

SESAME

Number 186: April 2014

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Experiment with Light in Scotland (see p. 27)

Published by South East Scotland Area Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Material for the next issue should be sent to the editor Alan Davies at 49a Lockharton Avenue, Edinburgh EH14 1BB, (email: a.davies@ed.ac.uk) at the latest by Tuesday 6 May, for distribution week commencing 18 May. 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 12 April, 11 am at Edinburgh Meeting House

During the morning session Jane Pearn will give a presentation on the work of the Mines Advisory Group. This is a follow up to our decision in December to support Jane's bid for a QPSW relief grant of £6000 to assist MAG with its mine clearance work in Sri Lanka.

A major item in the afternoon session will be a consideration of the part we can play in taking forward Yearly Meeting's 'Canterbury Commitment' to work towards being a sustainable community. Three Friends from our AM have recently taken part in a national conference on this matter and it was on the agenda of Meeting for Sufferings on April 5. Among other matters will be a financial update and looking at ways of getting to know each other better across our Local meetings.

We had proposed to consider our approaches to death and dying at this meeting but we shall hope to do this instead during the Autumn.

Immediately after Area Meeting, from 4.30 pm on, our usual Area Meeting tea is being converted into a party to celebrate the passing of Equal Marriage legislation at Holyrood. We shall be joined by guests from the Equality Network and from other traditions so do stay on and party!

We look forward to seeing you there.

Phil Lucas

Northern Young Friends Summer Shindig

Summer Shindig will take place once again this year at Ackworth School in Yorkshire, from Saturday 26 July to Saturday 2 August (so participants can skedaddle down to Bath too, if they really have the stamina!).

The theme this year is "Journeys", and Shindig is open to all youngsters between the ages of 11 and 16 on 30th June. Priority is

given to those from Scotland and the north of England, but there is always space for some from further afield, so don't be put off if you have a grandchild or relative from elsewhere (or even abroad) who you think would be interested. The fees are £300 for the first child and £280 for each sibling – bursary help is available. Information and application forms have been sent to all eligible youngsters on our GM database, and to LMs, but if you know of someone who hasn't received anything and would like more information, please contact the Co-ordinator, Helen Robbie, at summershindig@gmail.com or 07818 614 626

Yearly Meeting Gathering

Are you going to the 2014 Britain Yearly Meeting Gathering in Bath (Saturday 2 - Saturday 9 August)? Or not going, but would like to be connected?

The Area Meeting is running two sessions for interested Friends and attenders, on **Preparing for and Connecting with Britain Yearly Meeting Gathering** at which we will explore Documents in Advance and Epistles & Testimonies together. The first will be on **Saturday, 7 June, 3:00 - 5:00 pm**, at the home of Staša Morgan-Appel and Sue Sierra (please note new address). Session from 3:00 pm; tea and biscuits at 4:30 pm. Then on **Saturday, 5 July**, the second session will follow Area Meeting at Kelso. You are welcome to attend either or both.

Members of the AM Britain Yearly Meeting Gathering Committee may be contacted for information about particular aspects of the event, as follows:

General information:	Staša Morgan-Appel
Accommodation:	Ola Uduku
Children's Programme: Communications, and Documents in Advance:	Ola Uduku
Questions about costs/bursary help:	Katrina McCrae David Somervell

Travel:

Katrina McCrae, or
Staša Morgan-Appel

How to reach us:

Katrina	07783 658 881	katmccrea@btconnect.com
Staša	0131 281 1473	smorganappel@hotmail.com
David	0131 447 7862	david.somervell@ed.ac.uk
Ola	0131 662 8852	ola.uduku@btinternet.com

Staša Morgan-Appel

East Lothian Quaker Meeting

From Sunday 27 April, East Lothian Quaker Meeting will be moving to the St Andrew's Centre, 9 Bayswell Road, Dunbar. We will still be meeting on the 2nd and last Sundays of the month at 11 am, and all visitors will be most welcome. (For directions, contact Pat Lucas, 01368 850227)

Please note: If you are considering visiting us on Sunday 13 April, as per the AM Elders' suggestion, we will still be meeting in East Linton on that day, when you would be very welcome to worship with us.

Pat Lucas

Ecumenical Accompaniers for 2015

QPSW is advertising for Ecumenical Accompaniers, working as human rights monitors based in the West Bank and Israel in 2015. There are 18 vacancies for 3 months' service and two vacancies for 4.5 months' service. A living allowance and benefits are provided. The applications deadline is 20 June 2014. Our GM Administrator Bronwen Currie's service with EAPPI starts this month. If you are interested in serving and would like to know more, speak to Phil Lucas (01368 850227), who served in 2010.

