieve](#) for Mary Dyer. She was [hanged](#) from the great elm, and buried next day in an unmarked grave on the Common. Her [statue](#) now stands in front of the state house, opposite the place of execution. [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) wrote about Mary Dyer in his 1840 story, [Grandfather's Chair](#).

In one of the first acts of civil disobedience on American soil, Mary Dyer [was hanged](#) because she believed God speaks dir-

ectly to those who trust in him. Although happily married with children, she refused to give in to the dictates of the Bay Colony's leaders. Her conscience would not allow her to endorse beliefs she did not personally accept.

Although she died, her demand - that people be freely allowed to follow their own religious persuasions - was ultimately incorporated into the structure of American government.

Puritans of the day had shown no mercy for Mary, but her death led to protests against the anti-Quaker laws. Not long after her execution, Charles II, who still controlled the American colonies, forbade any further executions of Quakers. Mary Dyer had not died in vain.

In the words of General Atherton, one of her persecutors:

Mary Dyer did hang as a flag for others to take example by.

It was the Puritans themselves, however, who had to learn the lesson of tolerance. Before the end of the century, the Puritan way of life was over for ever.

Their control of Massachusetts had lasted a mere sixty years.

Quaker Life Representative Council, April 2015

My first encounter with Quaker Life filled me with delight. I loved the whole experience and have made many new Friends and learned a lot, some of which I would like to share.

The weekend was broken into three parts; a presentation, workshops and a play.

Izzy Cartwright, Peace Education Programme Manager QP&SW, gave an amazing presentation. Her humour, empathy with her work and mixture of media meant we were all enthralled. She included stories, Chinese words, icebergs, conflict styles and a short and very moving film about an upstander – Tariq Jahan.

The two workshops allowed us to explore the causes and possible way of dealing with conflict within Meetings. These were lively events with much discussion.

The play 'Red Flag over Bermondsey' was a 65-minute production about Ada Salter, a radical campaigner for equal rights: a socialist, pacifist, environmentalist, trade unionist, and a leading light in the transformation of the Bermondsey slums in the early 1900s. An insightful one-woman show, it transformed the Cadbury Room into the homes, streets and factories of Bermondsey. All profits from the production is used to support the Women's Co-operative of Seir, West Bank, Palestine.

Quakers are wonderful at sorting other peoples conflict – but we may not be very good at sorting out our own. Are we conflict averse? How bumpy is the carpet at our Meeting House? What has been swept underneath? Do these bumps affect the spiritual life of our meeting?

As it says in Conflict in Meetings – 'Friends may feel that being in conflict is somehow wrong: we have a Peace testimony and should ourselves be peaceful people'. Implicit in this idea that Quakers should be peaceful, seems to be particular understanding of *peaceful*, as meaning agreement or harmony. But as it also asks, How 'peaceful' would our meeting remain if a George Fox or John Woolman were dropped into it?"

Susan Robson, a Quaker who researches conflict and how Friends handle it - talks about how puzzling she finds it that Quakers understand the damage that can be done from ignoring conflict, yet continue to handle it really badly.

She offers us a quite a challenge – the danger is that we're so conflict averse we'll ignore it!

At the heart of Quakerism is the deep commitment to see 'that of God' in everyone, and recognise people as unique, precious, children of God. Few of us, thankfully, are tested in quite the way Tariq Jahan was (a father who lost his son in the Tottenham Riots), but we

are all presented with much smaller daily choices about how we treat people on a daily basis, whether we try to include or exclude, whether we try to listen to the quiet voices or not, build bridges with those we find difficult, or not. We have to decide where to put our energy in terms of our work for peace, is it at the community level in terms of relationships, or perhaps campaigning – none of us can do it all, and we have to make choices, but when conflict arises, perhaps *because* of this commitment to peace– the reaction seems to be denial, shame, avoidance.

At the root of dealing with conflict is our ability to love one another as we are. We were reminded of the importance of having fun with one another, of laughter, food and fellowship, of truly getting to know one another as worthy, mistake making human beings.

Conflict is a natural part of our everyday lives. To deal with conflict effectively, we must first be willing to be vulnerable, to open ourselves to conflict and work on strengthening our communities and building our resilience and skills. We must first know who we are on a personal level. In order to engage with others effectively, we have to like, or love ourselves. Otherwise it's very hard to cope with differences - and almost impossible to handle conflict - it's too much of a threat.

