

SESAME

Number 168: January 2012

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A Quaker in Barbados confronts a tobacco planter (17th Century)

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South East Scotland Area Meeting Saturday 14 January 2012 at 11 a.m. Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh

Our next Area Meeting will be on Saturday 14 January 2012 at 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh starting at 11 a.m. The morning session will be an introduction by Annie Miller to the topic 'Citizen's Income'. Our afternoon session will be regular business, but also including a review of Quaker Week 2011, and looking forward to General Meeting in March.

Soup will be provided at lunchtime. Please bring sandwiches, etc. if you would like a more substantial lunch. There will be light refreshments at the end of the afternoon session. We would hope to finish no later than 5 p.m.

The Meeting House is wheelchair accessible with accessible toilet and also has an induction loop in the Meeting Room.

Kate Arnot
Clerk, South East Scotland Area Meeting

Future Area Meetings:

Sunday 26 February, at the Open Door, South Edinburgh, at 2.00 pm

Saturday 31 March, at Kelso, 11.30 am - 4 pm:

Saturday 12 May, at Kirkcaldy, 2 pm - 5 pm

Saturday 30 June, at Polmont, 2 pm - 5.30 pm

Sunday 16 September, at the Open Door, South Edinburgh, 2 pm - 5.30 pm

Saturday 20 October, at the Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh, 11 am - 4 pm

Saturday 8 December, at 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh, 2 pm - 5.30 pm

2013

Saturday 12 January, at 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh, 11 am - 4 pm

Sunday 24 February, at the Open Door, South Edinburgh, 2 pm - 5.30 pm

Future Sesame Copy Deadlines

AM Sunday 26 February: deadline Tuesday 14 February

AM Saturday 31 March: deadline Tuesday 20 March

The Greening of Cotteridge Meeting House

Sunday, 15 January 2012, 1 – 3 pm

Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace

"The produce of the earth is a gift from our gracious creator to the inhabitants, and to impoverish the earth now to support outward greatness appears to be an injury to the succeeding age." John Woolman, 1772; *Quaker Faith and Practice* 25.01

Since 2005, Cotteridge Meeting, Birmingham, has been working to reduce both the carbon footprint of its meeting house and that of individuals who worship there. Between 2004 and 2011 they reduced the actual energy footprint of their all-electric meeting house by about 90%, from about 52,000kWh to 5,610kWh.

Harriet and Chris Martin from Cotteridge Meeting will give a presentation on how this was achieved and discuss what this has meant for the meeting.

There are more details of this achievement at:

www.cotteridge.quaker.eu.org/concern_for_the_environment.htm.

A summary of the information is available from Don Stubbings.

SUSTAINABILITY TOOLKIT

Becoming a low-carbon, sustainable community

Living Witness and QPSW have drawn on their collective experience and expertise to produce the Sustainability Toolkit, to inspire and support meetings in responding to the Yearly Meeting call to action. The Toolkit offers tools for learning, self-evaluation and practical action – as well as inspiration from Friends already facing the challenge – to support meetings in becoming low-carbon, sustainable communities.

A copy has been sent to all local meeting and area meeting clerks. However you can also download the Sustainability Toolkit or order a hard copy from the Quaker Centre.

<http://www.quaker.org.uk/sustainability-toolkit>

Climate Impact Calculator

For Quaker meetings: Work out the climate impact of your meeting using the interactive online calculator. It's easy to use and does the maths for you.

For individuals: This calculator helps you to estimate the climate impact of your own life. It is divided into seven categories: transport; energy; food; waste; house building; other goods and services; and public services. Again it doesn't need precise information to fill it in and the calculations are done for you.

Calculators to print: Both calculators can be printed, though you'll need to do the maths yourself.

<http://www.quaker.org.uk/climate-impact-calculators>

World Day of Prayer

World Day of Prayer will be at a church near you on 2 March 2012. Preparation for this event, including Bible study, will take place at the Church of Scotland Offices, 121 George Street, at 10.30 am on the following Fridays:

27 January; 3 February; 10 February; 24 February

Alison Burnley

Meeting for Worship at Faslane, 2012

Please be in touch (about 10 days in advance) if you wish a seat in a car from Edinburgh. You will need to bring: something to sit on; something to eat; and weatherproof clothing. Dates for the year are:

11 March; 13 May; 24 June; 12 August; 14 October; 11 November

Alison Burnley

Eldership and Oversight Introductory Days 2012

Introductory days for Eldership and Oversight are to be held in nine different meeting houses throughout the Yearly Meeting in 2012. These days are organised jointly by Quaker Life and Woodbrooke. Those closest to our AM area will be on Saturday 12 May

in Newcastle and 16 June in Glasgow.

For further information about registering for one of these days please contact Mark Holland, Educational Administration, Woodbrooke, 1046 Bristol Road, Birmingham B29 6LJ - 0121 415 6785 or mark.holland@woodbrooke.org.uk

For more information on Eldership & Oversight generally, please contact Michael Booth, Support for Meetings officer, Friends House, at michaelsb@quaker.org.uk or 020 7663 1023.

‘Becoming Friends’: A way to learn more about Quakers

We have been running some small groups working through the ‘Becoming Friends’ material, developed by Woodbrooke to help newcomers learn more about Quakers. Participants urge others to explore this material. Here are some of their comments:

Doing the *Becoming Friends* course has been a really good way to find out more about becoming a Quaker in a supportive, relaxed and informal environment. I feel I have made new friends and had an opportunity to explore my own and others’ thinking about Quakerism in ways that have been challenging and thought provoking as well as very affirming.