What's in a name?

In Arthur C. Clarke's short story *The Nine Billion Names of God* (1953), the monks in a Tibetan monastery are engaged in a project to list all the names of God. They believe that the cosmos was created for this single purpose and that, once all the names are listed, the universe will come to an end. The monks reckon there to be about nine billion names: listing them all by hand will take thousands of years. And so they rent a computer and hire two westerners to install and prepare the machine. When their three-month contract ends, with no obvious progress, the Westerners decide to leave the monastery quietly in case they are blamed for the lack of a result. They arrange for the final print run to take place after they have left the monastery, they descend the mountain safely, and then pause near the airfield where their plane is waiting.

They look back at the monastery high up on the horizon, estimating as they do so that by now the monks must be printing out the final list of names. Then they notice that *overhead, without any fuss, the stars were going out.*

One moral of this story is that we should not seek to know the name of God. We find this warning too in Exodus 3, the story of the burning bush. There God promises Moses that he will deliver the children of Israel out of the hands of the Egyptians. Then Moses speaks to God: *Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel and say unto them: the God of your fathers hath sent me unto you, and they shall say to me: what is his name? what shall I say to them? And God replies to Moses: I AM THAT I AM; and he said: thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel: I AM hath sent me unto you.* (Exodus 3: 13,14)

There is much exegesis, attempting to explain what *I AM* means. But one simple explanation is that God is unwilling to reveal his name because in doing so he concedes some of his

power and his mystique. Romeo (in *Romeo and Juliet*) may try to reassure Juliet that it doesn't matter what you are called: *A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.* But most of us cling to our names as central to our identity. No doubt that in part is why we are irritated when someone misspells or mispronounces our names.

Inspector Morse, the hero of Colin Dexter's detective novels and TV scripts, does not take kindly to being asked for his first name and invariably replies: *Call me Morse.* But there is one late occasion when he gives way and reveals his first name. It is Endeavour. His explanation is two-fold. First, his father's hero was Captain Cook, the explorer, whose most famous vessel was called *Endeavour.* And second, Morse's mother was a Quaker – though it is unclear what being a Quaker has to do with the name Endeavour – except that 17th century Quakers, like many Puritans, often gave such names to their children, Hope, Peace, Charity, perhaps even Praise the Lord. But why is Morse so unwilling to reveal his name? Perhaps he is embarrassed by its 20th century oddness, one easily mocked in the playground. But isn't it also because he is reluctant to surrender to someone else part of his identity, something which is uniquely his?

When I was a young teacher in Kenya, I discovered that some of the boys (really young men) in my class were frequently changing their name on the front of their exercise book: this meant, of course, that marking their work was not always straightforward since I did not know whose the work was. So I asked why they made the changes: one of them replied, "because that is my name today".

Naming is about me: my identity. I can change my name or withhold it, like God. So perhaps Romeo does have something going for him: my name is what I say it is: *I am that I am.*

Alan Davies

Sharing Southeast Scotland's Sustainability Stories goes on tour!

On September 28th 2013 Kelso LM organised a 'Good Lives' day at their meeting house. The day focused on ways local Friends could reduce their carbon footprint, with particular reference to choices we make around food. The AM group Sharing Southeast Scotland's Sustainability Stories (SSSSS) joined forces with Kelso Friends and helped to co-facilitate. Some 15 Friends joined together in discussion and worship.

The first session of the day took us on a fascinating journey exploring how much carbon goes into producing many of the foods we consume on an everyday basis. Playing a game developed by Carbon Conversations, the group split into teams and ranked certain foodstuffs in order of how much carbon had gone into their production, packaging and transport. Everyone learnt something new about the way that our food arrives on our plate and the complexities of the subject were seen all too clearly.

To add a practical element to the day, Friends were asked to bring something to contribute to a bring-and-share lunch that embodied the principles of local food, home grown or home made. With additions from the local farmers' market held that morning, it was quite a feast! Shared together in the very sunny courtyard in front of the meeting house, the joy that can be gained from sharing simple low carbon foods together was self evident.

In the afternoon, Friends embarked on a discussion about where they shop and why, with plenty of excellent suggestions for sourcing good quality food from independent and local suppliers. This was followed by a short presentation on an innovative project being set up by Whitmuir the Organic Place, near West Linton - a community buy-in of the farm to

enable the development of a living learning space where people can explore the future of sustainable food and farming.