It takes courage to walk into conflict, but we also need to be gentle with ourselves, and have the humility and readiness to ask for help when we need it. We also need to listen out for when others need to be listened to, cries for help come in many forms. Much of this stuff about conflict we know at the head level, but when things are closer to home it can be really hard to put into practice, and it is so easy to form barriers in our minds, and barriers lead to increased fear, and fear is dangerous, it often paralyses us – we can then stop seeing people as unique, precious, multi-dimensional human beings. It's very easy to slip justifying our own behaviour, to focus on proving how *right* we are, rather than putting energy into trying to think about the myriad of possibilities in front of us.

A method of mending broken crockery in Japan is *Kin-tsu-ku-roi*, which means 'to repair with gold'. The breaks are not concealed. The pot has its own beauty, though different from before. I like the idea of not concealing your cracks, your scars, but making them part of you, making you 'more' rather than less as a result. I think this is a great metaphor – or challenge - for approaching conflict.

In the words of Leonard Cohen: celebrate the cracks – that's how the light gets in.

I would love the opportunity to visit local meetings to share more of my learning from the weekend, such as what is Quaker Life?, share some of the amazing range of resources that exists to support our Meetings and more about dealing with conflict within them. If you are interested, please contact me at katmccrea@btconnect.com or by phone on 0778 365 8881.

Katrina McCrea

Conscientious Objectors Memorial

Friends may remember that it has been proposed to create a memorial in Edinburgh to those who refused to participate in the 1914-18 War, and who therefore suffered social ostracism, and, after the passing of the Military Service Act 1916, the threat of imprisonment or worse. Following a successful meeting with the Petitions Committee at Holyrood, members of the planning group have been looking at possible sites for such a monument in Princes Street Gardens and on Calton Hill.

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)

South East Scotland Area Meeting

EDINBURGH QUAKER MEETING HOUSE MANAGER

£19,920 pa (plus flat)

Our present managers retire in December, and we seek an active and practical person (or couple) with good management and people skills to replace them. Must be a Quaker (member or attender).

The post is residential; a 2-bedroom flat is provided. The Meeting House (7 Victoria Terrace) is an historic building in the centre of Edinburgh, used extensively during the week and as a venue for the Edinburgh Fringe.

Application pack at www.equaker.org.uk/jobs or may be requested by telephone on 0131 447 6964.

Closing date: 21st August.

South East Scotland Area Meeting

Visiting Other Local Meetings within our Area Meeting

We are all encouraged, from time to time, to visit other Local Meetings within our Area Meeting, to help build a shared sense of community. Throughout 2015, we are suggesting particular Sundays when Friends might like to visit each other, as detailed in the list below. Even if you cannot go to the Meetings listed, please hold them in the Light and give them your prayerful support.

L.M	Date	Time	Place
Polmont	30 Aug	10:45	Greenpark Community Centre
Cent'l Fife	27 Sep	10:30	Hunter Halls, Kirk Wynd, Kirkcaldy (<i>opposite old Kirk</i>)
Penicuik	4 Oct	11:00	Valleyfield House, 17 High Street (<i>bring & share lunch</i>)

All are warmly welcome!

Marilyn Higgins
On behalf of Area Meeting Elders

Wool Against Weapons (Scotland) Exhibition

The Maypole Fund gave a grant for the printing of three pop-up banners for the WAW exhibition, which has already been on display in Edinburgh Meeting House. We are hoping for it to be shown alongside *These Dangerous Women*, the exhibition celebrating the centenary of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and have contacted the Scottish Parliament, the Storytelling Centre and various other venues, including the Chrystal Macmillan Building at Edinburgh University – all of whom have expressed interest.

If any *Sesame* reader has ideas as to where the WAW exhibition could be displayed in other areas of Scotland, please contact me. The exhibition consists of three portable pop-up banners (free-standing) with photographs and text, and a “washing line” of twelve colourful sections of the knitted and crocheted scarf.