I was ploughing through *Becoming Friends* on my own and finding excuses not to do it. I was so pleased to join such a warm, friendly and open group. It was guided gently by Friends who shared their ideas and created an environment where it was easy to share our views and ask questions. I have gained some knowledge, had things bubble up in my mind for consideration and made some new friends.

I wanted to learn more about Quakers without feeling or being considered anything other than an enquirer. The course was very well devised and the *Becoming Friends* experience fitted the bill exactly. I enjoyed finding out more, discussing ideas and the companionship of group members whose inputs were always thought provoking and valuable. To anyone who is considering taking the course: Go for it!!

I found studying *Becoming Friends* in a small group with long standing

Friends very useful. It is an excellent resource with a wealth of information and ways in which to find out more. I liked the way our group used the resources flexibly and we went through the chapters following our own logic, not chronologically. This made sense to us and was not rigid, but more sensitive to the group members. I also liked meeting every so often, not every week, which could have been burdensome as people are busy. The atmosphere was always welcoming.

We had good honest discussions and this was the most valuable aspect for me. It was good to hear the views of a number of people including their doubts, and to have the insights of those who have been in Friends for a long time. This interaction helped me to think, I hope, more clearly. I also valued meeting the other members of the group. As we met over quite a long period of time, these relationships developed and helped the group to function in a relaxed, friendly and open way. I would recommend this informal way of studying the book to those coming into the Friends community. It makes a lot of sense to understand the background, history and values of Quakerism early on.

I think it’s a very well-designed course; it covers the essential core of Quakerism and it’s adaptable to differing levels of interest and time commitment. I am a Friend already in membership, and I found it made me consider familiar ideas afresh and took me out of my habitual areas of knowledge into areas I’ve neglected, such as Quaker history. I think it works well as a means of re-evaluation for members who may perhaps be questioning or in need of refreshment.

Using *Becoming Friends* in a group has been enjoyable and, for me, preferable to a one-to one situation – getting to know each other in a small group in itself contributes to learning about Quakers, and valuable insights emerged from the differing experiences members brought to the meetings.

The material can be used in a small group or individually, with a ‘companion’. If you are interested in learning more about this, please get in touch with me . We hope to start other groups in the New Year.

Marilyn Higgins

Economic Justice and the Sustainable Global Society

During September and November, I attended two conferences organised by QPSW, Northern Friends Peace Board and Woodbrooke, on the issues of economic justice and the sustainable global society. This article is intended to outline some of the issues discussed and provide some possible starting points for discussion.

So what's the problem?

The topics covered at both the one-day conference at Friends House and the weekend seminar at Woodbrooke, were vast, varied and complex. In the interest of space (and my own limited understanding), I have summarised and simplified as many of the issues as possible below. If Friends are interested to read the speakers' presentations in full, they can be downloaded or listened to at <http://www.quaker.org.uk/economic-justice-and-sustainable-global-society-conference-papers>

Food – Deborah Doane, Director, World Development Movement

Food is a basic human right and should not be treated like a commodity to be traded for profit. Speculation on wheat by investment banks has led to a sharp increase in the price of many basic foodstuffs. The impact on people with restricted incomes (particularly in the majority (or developing) world) has been catastrophic. The WDM is lobbying for stricter and more transparent controls on the way in which food is traded.

More information: www.wdm.org.uk/food-speculation

Public services and privatisation – David Hall, Director of the Public Services International Research Unit

There is no rationale for imposing a limit on public spending. The private sector does not always deliver efficiency and cost savings. It is inappropriate to deliver a public service through a private company owing to its focus on profit margins rather than equity of service provision.

More information: www.psir.org

A Quaker response – Jonathan Dale, Manchester & Warrington AM

We are facing a fundamental contradiction between the dominant social order of the day and our Quaker testimonies. The current system is based on constant growth and it has run into the buffers of a finite

world. Working against that system and building a world in line with our testimonies is both a response of faith and a political imperative.

Hilary Wainwright – Research Director of the New Politics Programme at the Transnational Institute; founding editor, *Red Pepper*

Personal action and responsibility has power that we must use. We need to challenge our political institutions. The system is as dependent on us as we are on it. We need to think of ways to use this dependence to subvert the system.

Excessive Consumption – Martin Smith, Central Yorkshire AM

Consumption is central to our lives in lots of different ways; it helps to form our identity, as well as being essential for survival in the most basic of ways. But fundamentally it is inadequate to meet our psychological needs. Consumption is underpinned by the manufacture of 'wants'. More and more people are turning to consumption to make themselves feel better, or to mark themselves out above others. This is not only unhealthy for the individual but is driving us to environmental disaster.

Young people and the economy – Rebecca Mattingley (North West London AM) and Ed Ullathorne (Central England AM)

The current crisis is having a disproportionately negative impact on young people. Unemployment, the increasing cost of education and the sense of disenfranchisement felt, particularly by those under the age of 18, is causing increasing concern and unrest.

The Positive Money Campaign – Susan Holden, Wensleydale & Swaledale AM

Our current economic system is based on debt. The Positive Money Campaign has a simple solution to end the debt crisis.

97% of the money in circulation today has been created by banks. Just 3% of it is 'legal tender', with reserves to back it up. Banks have been given the power to create money at the push of a button, a power formerly under the sole charge of the Bank of England, a democratically controlled body.

