

SESAME

Number 183: December 2013

**Non-theist Friends Network/ Library News/ John Wigham Trust/
A 19th Century Quaker Diary/ YMG 2014/ White Feather Diaries/
Jerome K. Jerome at the War/ AM October Minutes**

Still-born Silence! Thou that art
Flood-gate of the deeper heart!
Offspring of a heavenly kind!
Frost o' the mouth, and thaw o' the mind!
Secrecy's confident, and he
Who makes religion mystery!
Admiration's speaking tongue!
Leave thy desert shades among
Reverend hermits' hallowed cells,
Where retired devotion dwells!
With thy enthusiasms come,
Seize our tongues, and strike us dumb!

Richard Fleckno, *Poems of all sorts*, 1653

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South East Scotland Area Meeting

Saturday 14 December 2013, 2 pm, Edinburgh Meeting House

There are a number of interesting items on the agenda for December, an indication of the vibrancy of the Spirit at work among us. These include:

- A request that we recognise a new Local Meeting
- Consideration of reports on meetings with prospective Members
- Our proposed letter to the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland
- How best to share how the Spirit is prospering in each of our Local Meetings
- A memorial minute on Avis Swarbrick
- Two requests from our Elders and Overseers
- A request for support for a Friend seeking grant aid for mine clearance work in Sri Lanka.

Would you also come prepared with suggestions of Friends (perhaps including YOU!) who might represent us at the following conferences, all in March 2014:

- ❖ **The QPSW Spring Conference, 28-30 March at Swanwick, in Derbyshire.**
This is primarily for those relatively new to the work of QPSW who would like to learn about it. I attended this year as a group facilitator and found it both interesting and enjoyable.
- ❖ **The Canterbury Commitment conference, 7-9 March, also at Swanwick.**
This is concerned with taking forward our Yearly Meeting commitment to become a low carbon community.
- ❖ **Towards a Quaker View of Mental Health, a one day event, 15 March at Friends House, London.**

We shall also need soon to be finding names of young people to represent us at Junior Yearly Meeting, to be held as part of Yearly Meeting Gathering in Bath in August (see p 7.)

Please come with heart and mind prepared.

And just a reminder that Area Meeting meets again quite early in the New Year, on Saturday 11 January, also at 7 Victoria Terrace, when we shall be starting consideration of a Quaker response to the Scottish independence issue. We shall also be taking forward our concern on economic justice, with a report from two Friends who have recently attended a Quaker conference on the subject in Brussels.

Phil Lucas, Clerk

The Non-Theist Friends Network

Following the report in the last Sesame of the meeting in October at which "the theist/non-theist debate among Friends" was discussed, this article, by a member of Dudley Local Meeting, has been forwarded to us. (Eds.)

Why do I belong to the Non-Theist Friends Network (NFN)? There are three reasons:

The opportunity to discuss the issues around doubt and belief in God is the first. In my experience this was not something Quakers talked about very much. It has been good to be part of a group which is open to discussion, especially when so many people have a wide range of experience and knowledge. NFN members, as well as non-members, who attend our conferences, have travelled by a variety of routes to a variety of positions, and that makes discussions interesting. It is also a positive experience to be able to talk about my own doubts and thoughts without worrying that I may upset or offend someone.

The second reason is linked to the first; as a member of NFN I feel supported in my need to think and talk about non theism and God

because so many others want to do the same. In other forums, it is possible to feel that one is upsetting the apple cart by raising these issues.

I would suggest that one of the consequences of the starting of NFN and its subsequent work, is that there is now a greater awareness of the issues for some Friends around belief/nonbelief in God, shown, perhaps, by the number of letters in *The Friend*.

The final reason is honesty. I don't want to be a hypocrite, but able to state my position, where necessary, so that others know where I stand. This is important to me. I don't wish others to assume things which are not true.