Jane Lewis

Tel. 0131 669 5591; Mob. 07519 582130

Blog: <http://www.hovercraftfullofeels.org.uk>

Northern Friends Peace Board

The Board had its second meeting of 2015 at Glasgow Meeting House on 13 June. Coming together a month after the General Election – in which one of our members, Philip Latham, had been a candidate, representing the Liberal Democrats in Blyth Valley – some of us were gloomy at the outcome and fearful of its implications. The second of the members' forums – times during the meeting when participants can speak of concerns or activities not arising elsewhere in the agenda – was given

over to reflections on the Election, the process and its results. Some were dismayed at the apparent success of negative campaigning in stirring up fear of the SNP and misrepresenting moderate policies as dangerous; although others noted that the new parliament includes many who will be putting forward alternative views, particularly on Trident, which was, they felt, a basis for optimism. We were reminded also that social change can be worked for through other, non-parliamentary, channels: that, for example, we can challenge media misconceptions and untruths, and try to encourage the engagement of those who otherwise may be disenfranchised.

This last theme was continued in a presentation by Mairi Campbell Jack, Quaker Parliamentary Engagement Officer, who works on Friends' behalf at Holyrood and was attending one of our meetings for the first time. She outlined what she had been doing since her appointment at the start of 2015; there are several areas of concern that overlap – social justice and the economy, militarism in schools, and nuclear weapons, to name but three – and it is hoped that where Scotland is able to take a lead, people in the rest of the UK will use it as leverage for similar work where they are.

Tim Wallis of QPSW showed us two short videos. The first was *Propaganda in the Classroom?*, (available to view at www.youtube.com/watch?v=wB9jD61RCM): a critique of a document emailed to all schools in England and Wales with the endorsement of the Department for Education, “to educate children about the work of the UK armed forces”, the tone of which is summed up in the assertion by Michael Fallon, Secretary of State for Defence, that “The military ethos is a golden thread that can be an example of what is best about our nation and helps it improve everything it touches.” (Needless to say, this claim, and much else in the booklet, was questioned.) The second, *The Unseen March*, was a broader examination of

militarisation and how the armed forces seek to influence society. Interesting as it was, I felt that while it made a valid point in suggesting that 'military values' may be a euphemism for 'obeying unthinkingly', nevertheless to illustrate it by showing children writing lines to that effect was to invite the disingenuous criticism that since this never really happened the whole thing could be dismissed as, well, propaganda. (It can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=OgJ83yYIR1g)

As usual, we were updated about the project work being undertaken on the Board's behalf. The group working on 'Sustainable Security' is planning a conference for early 2016 to "support Quakers and others in communicating alternative approaches to peace and security". Meanwhile, the project 'Building Peace in Diverse Britain' has formally come to an end with the completion of its last piece of work, involving young people in West Yorkshire and Lancashire. Board members were concerned, however, that we explore ways to continue what has been started.

Our final agenda items concerned nuclear weapons, present and past: we were informed about actions to protest against Trident and its proposed renewal, about events in London in July and on the International Day of Peace, 21 September, and about the lobbying of MPs; also we heard about commemorations of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings in this their 70th anniversary year.

This is not an exhaustive account of what was a very full day; indeed for some participants, a full weekend, as they went on next day to join the meeting for worship at Faslane. More information about the Board and its activities can be accessed at www.nfpb.org.uk. Our next meeting is to be on 26 September in Perth.

Alan Frith

VENUE 40

During the Edinburgh Festival Fringe (this year, 9 – 30 August) our Meeting House at 7 Victoria Terrace is a venue for music, shows and talks, and the library becomes a tea room. Much of the work is done by volunteers – 14 in each of the three weeks – who come from far and wide to help things run. But assistance is also welcomed from local Friends: in particular, during the afternoons, to staff the (very simple) till in the tea room; and to offer hospitality (bed & breakfast) to volunteers staying in Edinburgh in one of the weeks of the Fringe. Maybe next year you could?

Also, the committee, which works on making Venue 40 such a wonderful event, is looking for new members ~ some have been doing this for far too long! If you are interested, we would like to know.

Don Stubbings

Sesame 196 – A Note from the Editors

This issue of *Sesame* has been produced under difficult circumstances, partly because of forthcoming changes to the editorial team. These will be announced shortly. We apologise for the delay in this issue's appearance, and for possible omissions; please let us know of these, or if you would like us to make any corrections.