The Positive Money solutions:

- Full reserve banking: the 'keep my money safe for me' account. This solution would mean that money deposited in an account could never be lent out, and therefore would not earn any interest.

- Transparency. Make the banks tell us how they will use our money!
- Return the power to create money to a single institution – the Bank of England.

More information: www.positivemoney.org.uk

Between the day conference and the weekend seminar, I convened a small group of AM Friends for informal discussion of some of the issues. There is not room here to give an exhaustive account, but some key points included:

- Capitalism can be a force for good, but it must be strongly regulated and have a strong redistribution system.
- Entrepreneurs are essential to our society but we must consider if they are contributing positively.
- The power held by corporations prevents others from influencing government – do we live in a democracy any more?
- The economy has become detached from society. We need to start with identifying what kind of society we wish to be a part of and then embed the economy within it.
- It can be difficult (and expensive) to live simply.

But what can we do about it?

This question returned time and time again throughout all these events. There are obviously lots of ideas listed above for campaigns to support, organisations to get involved with and topics and issues to read up on. But there were lots of other practical ideas too:

Mindful consumption

Boycotts of firms and countries

Using ethical banks

Using car breakdown services that aren't part of the car lobby

Supporting co-operative shops rather than the large supermarkets

Use services such as the Phone Co-op rather than BT

Putting money into ethical investments (Community Land Trusts was one example)

Thinking carefully about whether we can continue to fly

Support/roll out sustainable consumption initiatives

Stop using credit cards

Holiday at home

Become vegetarian/vegan

Encouraging and participating in new models of living

Car sharing

Support for new or more widespread modes of communal living

Reducing our working hours/years and our incomes to free up time

Political engagement

Bringing the unacceptable into the light

'Robin Hood' Tax

Low carbon communities

Just distribution of carbon emissions globally

Taxation of 'bads' not 'goods'

Progressive taxation

Country by country taxation

These lists are definitely not exhaustive; and there are more than a few suggestions that need unpacking and discussing further – but they are a start.

Some of the suggestions outlined above may feel distinctly uncomfortable for some Friends - they certainly do for me. Everyone's response to this issue will be different depending on family situation, financial resources available, age, health and a whole range of other factors. Yearly Meeting asked us to step outside our comfort zone but what that constitutes will be very different for each of us, and the extent to which we feel able to step outside it will be radically different too. Discussion group members strongly agreed with this sentiment and felt that community support was vital for people to be able to move forward with these issues.

I too believe we need to support each other at the point where we're at, acknowledging that this is a journey and we are all at different points along it. These issues are vast and complex. We need to provide footholds for people so the mountain doesn't seem quite so overwhelming, and we need to support and encourage one another in the tiny steps we are able to take.

Rachel Fitzgerald

The End of Life Assistance Bill

*Notes on talks given at Area Meeting, 26th November 2011,
by John Phillips and Henry Thompson*

Background to the End of Life Assistance Bill

Margo MacDonald MSP introduced her Bill in January 2010. There was a public consultation about it and it was rejected during 2010. She is expected to reintroduce her Bill (presumably after modification) in 2012 and there are plans for a further public consultation.

The present legal situation (as far as we understand it) is as follows:

Anyone has the right to refuse medical treatment for themselves, even if this hastens the end of life: an advance statement of a desire for no, or limited, treatment is legally binding in England & Wales. Although this is not strictly the case in Scotland, "living wills" (defining conditions under which treatment would not be continued) *may* be made in Scotland.

Withholding treatment (including the provision of food and water) from patients in a persistent vegetative state is legal if it is deemed to be "in the patient's best interest". This is an example of "passive non-voluntary euthanasia". Other forms of euthanasia are illegal, unless they happen to result as a side effect of another reasonable treatment (for example, relieving the suffering of the patient).

Suicide is not a crime, but in England & Wales it is specifically illegal to help someone to end their life even if this is clearly requested by the person wishing to die. Diane Pretty and Debbie Purdy challenged the Director of Public Prosecutions in England & Wales to clarify or to attempt to change the law in respect of their husbands' possible prosecution if they were to assist their wives' suicide in any way (such as facilitating their travelling to Switzerland to be helped through a Dignitas clinic). The result was a change in the DPP's guidelines on the factors that would affect the decision to prosecute. At present there are no comparable revised guidelines in Scotland and the situation with respect to physician-assisted suicide in this country is unclear.

There are four possible situations to consider in respect of assisting the end of life. These are:

Assisted suicide

Physician-assisted suicide

Active voluntary euthanasia (terminating life at the request of the patient)

Passive non-voluntary euthanasia (terminating life when the patient is unable to give consent).

In Margo MacDonald's original Bill, *assistance* was defined as assistance, including the provision or administration of appropriate means, to enable a person to die with dignity and a minimum of distress.

The patient would have to be terminally ill with a reasonable expectation of death within six months, or should be permanently physically incapacitated and incapable of living independently, and must find life to be intolerable. There would need to be two formal requests, both approved by a medical practitioner, and both subsequently verified by a psychiatrist who must report back to the medical practitioner. There was a lack of clarity about whether the Bill was legislating for physician-assisted suicide, or for euthanasia.