We ended the day by forming promise partners, each of us choosing a partner from our LM and choosing a step that we will endeavour to take over the next year to reduce our carbon footprint. By choosing a partner to support us in our efforts, we hope to be more successful in achieving them!

There is no doubt that living sustainably and reducing our reliance on carbon is a challenge and there are many complex emotional and practical issues to be worked through. It is an issue however, that I feel Friends are uniquely prepared for - striving to find the joy in living simply and adventurously, and growing together in community as we do so.

If your LM would be interested in holding a day similar to the one organised by Kelso friends, SSSSS would be more than happy to come and facilitate it. Please get in touch with Don, Rachel or Phil with the details below.

Don Stubbings 0131 336 1141 - djstubbings@cooptel.net
 Rachel Fitzgerald 0131 332 8270 - rachelfitzg@googlemail.com
 Phil Lucas 01368 850 227 - phil.lucas1@gmail.com

FOOD WASTE AT 7 VICTORIA TERRACE

For the past few years, food waste at Edinburgh meeting house, along with glass, cans, plastic, cardboard and paper, has been collected and recycled by Changeworks. They report monthly how much has been collected, and the amount of CO₂ which has been saved; each year I have analysed the results. What was striking this year was the inclusion of food waste in the report. In 2013 the meeting house recycled 640 kg of it, estimated to be the equivalent of saving 2.4 tonnes of CO₂. This is a significant amount.

The Scottish Government agreed a *Climate Change Delivery Plan* in 2009. As part of this, the *Zero Waste Plan for Scotland* proposed long-term targets of re-cycling 70% of all Scotland's waste by 2025, with only 5% of the remaining waste ending up in landfill.

Resource Efficient Scotland is a new Scottish Government programme to help businesses and the public and third sectors to save money by using resources more efficiently. It provides advice and support on energy, water, waste and raw materials, replacing existing Scottish Government support for businesses and the public sector *via* Carbon Trust, Energy Saving Trust and Zero Waste Scotland.

From January 2014, all businesses in Scotland are required to separate waste. Anyone producing more than 50 kg of food waste/month must have it collected for recycling. In January 2016, this reduces to 5 kg/month.

All food waste now goes to Anaerobic Digestion (AD) plants. Over 2 million tonnes of food waste is produced in Scotland every year from all sectors. If just half of it were captured and treated through AD, the electricity generated could power a city the size of Dundee for six months, provide heat for local homes and businesses, and produce enough fertiliser for 10% of Scotland's arable crop needs.

Don Stubbings

KJB: The Book that Changed the World. The Amazing Story of the Birth of the King James Bible. A DVD of this film will be shown at the Quaker Meeting House, Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh on Thursday, 8th May 2014 at 7.30 pm. Film duration 90 minutes.

John Fox

Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations: Day Conference - 25 January 2014

"Faith - what's God got to do with it?"

After the introductions three male speakers each gave a 40 minute presentation.

David Boulton, humanist and convenor of the Non-theist Friends Network began by thanking QCCIR for their "timely initiative" in facilitating this exploration into what we mean by terms such as 'faith, god, theology, a-theology, theism and non-theism'. He described the ideal 21st. century Quaker movement as comprised of individuals eager to listen to those whose experience differed from their own, not as members of two camps "sniping at each other from the safety of the Letters pages in *The Friend*." He confirmed that the Non-theist Network, recognised since 2012 as a listed informal group in Britain Yearly Meeting, is not a campaign which wants to rid Quakers of theism. It is simply a group that thinks Quaker actions and opinions need not have supernatural underpinnings. "Non-theists are but one colour in the Quaker rainbow." It asks: what do we *mean* by such terms as the 'spirit of the light?' George Fox himself rebelled against 'liturgese'. Some Quakers have observed that the god-word hardly got a mention in their Meetings until the non-theists arrived. He said "Faith is a most-abused word" and questioned the phrase "Faiths Communities" which carries the implication that other organisations like 'Save the Children' are in some sense faithless. On the other hand, faith abuse also exists as when it is disdained by the non-religious. He said we need to reclaim faith from these two extremes. Faith is not the same as belief and depends on trust. He then quoted several definitions from 'Twelve Quakers on Faith' including this: "Faith exists through my experiences and actions". The definitions shared an understanding of faith as something experienced, tried and tested. Fox wrote: "This I knew experimentally" at a time when the words 'experiment' and 'experience' were interchangeable. Unexamined faith will never propel us forward in our understanding. The word "god" was used in traditional Christian theology but

since the 18th century it has become increasingly depersonalised. He quoted Feuerbach: "Love is God Himself" and Blake: "And all must love the human form, In Heathen, Turk, or Jew; Where Mercy, Love, and Pity dwell, There God is dwelling too." Language about god has become increasingly metaphorical, non-literal. He concluded: "I believe in every aspect of god except his existence."