The Editors

From *In Praise of a Contented Mind*

*Some have too much, yet still do crave;
 I little have, and seek no more.
 They are but poor, though much they have,
 And I am rich with little store.
 They poor, I rich; they beg, I give;
 They lack, I leave; they pine, I live.*

*I laugh not at another's loss;
 I grudge not at another's gain;
 No worldly waves my mind can toss;
 My state at one doth still remain.
 I fear no foe nor fawning friend;
 I loathe not life, nor dread my end.*

*Some weigh their pleasure by their lust,
 Their wisdom by their rage of will;
 Their treasure is their only trust,
 And cloaked craft their store of skill:
 But all the pleasure that I find
 Is to maintain a quiet mind.*

*My wealth is health and perfect ease,
 My conscience clear my chief defence;
 I neither seek by bribes to please,
 Nor by desert to breed offence,
 Thus do I live; thus will I die;
 Would all did so as well as I.*

Attributed to Sir Edward Dyer, d. 1607

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

Minutes of Area Meeting held at 11.30 am on Saturday 30 May 2015 at Kelso Quaker Meeting House

2015/05/01 Worship

During opening worship extracts from Minute 36 of Britain Yearly Meeting 2015 have been read to us. It calls us to live faithfully and to act both corporately and individually to challenge the systemic injustice and increasing inequality in the world.

2015/05/02 Introductions

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

2015/05/03 The minutes of our last meeting, held on 18 April 2015 in Kinghorn, Central Fife, have been signed and entered in the minute book.

2015/05/04 Matters arising

Militarisation in society (Minutes 2014/10/06, 2014/11/04a, 2015/01/4a, 2015/02/06 and 2015/04/04 refer)

We are reminded of the request that Local Meetings pursue this matter with their local authorities. Local Meetings may be waiting for a draft letter to ensure a common approach and we ask our clerk to provide this.

We were informed that International Voluntary Service (IVS) are working on a programme with high schools in Scotland to develop peacemaking toolkits for use in schools, 'Fighting for Peace'. Richard Williams will keep us in touch with developments.

We have been told that Edinburgh Armed Forces Day, part of a nationwide programme being encouraged by the current UK Government, takes place on Saturday 27 June, with a parade at 11.30 am and 'entertainment' and military stalls in the Grassmarket. Alison Burnley offered to provide banners and invited others to form a peace witness group on the day. We ask our clerk to check

with the Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre to see if we can co-ordinate our action with that of others.

2015/05/05 Proposed outreach events for General Meeting

At the last General Meeting for Scotland, the request was made that South East, and West Scotland AMs should work together to arrange occasional gatherings for enquirers from throughout Scotland. It was agreed that, if the two Area Meetings agree to do this, the inactive GM Outreach Function Group should be laid down.

We have heard that an Outreach Group associated with Glasgow Meeting is considering responding to this and were asked by their Area Meeting clerk to work with us if they so wished. They have not yet been in touch.

We agree to organize such an event, either on our own or jointly with the Glasgow group. Max Marnau has offered to take this forward in conjunction with Friends more experienced in this area and Katrina McCrea and Pat Lucas have offered to work with her. We thank them for their offer of service.

2015/05/06 Annual Report: The John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust

Annie Miller has reported to us on the continuing work of the Trust. The trust fund was nearly exhausted but, thanks to the receipt of two unexpected substantial donations totalling nearly £14,000 and the generous gift of smaller amounts, the trustees have been able to extend its work for at least two more years. The first of these donations came from the remaining funds of the Christian Fellowship of Healing, which has been laid down, and the second from an anonymous donor.

Five awards totalling £1,800 were made during the early part of 2014, though no applications were received during the later part of the year. Annie explained that four of these awards were for events or journeys of various kinds and the fifth to restore a bi-cycle to working order. The trustees read with great pleasure the reports of the enjoyment given by awards, some of which was shared with

us, and encourage Friends and friends who meet the criteria to apply for an award.

We thank Annie Miller for her heart-warming report. A table summarizing the awards and their cost is available on request from Annie Miller and application forms for grants are available from Audrey Sinton.

2015/05/07 Proposed guidelines on eldership and pastoral care

(Minutes 2015/02/11 and 2015/04/08 refer)

As agreed at our last meeting, draft guidelines have been drawn up by our clerk, in consultation with conveners of elders and overseers. These guidelines are designed to supplement the advice in *Quaker Faith & Practice* chapter 12 and to reflect developing local practice.

We accept these guidelines and ask for them to be stored as Area Meeting 'gold minutes' and circulated to local meeting clerks and to conveners of local meeting elders, overseers and pastoral care groups.

We ask that these guidelines be shared with Quaker Life.