Responses to the consultation

Responses to the original consultation were overwhelmingly negative, especially from religious organisations and from individual doctors; the Bill was rejected. The major lines of argument put forward by religious bodies were:

- Sanctity of life: "It is not within God's plan for physicians, or others, to end a person's life early."
- Our responsibility to care for others: "Society can demonstrate its highest ideals by supporting those who are ill and those who suffer with them through the pain of love and by ensuring that they suffer as little as possible."
- Vulnerability of those who feel they are a burden to others: "It is a dangerous fallacy to believe that a person can act independently of all others, with their actions having no consequences for anybody else."
- Detrimental effect on society: "The Bill would have a detrimental effect on society's respect for human life, would damage the doctor-patient relationship and would be difficult to administer without widespread abuse."

- Dignity in death: “The whole focus of ‘end of life’ should not be on the moment of physical death, but on the period (days, weeks or months) leading up to that event, with the emphasis on achieving the best quality of life possible.”
- The role of physicians: “What of the physician who in conscience cannot be on the register of those prepared to assist in dying but who has a duty to refer on to someone who is on the register at the request of the patient, regardless of his or her own judgement of the case?”
- Loving your neighbour as yourself: “It is incompatible for those directly involved in the care of the dying to also be involved in either assisted suicide or euthanasia.”

Palliative care

Palliative care aims to relieve suffering and to improve the quality of life; many responses emphasised that good palliative care might remove the need for any sort of legislation. It is not tied to the end of life and greater availability of palliative care might remove or reduce calls for assisted suicide. However, it can certainly be costly, and a major extension of such services on the scale that is probably needed could reduce the opportunity for the development and delivery of other NHS services.

There is also an argument that while palliative care can alleviate physical anguish it does not provide long-term mental and spiritual support for patients. Clearly such care varies enormously: many who work in the environment of our hospices are well aware of the full range of support that ought to be provided for dying patients, but it may not be reasonable for this sort of care to extend over very many years of diminished mental capability. It is costly both in financial terms and in terms of the human (and training) input.

Some issues to think about

How do we view and come to terms with the prospect of our own death? Coming to terms with one’s own end of life is an intensely personal journey; we are helped by sharing and reflecting on the experience of others.

How do we react to the knowledge that although the actual process of dying can be quick – or even unexpected - it may in our own case turn out to be long drawn-out, may involve suffering (for ourselves and others, such as members of our families) and may involve loss

of human dignity over many years.

The End of Life Assistance Bill asks us to consider a much more limited area: should we were incapacitated through injury or illness, could we seriously imagine asking someone to end our lives for us?

Finally, whatever our thoughts about our own personal situation, can we as Quakers view with compassion those who conclude that they wish to terminate their own lives early by means of assisted suicide or by euthanasia?

End of Life Assistance

There are various questions that society needs to answer; to some extent any new Bill on this subject has to be judged against the answers that feel right for each one of us – none is simple.

- What criteria can be used to judge “quality of life”? Is this something that is simply relative to quality of life at some earlier time, or is there something absolute about it? How can one judge that one’s own, or another’s, life has become “intolerable”?
- Would assisting someone to die be a response to a relatively immediate need (the relief of present suffering) or could it relate to longer-term quality of life issues (such as a progressive decline over many years)?
- Who speaks for those who cannot speak for themselves? How do people make known their strength of feeling on this issue when they are in the final stages of their life? Is this something that could be thought about beforehand (like a “living will”) or must it necessarily wait until near the end, when the patient’s feelings may have changed?
- What is the methodology – for administration of the poison that ends the life, who does it, who authorises it, who is present? What are the effects on those who are involved? What are the mechanisms for any professional person to opt out of participating in these procedures?
- How does an individual record an absolute personal opposition to anyone considering early termination of her or his life? Where do family fit in to this process, or who else should be involved, if there is no family?

- What about the arguments concerning the exploitation of the feelings of the terminally ill? They are generally in some sense a burden on their families or on society, but can society draw up legislation in such a way that it completely avoids any sort of emotional blackmail?

Above all we should learn from experience in those countries that have already gone further than us in this field. In this summary we have used material from two helpful documents which would provide a starting point for further study of this issue; in particular, the first of them analyses what has happened in the Netherlands and in Oregon, following the passage of relevant laws about ten years ago.

(1) A briefing for MSPs:

www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/research.aspx

Enter "End of Life Assistance" in the search facility and select the research briefing paper under the first reference.

(2) The Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office:

www.actsparl.org/

Enter "End of Life Assistance" in the search facility, and select SCPO Briefing 12 3, February 2010.

Advices and Queries – A Walk In The Light?

Have you ever read Chapter 1 of *Quaker faith and practice*? The introduction to the Advices and Queries, reminds us that they are pointers to the insights of our Society. We maintain that expressions of faith must be related to personal experience but the deeper realities of our faith are beyond precise verbal formulation, and our way of worship based on silent waiting testifies to this. That these expressions are personal is exemplified in the oft-quoted postscript to an epistle issued by the meeting of elders at Balby in 1656.

Dearly beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by, but that all, with the measure of light which is pure and holy, may be guided; and so in the light walking and abiding, these may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not from the letter, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.

Section 4 of the chapter explains how the use and form of the Advices and Queries has changed from an initial three queries by the Yearly Meeting enquiring on the state of the Society to its present form.