Philip Gross, poet, writer, lecturer, and member of Penarth LM spoke next. He meditated on the use and power of words which he both loves and deeply mistrusts. Of all his writing he thinks poetry most closely reflects his lived experience. He describes himself as a Quaker non-theist who uses the word "god" in his work because it is "fruitful, necessary, enabling." He *feels* god. The problem for him is in the phrase: "believe in (god)." He thinks it is unlikely that there is a god who micromanages our world. In his poetry he writes more questions than answers, making extensive use of "if, as if and what if." "If" reflects curiosity, "as if" metaphor, and "what if" imagination. He thinks god is a metaphor. We have always understood our world through stories and images. He recognises that angry atheism is a reaction to fundamentalism, a reaction against evangelism. Religions are all relative and there is no going back. He wants to break the cycle of reacting to others' extremes. He feels at home with Quaker groups, he knows its roots are in Christian belief but that doesn't matter. When we worship, what we build is the living space between and around words. Is that god? There are different dimensions of truth so arguments between horizontal and vertical or between good science, good art and good religion are unnecessary. Just as collaborative artists can learn from the best of each other's work so, too can we learn about religion, which is also art, from each other. He describes himself as a materialist; he does not think we need another world to say that meaning and values are pre-eminently important. Good religion is non-oppositional, non-hierarchical but co-existent. He feels most comfortable using the word "light" as it most nearly describes his experience of "alrightness".

Rex Ambler, retired lecturer in theology and author of *The Quaker Way* suggested that theists and non-theists do not necessarily in-

habit such different camps. Nevertheless some Friends feel stuck now in a way they did not before. There is the potential for conflict so how do we resolve it? Friends may feel they cannot use certain words in Meeting. However a crisis is also an opportunity; he observed that the Chinese character for these two words is identical. He believes we can get through this crisis. Now that he has retired he thinks he is a more serious Quaker. Waiting in the silence has enabled him to become more aware of himself. What is he doing here? Many of the questions we ask such as 'why are we here?' are universal. We all share our awareness of mortality and of wanting to live, as well as asking what the point of it all is since we know it will all be destroyed. We are all trying to make sense of it all; there are no ready-made answers. Science can't get close to providing these answers. Such questions are internal, of ourselves, and there are no answers "out there". We find ways to numb ourselves from the pain of knowing that we lack answers to these frightening questions. So does much of religion. There are three approaches to this dilemma:

1. We can construct an "as if" answer, i.e. a god, to 'explain' the unexplainable and the unknowable. Indeed Quakerism evolved from a rejection of church authority and the determination to explain our world for ourselves. Liberal Quakers said: "we can remake the world, ourselves."
2. We can accept that there is no meaning therefore we must create it for ourselves in a meaningless universe.
3. Neither of these two is satisfactory because neither reflects *my* experience. This is the mystical approach: looking for a sense of unity through letting go of our individualism. This is the Quaker way.

We need to empathise with fundamentalists who are all struggling with similar questions. We need to *trust* even though that does not come easily. The Quaker way might seem more of the problem than the solution. It is, after all, a most unusual form of Christian practice which has angered many people. He suggested that we should reconnect with our Quaker roots to deal with the theist/non-theist debate. That is:

Silence which is non-liturgy based. It is an open space, having let go of all dogma, free yet disciplined which allows us to take heed, to turn the telescope on ourselves.

Our personal truth is experimental/experiential. It is not about the world out there but is in me. In me is the world reflected. Yet my sense of self is not really me. Is this mysterious core god?

We speak from experience.

We discern truth together.

We need to dwell more on the way we practise Quakerism, to listen to ourselves in silence so as to discern what **is**. The most elusive reality is the ultimate reality. We become silent in the mystery of life.

Theism, a doctrine that postulates an existent god is inappropriate because god is incomprehensible; therefore no theory about god is possible. Atheism is another doctrine as is non-theism. We have to let them all go. Perhaps Meeting for Learning and a deeper exploration of the Quaker way will help resolve this crisis.

For the next session we were divided into "Breakout Groups". Observations included:

It's when you put "isms" on words that you start building barriers and creating them and us. Let there be no contention over words.

I'm torn between two perspectives: (a) that language doesn't matter, it's the music behind it, the symbolism *etc.*; and (b) that this may diminish both the importance of words and people's sense of being represented.