2015/05/08 Sharing the life of Kelso Quaker Meeting

Several Kelso friends shared something of their experience of their Meeting, which has developed a strong spiritual life, appreciated by members and attenders alike. The Meeting covers 1800 square miles and ten postcodes, which creates some difficulties with continuity and communication. To help build community, the Meeting is now experimenting with monthly meetings for learning, with a different convener each time. Three have taken place so far, with attendance of about ten each time. Pastoral care is being managed by a newly appointed group, which has got off to a good start and is also helping to build community.

The meeting house is appreciated, loved even, by those who use it, both Quakers and other local groups. Upkeep of the building is largely self-managed on a voluntary basis and this enables the Local Meeting to offer a financial return to the Area Meeting. The

LM has recently taken on greater responsibility for its finance and buildings; banking is now with the Unity Trust Bank and lettings income of between £200 and £300 per month now comes into this account. Gas and electricity are now both provided by Good Energy. Weekly collections have totalled about £2,000 for the year, the money being given to good causes, both Quaker and other.

We also heard of the journey into membership of Kelso's newest Quaker member, described as one of the most significant events of her life. The Meeting has no children in regular attendance at the moment.

We thank our Kelso friends for sharing all this with us.

2015/05/09 Report on Quaker Life Representative Council

Katrina McCrea, our appointed representative, has reported on the most recent meeting of QLRC, held at Woodbrooke in April. Katrina said her first encounter with Quaker Life filled her with delight. She described it as an amazing experience and then shared with us something of the theme of the council weekend: 'A Spirit-led approach to conflict in our Quaker communities'. The presentation by Izzy Cartwright, Peace Education Programme Manager at Quaker Peace & Social Witness was enthralling. Friends were asked the challenging question: are we better at sorting out other people's conflict than at understanding and addressing our own?

Katrina would love to visit local meetings to share more of her learning from the weekend. Invitations would be welcomed. We ask her to submit some of the key information from her report to the next issue of *Sesame*. [See page 4]

2015/05/10 Membership matters

a) Tabular statement for 2014

Richard Williams, our new Assistant Clerk (Records) has presented the tabular statement for 2014. This shows membership of the Area Meeting as 236 (91 men and 145 women) at the year's end, an increase of 4 during the year. In addition there were 350 attenders (112 men, 155 women and 83 children).

b) New applications

[We received two applications for membership.]

c) Earlier membership applications**1) Joan Torbett-Schofield**

An account of Joan's spiritual journey up to her decision to apply for membership of the Religious Society of Friends, has been read to us.

Joan was brought up a Catholic and has attended various church services over the years, without ever feeling completely at home, though she has continued to have a spiritual life. She discovered the Quaker way some five or six years ago and has now been attending Portobello & Musselburgh Meeting for more than four years, has participated in a Becoming Friends group, and has taken an active part in the life of the Meeting, including attending business meetings. She met Mary Woodward and Kim Smith in her home in March to take forward her membership application.

We welcome Joan into membership and ask Katrina McCrea to express this welcome on our behalf and to inform Portobello & Musselburgh Meeting.

2) Anna Lawrence

Marilyn Higgins and David Hume met with Anna on 23 April in the home in Peebles she shares with her husband, John Cassie. Anna grew up in West Lothian in a Church of Scotland family and has had experience of Quakers and Quaker testimony since her student days. She has read widely in matters relating to faith and belief and has valued meditation, particularly Sufi meditation. She lived in Oxford for twelve years and attended Quaker worship and enquirers' meetings there before moving to Peebles four years ago. The welcome she and John received when they first visited Tweeddale Meeting contributed to their decision to make their home in Peebles. Anna has taken an active part in the life of the Meeting and her contribution to its spiritual life has been valued.

We welcome Anna into membership and ask David Hume (subject to consent) to express this welcome on our behalf and to inform Tweeddale Meeting.

3) **Mairi McCormack**

Mairi McCormack, Alison Burnley and David Sterratt met on 19 April to talk about Mairi's application for membership. Alison has shared with us some of their conversation.

Mairi grew up on the Isle of Lewis, attending a Church of Scotland Sunday School where she experienced a form of preaching focused on sin and fear. She stopped going. Later she studied divinity and is now a teacher of religious education. Having been drawn to Quakers through the insight expressed in *Towards a Quaker View of Sex*, written in the 1960s, she started coming to South Edinburgh Quaker Meeting four years ago. Since then, she has visited other Meetings and attended a Meeting for Business. She appreciates the care Friends offer each other, their openness to new thinking and especially the Advice to 'live adventurously'. Mairi is a pacifist and tries to bring these values and practical, positive peace building into her work.