Although Quakerism was founded in Britain, it has spread worldwide and taken on different forms. Each maintains our testimonies but expresses them in differing ways. British Quakers and Britain Yearly Meeting have been described as 'liberal', while Quakers of other Yearly Meetings may be 'conservative', 'pastoral', or 'evangelical'. Individual Friends may be described on a continuum as being 'Universalist' to being highly Christ-centred and scripturally based. Meetings for Worship can be unprogrammed, non-pastoral with silent worship, to programmed, pastoral and Evangelical. As other Yearly Meetings have been formed so they have produced their own Faith and Practice each with their Advices and Queries.

Would you like to join a group to study a selection of these different Advices and Queries and how they relate to the differing expressions of Quaker worship? I hope to start in early 2012 and would be pleased to be joined by Friends from Meetings other than Central Edinburgh. If you are interested, please sign the sheet in the Library at 7, Victoria Terrace, or let me know by email or phone.

Andrew Farrar

Meeting for Sufferings, 3 December 2011

We began with the Triennial report from the Retreat, the Quaker mental health care provider in York. Small changes are being made to maintain a distinctive Quaker influence in its governance. Economic cuts have meant the need to make substantial savings, but its finances are sound and it is generating specialist services with a very person-centred approach. It provides services to patients referred by the National Health Service.

The major business of the day was returning to Minute 36 of Yearly Meeting (on sustainability), reminding us of its radical vision and its spiritual basis. We approved the setting up of a Commitment Group and were asked to remind our Local and Area Meetings to use The Sustainability Toolkit and the Carbon Impact calculator [see page 3] and to watch the DVD of the Swarthmore Lecture 2011

which have all been sent to meetings recently. The group's first task will be to collate responses to these tools for Yearly Meeting in May, so they will need responses soon.

We heard read the public statement on the 'Occupy' Movement which was issued in November.

Among the Nominations, Laurie Naumann was renominated to Quaker Peace and Social Witness [QPSW] Central Committee.

We had a report from the Quaker Committee for Christian & Inter-faith Relations which set out their priorities for its work: reporting, representation, discernment and publishing. There is continuous interaction with other faith and church leaders on special issues such as sustainability and same-sex marriage. (This report was of particular interest to me because Central Nominations Committee on which I serve is currently looking for five Friends to join CIR.)

QPSW is to draft a letter to the Justice Secretary at Westminster on 'Breaking the cycle: effective punishment, rehabilitation and sentencing of offenders'. Christine Cannon, the Clerk of Meeting for Sufferings, will sign it.

Rachel Frith

Ethical Pensions

Duncan Wallace, an Attender at Edinburgh Central has written to us on the subject of ethical pensions: he has set up his own pension plan using a SIPP (Self-Invested Personal Pension) which enables him to direct his investment to companies not listed on the stock exchange. He regards the stock market as "part of the root cause of global uncertainty and exploitation", and is dubious about the negative screening operated by many so-called ethical consultants which does not direct investment towards firms with ethical principles but only away from those conspicuously lacking them.

He is keen to discuss issues surrounding investment, and to share his own experiences. Interested Friends are invited to contact him directly or via the Craighead Institute.

Editors

NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

Alec Gaines of the United Nations Association has passed on to us the text of a letter to his MP (Mark Lazarowicz, Edinburgh North) from Alistair Burt MP, Minister at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) responsible for disarmament issues. Mark Lazarowicz had, on Alec's behalf, asked the Defence Secretary how the Government is responding to the UN call for disarmament; Alastair Burt's reply sets out what the Government has been doing in the past twelve months in pursuit of its stated commitment "to the long term goal of a world without nuclear weapons".

The letter sets out ten areas of activity. Alec Gaines's comments are given in italics (*thus*).

1. The Government "regularly" calls upon India, Israel and Pakistan to accede to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which seeks to re-strict to the five "recognised" nuclear weapon states (China, France, Russia, the US, and the UK – the P5) the holding of such weapons.

2. The Government's programme of "ground-breaking research into the verification of nuclear warhead dismantlement" is intended to be expanded. As well as hosting P5 discussions, the UK is to co-host with Norway an international workshop for non-nuclear weapon states on the progress of the research.

3. "The issue of non-strategic nuclear weapons is under active consideration in the context of NATO's ongoing Deterrence and Defence Posture Review . . ." [*Perhaps this is weaker than it should be? Russia is no longer an adversary. Recently we closed down the RAF air-base in Scotland that monitored the infringement of air-space by Russian bombers. I await a reply from the MOD as to the extent to which we consulted with Russia before the closure and the extent to which we are sharing information about the launching of missiles with Russia.*]

4. "Promoting entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty is one of the Government's key disarmament priorities. We have regularly urged the nine countries [*the US is one of them*] whose ratification is required for the treaty to enter into force to do so without delay . . ."

5. "The Government has been active . . . in continuing to press for the start of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty . . . We continue to press Pakistan to end its block on the start of negotiations in Geneva . . ." [*Pakistan has a consulate in Glasgow. Perhaps UNA should ask for an appointment to be briefed as to what this is all about?*]

6. (On "the risk of accidental or unauthorised explosion of NATO's nuclear weapons" [*~800 tactical nuclear bombs on NATO airbases in Belgium, Germany, Holland, Italy and Turkey*]): "A robust command and control system . . . assures that they could only ever be used under the express direction of the relevant authorities."