Unlike some others, I don't feel the NFN is divisive, since I know that there is a wide variety of belief and doubt within the Religious Society of Friends. This I value, and see no reason, except perhaps fear, why the situation should change. We all have to choose our own stance; tolerance of each other's varying beliefs is important.

We are called 'Non theist' because it is the best name we could find that was honest, short and did not link us to the proselytizing atheism of Richard Dawkins and his like. We tried lots of alternatives but this was preferred.

Perhaps some of you are now thinking 'Why is she a member? We are, after all, the *Religious Society of Friends*'. When I first came to Friends, although I had doubted God's existence since my twenties, my doubts were quiescent and I was carried along by the certainty of others. It was only after I had been a member for a while that the doubts surfaced. It has always seemed to me that the actual words used by any religion matter far less than the behaviour of its adherents. It also seems to me that Quakerism, a non credal religion, takes a similar view. Therefore the testimonies of Quakerism and the way the organization is set up to follow and promote them, are of prime importance to me, and that is one of the reasons that I became a Quaker.

I also value highly the Quaker community in which people 'seek to know one another in the things which are eternal'. Such in-depth knowledge is rare and to be prized.

Miriam Branson

Library News

The library at Victoria Terrace has a display shelf by the door where pamphlets and leaflets for current worship groups can be found. As usual, newly acquired items are on the display shelf as well. Among our new acquisitions are:

'Nonviolent Direct Action as a Spiritual Path' by Richard Taylor (a Pendle Hill pamphlet) ;

Native Speakers and Native Users: Loss and Gain by Alan Davies of Central Edinburgh Meeting: an academic work, with a chapter on "Talking in silence: ministry in Quaker meetings"

The Essence of George Fox's Journal ed. Hunter Lewis;

God Just Is: Approaches to Silent Worship by Curt Gardner;

The Burning Question: We Can't Burn Half the World's Oil, Coal and Gas, So How do We Quit? by Mike Berners-Lee and Duncan Clark;

Quakers and the Arts: Plain and Fancy – An Anglo-American Perspective by David Sox.

Please remember to sign out borrowed items in the Loans Book by the catalogue, and return them in good time. Also: if anyone has copies of Swarthmore lectures which are not needed, the library would appreciate receiving them.

Rhoda MacKenzie

The John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust

The John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust has made over 100 financial awards to people in Scotland in recent years. The Trustees want F/friends to know that there is now approximately £1500 left in the funds to be distributed to those whose straitened circumstances entitle them to apply for grants up to £500. The Trustees would like to encourage F/friends to consider whether they could make a donation to enable the Trust to continue its work. Donations, whether small or large, would be very welcome. If donors could make a Gift Aid declaration that would be appreciated.

Cheques should be made out to South East Scotland Area Meeting and sent to John Phillips, the Treasurer of JW(E)T, indicating the intention of the donor.

Sylvia Massey
on behalf of Trustees

The Diary of Margaret Wright

When our Friend, Victor Webb, now deceased, was leaving his home in Dalkeith, he asked our Library Committee if they would be interested in any books or papers from his library. Brenda McGovern and Rhoda Mac-Kenzie visited his house and among other items they took away a hand-written diary, written between the years 1811 and 1828 by a Friend, Margaret Wright. The diary, which has been transcribed by Rhoda, is difficult to decipher but it appears that Margaret Wright lived in Houghton in Huntingdonshire (in the English Midlands). She seems to have been in her twenties when the diary begins. When it ends, she has just got married and has a daughter. She writes of her family, and of her Meeting in which she is heavily involved.

If anyone has information about Margaret Wright, we would be glad to hear it. Our assumption is that she must be an ancestor of either Victor Webb or, perhaps more likely, of Greta Webb (née Marriage), his wife.

We publish some excerpts in this issue of Sesame of entries early on in the Diary. In the next issue we plan to publish entries from the second half.