We welcome Mairi into membership and ask Alastair Cameron to express this welcome on our behalf and to inform South Edinburgh Meeting.

3) **John Cassie**

Alan Davies and Morag Ferguson visited John Cassie at his home in Peebles on 18 April 2015. John, originally from London, has had a variety of spiritual experiences. Living in India for a time, he studied martial arts and yoga and learned massage and healing techniques. Returning to the UK, he moved in Quaker circles in Devon and London and met Anna, now his wife, through his involvement with Sufism. They have been attending Tweeddale Meeting for about three years and married two years ago.

John feels he has come home to Quakerism and values our silence-based worship and especially our testimony to simplicity. He feels that becoming a Quaker together with Anna is a wonderful thing and he will offer service to Quakers when he feels led to do so. His quest will continue as he reads more and becomes more involved.

We welcome John into membership and ask John Foster (subject to consent) to express this welcome on our behalf and to inform Tweeddale Meeting.

2015/05/11 The Future of our Festival Fringe involvement

(Minutes 2014/11/05 and 2015/04/09 refer)

John Fitzgerald, convener of the Venue 40 Strategy Review Working Group, has presented the final report and recommendations of this group.

The group met on three occasions in the period December 2014 - April 2015, and interviewed and surveyed Friends with key roles within the work of Venue 40. During that time the strategy review working group was impressed by the large amount of work carried out by dedicated staff and volunteers, not just during the Fringe but right through the year.

The Venue 40 strategy review working group recommendations are:

1. That the Venue 40 committee continue to develop a relationship with Paradise Green and identify further areas for collaboration and mutual support. (Paradise Green is a not-for-profit organization, which uses a team of volunteers to run theatre venues at the Edinburgh Fringe, primarily at Augustine Church.)
2. That the Meeting House Management Committee be asked to explore further with the current managers the nature of the workload involved in Venue 40.
3. That the convener of the Venue 40 Committee explores with AM nominations committee specific issues relating to committee appointments and succession.
4. That the Venue 40 Committee works to promote engagement across Area Meeting with the work of Venue 40, particularly local volunteering opportunities.

Area Meeting has now reviewed the value of Venue 40 and reaffirms it as an example of Quaker outreach and a way of building

community. It is important that the workload involved in continuing this concern is sustainable and not unduly burdensome.

We accept the recommendations of the review group and ask the Venue 40 Committee and Meeting House Management Committee to implement them. We ask all members and attenders in the Area Meeting to consider how they can as individuals support the Venue 40 project to ensure it continues to achieve its aims.

We thank the Venue 40 Strategy Review Working Group most warmly for its work.

2015/05/12 Financial donation from Venue 40 profits

Our Venue 40 Committee recommends that, for this year only, we give a donation to Nepal Earthquake Relief, as it represents a case of urgent need.

We accept this recommendation. Funds will be sent through the Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre.

2015/05/13 Report from Area Meeting Elders

Marilyn Higgins, convener of Area Meeting elders, has reported on their work over the last two and a half years. Their main aim is supporting each other in their responsibilities for the spiritual life of our local meetings. They have met twice each year and also twice each year jointly with Area Meeting overseers.

Elders have developed a systematic way of helping newly appointed elders grow into the role and have encouraged inter-visitation between local meetings. They have offered support to Central Fife meeting, which has had no elders itself and have arranged special meetings for those providing eldership in our smaller local meetings, recognizing the different demands of meetings of different size. Among other activities, a new membership process leaflet has been produced, work has been done on spiritual review processes and an article published in Sesame on the use of 'Afterwords'.

We note that Marilyn's six years of service in this role ends later this year and thank her both for this report and for all she has done on our behalf.

2015/05/14 Impressions of Britain Yearly Meeting 2015

Those who had attended Britain Yearly Meeting over the first weekend in May shared with us informally some of their impressions.

Restlessness to take action to address issues of injustice and inequality ran through the weekend. A first-timer was deeply impressed by the corporate silence of worship and business sessions and its contrast with the cheerful social intercourse which took place outside the large meeting room. Meeting each other and upholding each other is an important part of this experience. The clerking was wonderful; we were led gently but firmly.