7. (On Trident renewal): We are “committed to minimum effective nuclear deterrent, whilst taking tangible steps towards the long term goal of a world without nuclear weapons.” *[We are working for a safer world; the Government should anticipate that in consequence we will have more friends in future, not enemies. The Minister doesn’t mention that we appear to be designing an updated Trident submarine - whereas many states are trying to purchase Astute class submarines - with nuclear engines but conventional weapons - as a better deterrent. Our treaties with non-nuclear weapon states greatly diminish the accessibility of much of the world’s oceans to Trident submarines. Apparently a Trident submarine spends much of its active service in the Atlantic where it is clearly wonderfully effective in deterring nuclear attack by Washington and Paris. Surely no clear-eyed government would waste money updating Trident]*

8. “Over the last year the UK, Russia and the United States have worked closely to engage with the states of the Middle East on options for a host government and facilitator to discuss the possibility of a Middle East Free of Weapons of Mass Destruction. We are very pleased Finland has now been appointed as host, and we have full confidence in their chosen facilitator Under Secretary of State Mr Jaakko Laajava. The government believes a Middle East free of all WMD and their means of delivery is an achievable goal but one that will take time and the commitment of all states in the region.”

[1. Book this date now! Monday, 28 May. You have to be at the Scottish Parliament to listen to and discuss with distinguished Middle East speakers on the possibility of the Middle East becoming WMD-free. The UN Meeting in Helsinki will be in December 2012. Thanks to Malcolm Chisholm MSP., May is your opportunity to ensure Helsinki is successful. Watch our website for the programme.

2. The UK’s recent imposition of increased sanctions against Iran is completely inconsistent with Alistair Burt’s paragraph. Iran has a population proud of its heritage but many are frightened, being surrounded by nuclear weapons in Russia, China, Pakistan, Turkey - the NATO airbase in the south of Turkey - Israel and perhaps in the US Fleet in the Gulf and the US planes based in Saudi Arabia. Iran is responding to this situation much as we would. She has been calling for a WMD-Free Middle East for over thirty years. Sanctions don’t help Helsinki].

9. “The Government continues to promote universal adherence to an Additional Protocol to the IAEA’s Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement . . .”

10. (On disarmament education): “I participated in a United Nations Youth & Students Association event at the Foreign Office on 7 October to give students the opportunity to discuss nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament issues (students from Edinburgh took part). We regularly support independent academic studies . . . and have discussions with academics as well as NGOs. We would however welcome ideas on how we could enhance disarmament education for schoolchildren. If your constituent has some ideas he would like to share with us, please ask him to contact our Nuclear and Disarmament team. *[May I suggest Edinburgh UNA takes up this offer and forms an expert committee to show how to introduce disarmament education to schoolchildren throughout Scotland?]*

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

Minutes of Area Meeting held on Saturday 26 November 2011 at 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh

Minute 1: [Procedure]

We agree that, until March 2013, the minute of the morning session of an all-day Meeting for Worship for Business will be drafted over the lunchtime break.

Minute 2: Reflection on End of Life

Margo MacDonald, MSP, in 2010 introduced a bill in the Scottish Parliament “The End of Life Assistance Bill” which fell. It is widely expected that she will re-introduce a similar Bill within this term of the Scottish Parliament.

Henry Thompson gave us the background to the introduction of the Bill and emphasised that there are complex legal issues regarding both suicide and euthanasia. We were also made aware that laws in England & Wales and in Scotland do differ in some significant respects. Suicide may be by the individual or assisted. Euthanasia is assisted, perhaps by a doctor (physician assisted suicide: psa) and can be through active and voluntary assistance of someone else or passive and involuntary within a medical context.

Both the Netherlands and Oregon have introduced very different legislation with the Netherlands legislation providing for no prosecution of those assisting and the Oregon legislation coming about because of a public ballot. It is only applicable to those who have been diagnosed as expecting to die within six months.

John Phillips commended to us *QF&P* 21.57. We all have to come to terms with our own death and our views may change through time, as we get older. We fear a long, drawn out process of suffering and dying both for ourselves and for those we care for. We know from reports that there is a great deal wrong with much care of older people – systematic failure, poor standards and a loss of self worth and human dignity.

The Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office web page has a very helpful summary of responses to the last consultation. Most of the Churches opposed the bill for various reasons including:

- The sanctity of life
- Caring for others is a Christian ideal
- A detrimental effect on the patient/physician relationship
- Not to focus on the moment of death but the time leading to it

High quality palliative care can make the end of life as pain free as possible but it is doubtful that we, as a society, can provide this for everyone because of the cost.

Friends spoke movingly of their own experiences of illness, long-term decline and death, often of parents but of all ages, including babies and children. We also spoke of those with long-term disability issues.

We were reminded that God is love and that we, as Quakers, endeavour to see that of God in everyone. What does love require of us in any situation? There are no easy answers but we may find or need to find answers for ourselves. For those who work, especially with older people, death is part of their work. The end of life is not a disease. We hope for a good death, as well as a long and happy life. If discussions about the end of life were more socially acceptable, it would be easier to discuss what could be done to make life better and lessen the common feeling of being a burden. We should be able to have choice and control at the end of our lives so that our deaths are dignified, and we are supported with compassion. As a society we can do better and we do need to have safeguards.

In the course of the morning, the following questions were asked and we need to continue to grapple with them.

1. What criteria do we use to judge quality of life?
2. Do we need to distinguish between rapid or long-term decline?
3. Who speaks for those who cannot speak for themselves?
4. Methodology and the effects on those involved in a possible process?
5. How is personal opposition recorded and taken account of?