5th of First Month 1813

Was prevented going to Monthly Meeting. Called on E.B. Maria and I called on poor Cliftons who shared Maria's bounty. We then went to the Workhouse, went to the School of Industry – met a wealthy

widow who told me with much apparent satisfaction that she has adopted my plan of working for the poor. Called on my sisters and carried them a small present. Happened of a poor mendicant aged 91 years who says she can read in no other book than her own heart towards God. She was born in Jersey, lives in Bedford, has traversed the counties of Bedford and Huntingdon seventy years. Returned in the evening and was much favored, and now my dear Saviour if I have found favor in thy sight be graciously pleased to make me instrumental in bringing the poor wanderer home to thee, for whom I have felt inexpressible anxiety.

27th of First Month 1813

I was much favored at Meeting this morning but MB did not appear in testimony at Meeting today. Nevertheless I feel quick in my own mind and I hope willing to wait his due and appointed time for accomplishment of what is right in His sight concerning me.

1st of Second Month 1813

I seem to have been dead as a leafless tree all day. My morning meeting, sitting down in afternoon and evening retirement have been far from giving opportunities. Mrs J and JB visited my sisters. YS came in after supper to speak with me.

Third of Second Month 1813

Was comforted at Meeting this morning with a hope that there will be a revival of strength among us if we steadily adhere to the resolutions of shutting every door against talebearing and distraction.

Nineteenth of Third Month 1813

Went to Quarterly Meeting in a gig yet through favor I believe I took no cold and was favored to sit at Meeting five hours out of the six. We had several testimonies by J. Bateman, E. Townsend. M. Blackly, I. Wiggin and W. Tomson. Much was said on the interesting subject of unbelief. 'Is there no balm in Gilead, is there no physician there?' and several other passages. I was visited with that which is better than myself and desire to acknowledge it in humble reverence.

Seventh of Fourth Month 1813

C. and M. Townsend attended our Meeting at Huntingdon. C.Y. had a close time with arresting the attention of those whose passions were become stronger than they were a few years back, exhorting them to be angry and sin not for we are allowed to be displeased at wrong things, but not to give way to an impetuous temper. Standing up a second time, she spoke to such as perhaps might feel the foregoing did not belong to them and had suffered their thoughts to wander (and I was one of those number) and adverted to the same subject again, still urging that we should be angry and sin not. If it was intended for me, I desire to take it even though I consider myself very ill used by Nevertheless they are not aware of this injustice towards me, hardened in their ill will. She recommended Christian love and exhorted what parents often say to children – 'kiss and be friends' – After they have submitted they will find there is still balm in Gilead, there is a physician there.

Yearly Meeting Gathering 2014

YMG – just another Quaker abbreviation, or a fantastic event bringing together Friends, friends and families from around Britain for a week of joyful communion at a beautiful venue at the height of summer? Yearly Meeting Gathering in 2014 promises to deliver just that. The University of Bath, set on Claverton Down, which sits on the south-east hilltop edge of the city, provides the setting for our event, along with superb accommodation and the newly commissioned Chancellor's Building for our younger gatherers' activities. A luxury big top and a tented village of marquees and covered walkways will be home for our Quaker business and our special times for getting to know one another as we grow in community and spiritual learning.

There's much more than Quaker business at YMG, as those who have been before will know. Every waking moment is filled with opportunities for everyone: exploring the array of interests that make us such an eclectic group, learning about what we do in the world, and exploring spirituality through art and practical activities. Music, painting, gardening, being entertained and just relaxing are all part of the itinerary. And of course, we will be developing our understanding of what it means to be a Quaker today, a theme running

through the previous two Yearly Meetings and culminating at Bath.