Both the Swarthmore Lecture and the Salter Lecture were inspiring. A quote from the Swarthmore Lecture stuck in the mind of one: 'If war is the answer, it must be a really stupid question.' The reprised performance of *The Gates of Greenham* by the Leaveners was uplifting, and friends found Minute 36 (part of which was read today during our opening worship) very powerful. One friend was thankful for the children's minutes and others, even those not able to be at Yearly Meeting, found the Epistle particularly helpful, its reading in Meetings following so soon after the result of the general election.

2015/05/15 Management of Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House

Janet Grimwade, on behalf of the Meeting House Management Committee, has informed us that the present meeting house managers, Sue and Anthony Buxton, intend to retire at the end of the year after eight and a half years in post. Arrangements are in hand to advertise for their replacement and we are asked to make this widely known.

2015/05/16 Appointments and release from service

a) Appointments

Our Nominations Committee has brought the following nominations for our consideration:

To serve from July 2015 to end of June 2018:

as an elder – **Anna Mitchell** (Central Fife LM)

as overseers – **Hilary Constable** (Central Edinburgh LM); and
Phil Noble (South Edinburgh LM - second triennium)

These names being acceptable, we appoint them accordingly.

b) Release from service

Annie Miller has asked to be released from service on the Social Responsibility Working Group due to other commitments and we release her accordingly.

We note also that Janet Grimwade has completed her service as our representative on Meeting for Sufferings.

We thank Annie and Janet for their service on our behalf.

2015/05/17 Closing minute

22 members and three attenders representing five Local Meetings have attended all or part of this Area Meeting, as indicated below:

Central Edinburgh 11	Central Fife -	East Lothian 3	Kelso 7	Penicuik -
Polmont 1	Portobello & Musselburgh 2	South Edinburgh 1	Tweeddale -	

We hope to next meet in the Open Door, South Edinburgh, on Sunday, 12 July 2015 at 2 pm.

Signed
Phil Lucas, Clerk

*Quaker Meetings for Worship in South East Scotland***Every Sunday**

Central Edinburgh: 7 Victoria Terrace	9.30am & 11.00am
South Edinburgh: Open Door, 420 Morningside Road,	10.30am
Polmont: Greenpark Community Centre	10.45am
Kelso: Quaker Meeting House, Kelso	10.30am

Every Wednesday

Mid Week Meeting: 7 Victoria Terrace	12.30pm- 1pm
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First Sunday in the Month

Penicuik & Peebles Valleyfield House, 17 High St., Penicuik	11.00am
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Children welcome, bring and share lunch.

Portobello & Musselburgh: Old Parish Church Hall, Bellfield Street	7.30pm
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First Tuesday in the Month

Edinburgh University Common Room, Muslim Prayer Rooms	1pm-1.30pm
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(opposite the Weir Buildings) at Kings Buildings: contact

Sarah Martin 07818050853 or sarah.martin@ed.ac.uk for more details

Second Sunday in the Month

Portobello & Musselburgh St James Church Hall, Rosefield Place	11.00am
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Portobello EH15 1AZ

Tweeddale Nomad Beat, 10-11 Cavalry Park, Peebles

All welcome but please phone to confirm.

01721 721 050 or 01896 850 389.	10.30am
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Central Fife: Hunter Halls, Kirkcaldy	10.30am
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(in Kirk Wynd opposite the Old Kirk)

East Lothian: St Andrew's Centre, Dunbar	11.00am
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Third Tuesday in the Month

Edinburgh Uni Common Room, Muslim Prayer Rooms	1.00- 1.30pm
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Fourth Sunday in the Month

Portobello & Musselburgh as above	11.00am
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Tweeddale: Nomad Beat, 10-11 Cavalry Park, Peebles

Central Fife Hunter Halls, Kirkcaldy as above	10.30am
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N. Edinburgh Meeting, Broughton St Mary's Church Edinburgh	7.00 pm
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Fifth Sunday in the Month

Central Fife Hunter Halls, Kirkcaldy as above	10.30am
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Last Sunday in the Month .

East Lothian: St Andrew's Centre, Dunbar	11.00am
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Distribution of Sesame & 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, Mark Hutcheson. An email version of *Sesame* is more ecological and is free! A large print version is available on request. Published by 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