6. How do we avoid those in decline feeling they are a burden on others?

We thank Henry and John for introducing this session [*see page*], Jim Pym for facilitating, and all who contributed to a moving, learning and stimulating session.

Minute 3: Welcome and introductions

We welcome Alan Sayle, an attender at Central Edinburgh LM, today.

Minute 4: Apologies

The following Friends are prevented and send their apologies: Alison Burnley; Caroline Evens; Daphne Foster; John Foster; Madeleine Harding; Chris Holland; Ken Jobling; Annie Miller; Laurie Naumann; Jane Pearn; and Jasmine Perinpanayagam.

Minute 5: Signing of the AM minutes of 15 October 2011

The minutes of 15 October 2011 have been published in *Sesame*. The clerk has signed a copy and entered it in the Minute Book.

Minute 6: Opening Worship

Extract 21.19 from *Quaker Faith & Practice* was read during our opening worship. This was written by Dorothy Nimmo in 1979.

Minute 7: Matters arising

a) Further to Minute 12 of 15 October 2011, Pat Lucas, of the AM Archive Group, has given us further news of the historic first edition of George Fox's Journal. We have now learned that there are 49 known copies in public ownership in the world. Only one other is in public ownership in Scotland (Edinburgh University Library).

We are donating this Journal to the National Library of Scotland who will keep and own it in perpetuity. We ask the Clerk to sign a standard donations form.

This could be an opportunity for Outreach and we ask the Clerk to explore this.

b) Further to Minute 9 of 9 July 2011, regarding communication among Edinburgh Friends, the Clerk is not sure if Edinburgh

Meetings have discussed how information and representation which applies only to Edinburgh City Council area can be shared only within Edinburgh Friends. Recognising we are all very busy, we ask that this be discussed by Edinburgh Friends with the aim of coming back to AM in February.

c) Further to Yearly Meeting Gathering at Canterbury and our wish to continue the impetus to corporate commitment to sustainability, we agreed to consider this at our Area Meeting in Kelso on 31 March 2012. Preparative work may be helpful. Every local Quaker Meeting has been sent a resource pack, including a DVD of the Swarthmore Lecture by Pam Lunn, and we urge all of our Meetings to view this before 31 March.

Minute 8: Festival Committee

Alan Sayle spoke to the Festival Committee accounts. A transfer to Area Meeting of £10,000 has been made. Foyer snacks were a new initiative and contributed about £1,000. From a survey, we have been told we offer a friendly venue with add-ons for groups.

Festival Committee is recommending we remit £1,250 to each of the 3 charities we have agreed to support. These are: **Quaker Bolivia Link**; **Alternatives to Violence (Scotland)**; and **Comanna Mara**.

We accept the Festival Committee's recommendation and ask our Treasurer to action it. A copy of the Committee's draft account is attached to these minutes.

Marjorie Farquharson reported that there had been an evaluation of the theatre companies who were all appreciative of the technical aspects of the venue. They also relished fresh flowers and prompt payment amongst other factors. There will be opportunities for service including accommodation at the Fringe by Friends and we urge all of our local meetings to continue to participate.

We thank all members of the Festival Committee and staff and we look forward to Fringe 2012.

Minute 9: Quaker Disability Equality Group

Hilary Davis has reported on the valuable work of this group. SE

Scotland AM has contributed financially to QDEG. The group exists to enable Friends with disabilities to contribute more fully to the work of the Religious Society of Friends and for local meetings to have an understanding of the needs of Friends with disabilities. Its web site is a useful resource for Friends. The group consists of a wide range of Friends who can assist Meetings which are considering adaptation and refurbishment of Meeting Houses. The group is seeking charitable status to broaden its work and has offered opportunities for Friends at Woodbrooke. It is also hoped that this may enable progress to happen more quickly.

Financially, there is a relatively healthy balance so no financial contribution is being sought at present. There is no membership fee. Most important is the spiritual and prayerful support of Friends for the group, for Friends to inform those who may be able and/or willing to participate in the group so that the Committee can continue to have new members serving. To serve on the Committee Friends must be aware of the concerns of disabled Friends.

Receiving *Sesame* is appreciated, perhaps especially by Friends who cannot always attend Meeting for Worship.

We thank Hilary for her report and commend the group to Friends in SE Scotland Area Meeting. We agree to become a Supporting Meeting of QDEG (Hilary will inform us of how to do so). The report and accounts are attached to these minutes.

Minute 10: Membership Matters

a) Further to Minute 9(c) of 15 October 2011, we have received a certificate of acceptance of transfer of membership from Kendal and Sedbergh AM in respect of **Anne Hawthorne** (previously Woolgrove)

b) Further to minute 8c of 10 July 2010, San Francisco Friends Meeting have accepted the transfer of **Scott MacLeod**.

c) [We received a request for membership and appointed visitors.]

d) [We received a letter of resignation and appointed an overseer to visit.]

e) Kelso LM has let us know of the death of our Friend **Joan**

Tansley, latterly of Berwick upon Tweed. We ask Kelso Friends to write a memorial minute for a future AM.

f) It has been our custom to appoint a Friend to check the Tabular Statement. We thank Alastair Reid who has done so for several years. We agree to continue this practice, and appoint **Don Stubbings**.

Minute 11: Nominations and appointments

Our Nominations Committee has brought the following names for appointment to serve from 1 January 2012:

a) Elders

We appoint **Andrew Farrar** and **Jasmine Perinpanayagam** (both Central Edinburgh) to serve until 30 June 2014 (both re-appointments).