Inclusivity has been a major factor in all the planning. Families will find a full programme for children of all ages, from babies to Junior Meeting for 16-17 year olds who will be sharing the campus and some of the time with us. For the slightly older age group Woodbrooke will be running sessions from a new programme for young adult friends throughout the week. And for those of us at the other end of the age range, needing a bit of help with mobility, or maybe sensory enhancement, we hope to have learnt from previous events and facilities should be tip-top. The site has been chosen for ease of access to both accommodation and the events venue, with a flat walk between the two. For those of you who come alone there will be opportunities to meet others, and for those of you who like the quieter moments there's no need to join in everything! Wednesday will be very special in that local Friends have been busy for a long time putting together a most varied programme of activities – an 'away-day' for those who want to get off campus and enjoy a local attraction or place of special interest, or maybe just a trip to somewhere nice.

Cost is always a major consideration and every effort has been made to provide for every purse. Accommodation ranges from full-board to self-catering, with en-suite or shared bathrooms. For campers there is a field some ten minutes walk away, with toilets and hot-showers planned. And for those whose purse is rather light, there are a number of ways of getting help. All area meetings should be making provision for Friends who want to come but need support, for transport and accommodation – do speak to your local overseer. Bursary support is an important part of ensuring this is truly a gathering for all, and we should all encourage one another to consider this option. Friend – is there anyone you know who could use a little help, and just needs a gentle prod?

What happens now? View our website [HYPERLINK "http://groupspaces.com/QuakerYMG/"](http://groupspaces.com/QuakerYMG/) <http://groupspaces.com/QuakerYMG/>. YMG sweatshirts and t-shirts are now available (click on the website's shop tab). Have a look at the faces of the committee and our clerks, and those who have already logged in. See the pictures of the university, and what our village will look like. Watch our YMG film. Check the options for age ranges and for accommo-

dations, and join in the discussion. And keep your eyes open for the booking forms – online versions will be up and running in December, and paper versions sent to local meetings. And don't forget to tell all your F/friends!

A Message from Andrew Morton

I have been deeply moved and greatly helped by so many thoughtful messages that have come in various forms and from far and near, as also by the presence of so many at the celebration of Marion's life. So for the moment I offer a simple thank you.

If anyone would like a copy of the printed order of that celebration, I can send one.

If anyone wishes to make a donation to cancer research, Cancer Research UK has a 'Donate in Memory' scheme, which now has this link specific to Marion's memory:

<http://donateinmemory.cancerresearchuk.org/0004324>

Yours, gratefully and warmly
Andrew

“White Feathers”

The White Feather Diaries is an online Quaker storytelling project to mark the centenary of World War I.

The real-time story follows five Quakers as the war unfolds: they explore their dilemmas and different choices in a daily blog and Twitter feed. The project will run at incremental periods over three years (2014-2016) up to the anniversary of the 1916 Military Service Act, which introduced conscription and recognised conscientious objection. The stories will chart the individuals' journey of discovery as they find out that opposing war is never easy and being a pacifist is always a brave decision.

By using digital media the project is designed to resonate with an audience who are the same age as those called up to fight in 1914. The interactive nature of The White Feathers Diaries will create

opportunities for discussion and a deeper understanding about the causes of conflict and current peacemaking. The White Feather Diaries will raise challenging questions and ask why this is still as relevant now as it was 100 years ago.

Interviewed by John Humphrys on BBC Radio 4, Jane Dawson of Friends House said: "We want people to understand choosing to be a pacifist is never easy in a culture of war. It is always a brave and difficult decision. Some people suffered, some were imprisoned and died there."

The tribunals which heard the cases of conscientious objectors were "not necessarily as fair as they could be" she added, "... we as British people should be incredibly proud [of establishing the right]. This is a fascinating part of our record as a liberal-minded country."

The White Feather Diaries are among WWI centenary events mentioned in The Guardian (4 November) and The Independent (5 November); both these articles are available on the newspapers' websites. The interview with Jane Dawson can be heard on the R4 website starting at 02.56.00.)

An Ambulance driver writes

Jerome K. Jerome, author of Three Men in a Boat, was in his mid fifties when the First World War started. In the autumn of 1916 he joined the French Army, for which age, "so long as it was not accompanied by decrepitude, was no drawback to the driving of a motor ambulance". In a uniform "of russet khaki relieved by dark blue facings, with a swordbelt and ornamental buttons" that the volunteers had to pay for themselves, but which meant the wearers were "assumed, in the dusk, to be Field-M Marshals", he set out with D.L. Oliver, their Chef de Section, and Bernard Spring-Rice (brother of the British Ambassador in Washington, who wrote "I vow to Thee My Country") towards the Western Front . . .

The first night we reached Caudebec, a delightful mediæval town hardly changed by so much as a stone from the days of Joan of Arc, when Warwick held it for the English. If it hadn't been for the war, I would have stopped there for a day or two. As it was, Spring-Rice and myself were eager to get to the front. Oliver, who had had about a year of it, was in less of a hurry. At Vitry, some hundred miles the other side of Paris, we entered 'the zone of the Grand Armies', and saw the first signs of war. Soon we were run-

ning through villages that were little more than rubbish heaps. The Quakers were already there. But for the Quakers, I doubt if Christianity would have survived this particular war. All the other denominations threw it up. Where the church had been destroyed the 'Friends' had cleared out a barn, roofed it, and found benches and a home-made altar –generally, a few boards on trestles, with a white cloth and some bunches of flowers. Against the shattered walls they had improvised shelters and rebuilt the hearthstone. Old men and women, sitting in the sun, smiled at us. The children ran after us cheering. The dogs barked. Towards evening I got lost. I was the last of the three. Over the winding country roads – or rather cart tracks - it was difficult to keep in touch. I knew we had to get to Bar-le-Duc. But it was dark when I struck a little town called Revigny. I decided to stop there for the night. Half of it was in ruins. It was crowded with troops, and trains kept coming in discharging thousands more. The *poilus* were lying in the streets, wrapped in their blankets with their knapsacks for a pillow. The one miserable hotel was reserved for officers. My uniform obtained me admission. The *salle-a-manger* was crammed to suffocation: so the landlady put me a chair in the kitchen. The cockroaches were having a bad time. They fell into the soups and stews, and no one took the trouble to rescue them. I secured some cold ham and a bottle of wine; and slept in my own ambulance on one of the stretchers. I pushed on at dawn; and just outside Bar-le-Duc met Oliver, who had been telephoning everywhere, enquiring for a lost Englishman. I might have been courtmartialled, but the good fellow let me off with a reprimand; and later on I learnt the trick of never losing sight of the car in front of you. It is not as easy as it sounds.

From *My Life and Times* (1925)

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

Minutes of Area Meeting held on Saturday 26 October 2013 in Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House

2013/10/01 Worship

During opening worship we have remembered Peter Pond, a member of West of Scotland Area Meeting, who lived recently in Dunfermline and has worshipped with Central Fife Meeting, and Avis Swarbrick, a long-term and much-loved member of our Area Meeting, who also lived in Fife and worshipped for many years in Central Fife and Central Edinburgh Meetings.

Paragraphs from the introduction of *Quaker Faith & Practice* have been read to us. These remind us of the purpose of our book of Christian discipline and our practice of updating it regularly to acknowledge that our vision of the truth moves on. We have been reminded that we need discipline in order to make the best use of this wonderful life. Our worship together is a vital part of this shared discipline.

2013/10/02 Introductions

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

2013/10/03 Signing of minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of our last meeting, held on 15 September 2013 at the Open Door, have been signed by Kate Arnot, who clerked that meeting, and entered in the minutes book.

2013/10/04 Matter arising

(a) Letter to Roman Catholic Church (Minute 2013/09/07 refers)

As requested at our September meeting, Geoffrey Carnall has brought to us an amended letter with a request that we ask General Meeting for Scotland to send it to the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland on behalf of Scottish Quakers. The text of this amended letter has been read to us. With some further amendments, we have accepted this text, which now follows, and send it on to General Meeting for Scotland.