We appoint **Alison Burnley** (South Edinburgh) to serve until 31 December 2012.

We agree to release **Sandra Riddell** (South Edinburgh) from service on 31 December 2011 and thank her for her service.

b) Overseers

We appoint **Simon Jackson** (Central Edinburgh) and **Laurie Naumann** (Central Fife) both to serve until 31 December 2014.

We agree to release the following from service on 31 December 2011: **Audrey Sinton** and **Rachel Frith** (both Central Edinburgh), **Penny Holland** (Central Edinburgh and Central Fife) and **Sandra Marks** (South Edinburgh) and thank them for their service.

c) Trustees

We appoint **Ken Jobling** and **John Phillips** (both Central Edinburgh), and **Rufus Reade** (South Edinburgh) all to serve until 31 December 2014.

d) Nominations to serve on Meeting for Sufferings

Meeting for Sufferings has asked for nominations from Area Meetings of Friends to serve for three years from May 2012. We agree to nominate **Janet Grimwade** (Central Edinburgh) and, as her deputy, **Jasmine Perinpanayagam** (also Central Edinburgh).

e) Request for release

We agree to release **Bronwyn Harwood** from service as Trustee. We thank Bronwyn for her service and wish her well.

We value the work of our Nominations Committee and the difficulties both of Friends being asked to do too much and of being asked to do too little.

Minute 12: Residential General Meeting held in Edinburgh, 12-13 November 2011.

Much appreciated was the service by Friends to enable residential General Meeting to be such a deep experience. It was very worthwhile with valuable presentations from both of the main speakers, and in the morning from Quaker Housing Trust which reflected the theme of who benefits from current financial structures.

After a demanding day, some 30 Friends stayed to enjoy the ceilidh. The social aspect of meeting Friends should not be underestimated.

Minute 13: Economic Justice

Rachel Fitzgerald reported on the two linked events at Friends House and Woodbrooke on Economic Justice and the Sustainable Global Society, organised jointly by QPSW, Northern Friends Peace Board and Woodbrooke. There was a tremendous energy, enormous, wide ranging topics and a wide variety of workshops. Rachel has given us a brief, verbal report and has written a longer report for *Sesame*, with web site links [see page 7].

There were many ideas for personal and corporate action and ways of being.

Economic Justice and Sustainability are linked. We hope to develop these connections at Area Meeting in Kelso on 31 March. Young people are particularly affected by the long-term effects of our current economic structures.

The Friend has reported on the group outside St. Paul's in London and Friends' contribution to "Occupy". There is an "Occupy" group in Edinburgh at St. Andrews Square and Friends in Edinburgh may want to consider some involvement with them.

Also see above Minute 6c. It would be helpful further to explore sustainability and economic justice for all members of the Area Meeting and all Meetings within the AM to be involved in this.

A threshing meeting could enable a deeper reflection prior to 31 March which is part of a long, on-going process, including the morning session at AM on 14 January 2012.

We agree to a threshing meeting early to mid February and ask Rachel Fitzgerald, Don Stubbings and Phil Lucas to co-ordinate arrangements for this. We thank Rachel for her attendance at both events, her verbal report today and the written report in *Sesame*.

Minute 14: AOCB

There was none.

Closing Minute

41 Friends from six local meetings attended all or part of this Meeting for Worship for Business. The next Area Meeting will be on Saturday, 14 January 2012 at 7 Victoria Terrace at 11 a.m.

Kate Arnot

Clerk, South East Scotland Area Meeting

CHANGE OF EMAIL ADDRESSES

Alastair Cameron and Mary Jane Elton have new email addresses:

Alastair is mandolin.alastair@gmail.com

MJ is maryjcamell@gmail.com

Please note these, and delete the @camell.me.uk addresses.

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 <i>Children welcome, bring and share lunch.</i>	11.00am
Portobello:	Old Parish Church Hall, Bellfield Street	7.30pm

First Tuesday in the Month

Edinburgh University Common Room, Muslim Prayer Rooms (opposite the Weir Buildings) at Kings Buildings: <i>contact Sarah Martin 07818050853 or sarah.martin@ed.ac.uk for more details</i>	1pm- 1.30pm
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Second Sunday in the Month

Tweeddale:	Tweedbridge Court, Margaret Blackwood House, Dukehaugh, Peebles <i>All welcome but please phone to confirm. 01721 721 050 or 01896 850 389.</i>	10.30am
Central Fife:	Hunter Halls, Kirkcaldy (in Kirk Wynd opposite the Old Kirk)	10.30am
East Lothian:	East Linton Community Hall	11.00am

Third Tuesday in the Month

Edinburgh University Common Room, Muslim Prayer Rooms	1pm- 1.30pm
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Fourth Sunday in the Month

Tweeddale:	Tweedbridge Court, Margaret Blackwood House, <i>Details as Second Sunday above</i>	10.30am
Central Fife:	Hunter Halls, Kirkcaldy <i>as above</i>	10.30am
Portobello:	CHANGES Community Health Project 108 Market St, Musselburgh, East Lothian EH21 6QA	10.30am
Barony St Meeting	33 Barony Street, Edinburgh	9.30am

Last Sunday in the Month

East Lothian:	East Linton Community Hall	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, Caroline Evens. An email version of Sesame is more ecological and is free! (see page 3). A large print version is available on request.

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