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Scotland always appreciated the strong support of the peace movement expressed by Cardinal O'Brien, and we understand that he was equally appreciative of the Quaker commitment to our peace testimony. This shared concern to work for a more humane and peaceful world transcended our radical differences on some other issues.

We know that the Catholic Church in Scotland has for many years supported nuclear disarmament, and Cardinal O'Brien's powerful advocacy for nuclear disarmament will be missed.

We recognise the pain that events surrounding the Cardinal's departure from office have caused within the Catholic community, and

that time is needed for healing. We earnestly hope that the Church will do its best to meet the challenges involved.

We look forward to working together with the Bishops' Conference, clergy and laity in the quest for alternatives to war and violence. We trust that momentum will not be lost in the Catholic voice speaking within and on behalf of the peace movement, in particular for the abolition of Trident.

(b) Possible GM Family Gathering (Minute 2013/09/16 iii refers)

Madeleine Harding will shortly be drawing up plans for this family camping weekend, proposed for the early summer of 2014, and asks all those interested in taking part or helping to organise it to get in touch with her.

2013/10/05 Quaker Life Representative Council Report

John Fox, our deputy representative, has reported on the meeting of Quaker Life Representative Council, held at Woodbrooke last weekend, when the main subject was the meaning of membership. There was a stress on the importance of discipleship. Membership brings accountability. Is it principally spiritual or organisational. The new Chapter 11 of *Quaker Faith & Practice*, accepted at Yearly Meeting in 2011 and to be included in the fifth edition of the current *Q.F. & P.* and available now on the BYM website, gives guidance on current practice. Some of us have shared how valuable we feel membership to be but it is a matter which needs continued exploration and we shall return to it during the coming year.

2013/10/06 Membership matters

(a) Avis Swarbrick, a long-term member of this Area Meeting who worshipped mainly with Central Fife and Central Edinburgh Meetings, died last month. Her funeral was held at Dalgety Parish Church on 2 October. We ask Laurie Naumann (s/c) to co-ordinate the preparation of a memorial minute, remembering to consult with Aberdeen Friends, and to bring it to a future meeting, with a recommendation regarding the possible writing of a testimony to the grace of God as shown in her life.

(b) We record also the death of **Peter Pond**, a birthright Friend who lived in our area and sometimes worshipped with Central Fife Friends. His membership remained with West of Scotland Area

Meeting, where his death has been recorded. We note that his funeral in Dunfermline Crematorium was a Church of Scotland service with some Quaker input led by West of Scotland elder Martin Mansell.

(c) [We received an application for membership; visitors have been appointed.]

(d) **Felicity Kelsall's** transfer of membership was accepted by Lincolnshire Area Meeting on 13 July and the certificate of transfer has just been received.

(e) We appoint **Janet Grimwade** once more to review the tabular statement of membership.

2013/10/07 Possible review of *Quaker Faith & Practice*

Area Meetings are being consulted about whether the time is right to consider the complete revision of *Quaker Faith & Practice*. A paper on this has been distributed to Friends. We hope our Yearly Meeting will start preparing for a new Book of Discipline to be published in ten or fifteen years time. We wish to give more time to the exploration of the interesting questions we have been asked and will arrange a special meeting for this purpose in the New Year.

We send this minute to Meeting for Sufferings.

2013/10/08 Appointments

Our Nominations Committee has brought the following names to us for appointment, to serve from Jan 2014 to the end of Dec 2016 unless otherwise indicated:

(a) **Elder** Doreen Dodd (East Lothian LM) reappointment

(b) **Convenor, Funerals Committee**
Laurie Nauman (Central Fife LM)

(c) **Overseers** Hilary Davies (South Edinburgh LM)
for one year from Jan 2014

Jean McAuslin (Tweeddale LM) reappointment

(d) **John Wigham Trust** Annie Miller, reappointment

We appoint these Friends accordingly.

We are invited to send a representative to a QCCIR conference entitled 'Faith: what's God got to do with it?', to take place at Friends House on Saturday 25 January 2014 and ask those interested to let Nominations Committee know before 4 November.

We note that Nominations Committee has not yet been able to bring to us a nomination for Assistant Area Meeting Clerk, to replace Rosie Roberts, who has been continuing in the role since she moved to Sheffield. Rosie will be in Edinburgh with family when we next meet on 14 December and is willing to continue serving until then. We thank her and ask her to do so.

At Area Meeting on 16 September 2012 (minute 8), it was agreed that Quaker representation on Edinburgh Churches Together should transfer from Area Meeting to Central Edinburgh and South Edinburgh local meetings jointly. We note that this transfer was completed in June 2013 and both meetings have appointed representatives. We thank Don Stubbings for his service as Area Meeting representative until that time.

2013/10/09 Report and recommendations from our Festival Committee

Alan Sayle has given us a provisional report on the financial outcome from the Festival Fringe activities at Venue 40 in August 2013, which this year included involvement with the Edinburgh Just Festival. Our Festival Committee proposes a transfer of £6000 to Area Meeting funds, with a recommendation that it be distributed as follows: £1250 to Quaker Bolivia Link, £1250 to Refugee Survival Trust and £500 to the Windows Appeal, leaving £3000 for Area Meeting General Funds.

We thank the Festival Committee for all their hard work and accept their recommendation.

2013/10/10 Correspondence

The following correspondence has been shared with us:

(a) Details of independent financial advisers Investing Ethically Ltd, who are members of Quakers in Business.

(b) Details from the Scottish Prison Service of Prisoners Week, 17-24 November 2013.

(c) A letter from Church Action on Poverty on their work aiming to close the gap between rich and poor, giving contact details of the worker appointed to take this project forward and inviting donations towards it.

(d) A paper from ECCR on pornography and children

2013/10/11 Report from Britain Yearly Meeting 2013 Group

Alison Burnley has given us a final report on the work of the AM Britain Yearly Meeting 2013 Group, which has supported Area Meeting Friends attending Yearly Meeting, helping them prepare for and participate in the life of the Yearly Meeting. Those new to Yearly Meeting much appreciated the support they received, both in preparation and while there. The experience has fed into the life of our Area and Local Meetings through personal contacts, conversations and study groups.

The Group has clearly fulfilled a valuable function and there is still much to be done to encourage future involvement in Yearly Meeting by Friends in this Area Meeting. We agree that a similar group is needed for Yearly Meeting Gathering 2014 and that this group needs to start its work this year.

We ask our clerk to write to Local Meeting clerks to solicit members for this Group, not only from those who have previously attended Yearly Meeting but also those who are interested in attending. It might involve three or four meetings before Yearly Meeting Gathering. We appoint Stasa Morgan-Appel to convene the new Group.

2013/10/12 The work of Quaker Trustees

We have devoted much of our afternoon session to a consideration of trustee responsibilities and work in our Area and Yearly Meetings.

John Phillips, clerk of Area Meeting Trustees, has reminded us that separate bodies of trustees for our Area Meeting and Yearly Meeting is a recent innovation. Their work is defined in *Quaker Faith & Practice* 15-02 (latest version not yet in print). Quaker reorganisation (the RECAST exercise) coincided with the UK government's revision of charity law, which affected religious organisations like ours. In Scotland, this made Quakers answerable to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), each Area Meeting needing its own trustee

body. A Quaker style of trusteeship has been evolving since then and is still evolving.

For our Yearly Meeting, this involved a change of function for Meeting for Sufferings (which previously held trustee responsibility), which has now become a melting pot for vision and ideas. Trustees' function is to transform this into practical action. Legal responsibilities have been subsumed in the work of trustees.

Margaret Mortimer became a Britain Yearly Meeting trustee very early in the life of the new trustee body. She had to be persuaded that she had skills and experience which suited her to the task but realised she did. She found it quite a demanding role, which absorbed a lot of time and energy. Being involved in controversial decisions was particularly demanding. But it was a wonderful learning experience, very humbling, very enjoyable and a real privilege.

During the afternoon we have watched the annual report of BYM trustees delivered at Yearly Meeting 2013 via a brief DVD presentation. This explains the work for which YM trustees have legal responsibility and how the budget is raised and spent.

Ann Forsyth is quite new to membership and is now an Area Meeting trustee. Having been a lawyer she has considerable experience of trusteeship and understands the very good legal reasons for Quakers having trustee bodies. Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the decisions made within our AM are acceptable to others and can work within the law. AM trustees meet about six times per annum and play an important role in supporting the work of our Local Meetings and Area Meeting. Friends who are appointed as trustees act on behalf of the AM (not instead of it). We currently have about ten AM trustees, with an attempt to ensure representation from across Local Meetings.

Using a number of interesting and sometimes humorous scenarios and working in small groups we have explored the sort of responsibilities and decisions which may fall to Area Meeting trustees.

We thank John Phillips, Margaret Mortimer and Ann Forsyth for leading our thinking this afternoon.

2013/10/13 AOCB

Alison Burnley has raised with the Recording Clerk issues which might arise if next year's referendum finds in favour of Scottish independence. He is concerned about the resulting impact in England of having fewer Labour MPs at Westminster. We see the need to address the referendum issue as Quakers and understand that General Meeting for Scotland plans to do so in March 2014. We agree to include this on an Area Meeting agenda before then to give South East Scotland Friends the opportunity to prepare for the GM discussion.

2013/10/14 Concluding minute

Twenty Friends from six Local Meetings have attended all or part of this Area Meeting, as indicated below:

Central Edinburgh 10	Central Fife 2	East Lothian 1	Kelso 1
Penicuik -	Polmont 2	South Edinburgh 4	Tweeddale -

We next meet at Edinburgh Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, on Saturday 14 December, 2013 at 2 pm.

(Signed)

Phil Lucas, Clerk

This is my letter to the World
That never wrote to Me –
The simple News that Nature told –
With tender Majesty

Her Message is committed
To Hands I cannot see –
For love of Her – Sweet – countrymen –
Judge tenderly of Me

Emily Dickinson (1830-86)

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 1 0.45am
Kelso: Quaker Meeting House, Kelso 10.30am

Every Wednesday

Mid Week Meeting: 7 Victoria Terrace 12.30pm- 1pm

First Sunday in the Month

Penicuik & Peebles Valleyfield House, 17 High St., Penicuik 11.00am

Children welcome, bring and share lunch.

Portobello: Old Parish Church Hall, Bellfield Street

First Tuesday in the Month

Edinburgh University Common Room, Muslim Prayer Rooms 1pm- 1.30pm

(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

Tweeddale Tweedbridge Court, Margaret Blackwood House,
Dukehaugh, Peebles All welcome but please phone tconfirm.

01721 721 050 or 01896 850 389. 10.30am

Central Fife: Hunter Halls, Kirkcaldy 10.30am

(in Kirk Wynd opposite the Old Kirk)

East Lothian: East Linton Community Hall 11.00am

Third Tuesday in the Month

Edinburgh University Common Room, Muslim Prayer Rooms 1pm- 1.30pm

Fourth Sunday in the Month

Tweeddale: Tweedbridge Court, Margaret Blackwood House,
Details as Second Sunday above 10.30am

Central Fife Hunter Halls, Kirkcaldy as above 10.30am

Portobello: CHANGES Community Health Project

108 Market St, Musselburgh, East Lothian EH21 6QA 10.30am

Barony St Meeting 33 Barony Street, Edinburgh 7.00 pm

Last Sunday in the Month

East Lothian: East Linton Community Hall 11.00am

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