I was brought up without religion and ended up being a Quaker because no belief was expected of me. In my Meeting there are those I call the 'walking wounded' who, having left organised religions, are now vehemently anti the god-word.

How much are we tilting at windmills?

In my Meeting there are some people who fear speaking for fear of offending the non-theists.

I find labels deeply unhelpful and go annually to Lourdes as a spiritual boot camp.

The sense of doubt even pervades T.S. Eliot's Four Quartets.

We say and believe different things and we need to dialogue about them.

I've had an un-conversion experience.

The final Plenary Session comprised questions to the three main speakers, as follows:

What do you worship and how do you pray?

Rex said that worship made him feel whole. David doesn't worship anyone or thing. Instead he concentrates on "things of worth". He prays compulsively, having come from an evangelical background. However: "God has no hands on earth than ours." Philip would pray for that.

Human life is an historical unfolding, finding reconciliation with the earth for example. History can aid our discernment. God acts through history with mercy, pity, peace and love, said David.

"Where does it all come from?" asked the Sufi master. "Tell me!" said his student. "That's the answer" said the master.

Have any non-theists asked for the god word to be written out of Quaker Faith & Practice?

No, not within his group, said David. It would be an absurdity. But *Quaker Faith & Practice* might include other interpretations of the language in future editions. Philip asked: "How could I want anyone to censor their own language? I value their honesty, that's why I go to Meeting." Rex argued that non-theism *is* drawing boundaries and making objections which affect how Friends speak to each other. David denied this. It is *his* way of understanding Quakerism. Now we are all universalists previous tensions have dissipated. The glory of Quakerism lies precisely in its diversity.

Could we use the terms realism/non-realism instead of theist/non-theist?

Rex thought this was not helpful since realism and metaphor can be used together in both poetry and science. Words actually distort

our getting close to reality. Reality, metaphor and mystery all go together. Quakers have traditionally been reluctant to define their faith with 'isms' like 'theism'. We need a positive metaphor such as 'sea of faith', said Philip. We need a new metaphor to illuminate this diversity.

David said: naming our differences allows us to debate and dialogue. Otherwise it's all just Quaker fudge. He then said that all language, including language about god, was man-made. I said that if you believed in divine revelation then you could not say that.

Finally we were all asked **"What do you tell the children?"** and to share our answer with our immediate neighbour. As I was seated at the end of a row, still scribbling furiously, I found myself without an available partner. However I would have been tempted to reply: "I'm sorry, I haven't a clue!"

On the Evaluation Form at the end we were asked what we had learned from the day. I wrote that some Christian Quakers feel inhibited by non-theist opinions expressed in their Meetings. Asked what I would take back to my own Meeting I wrote that all participants should be encouraged to speak with confidence without fear of causing offence, whatever their beliefs.

Lynne Barty

Meeting for Sufferings

The first meeting of 2014 took place on 1 February, with a new clerking team at the table. We had a number of different items to consider but they did seem linked with the theme of how we speak out in the world.

As usual we heard from Trustees. They had been reflecting on how things had worked in 2013 and considering good forward planning and carrying out discerned work. There had been a lot of concern and comments about the alternative name for the Large Meeting House, "The Light", which will be used when letting to outside groups. We were told that this was a decision taken by the

Hospitality Board following a process of discernment and we were reminded of the importance of trusting other groups' decisions. We also heard from the Treasurer who told us that there had been an increase in contributions in 2013 and the position remains healthy. Following the divestment from fossil fuel extraction, investment has now been made in renewable energy and there is a new policy for investment. We were reminded of the contribution that the Hospitality Company makes to the running of Friends House and to the centrally managed work.

In 2012, Sufferings set up a group to look at the policy on making public statements as the present guidance did not reflect what is required now and the frequent need for a rapid response. The general principles were accepted and a detailed policy will be drawn up for staff who will also draft a shorter version for use by AMs and others who might be making public statements. We also recognised that there was a need to look at the use of social media and for issues of reputational risk to be considered by Trustees.

We then considered whether we wanted to recommend to BYM that a revision of *Quaker Faith & Practice* should begin. The consultation on this had produced wide discussion and many responses. We agreed to recommend to YM in 2014 that the process of revision is started but with a period of threshing and preparation. It is unlikely any new version would be available until the 2020s.

Friends may remember the proposed Vibrancy Project, a joint project of Woodbrooke and BYM Trustees to help Meetings become stronger and more confident. We heard from the newly appointed Programme Developer, who has had various discussions and considered the research that was done some time ago. She is looking to establish regional workers who would work across AMs to share experience, and also a single telephone number for help and advice. She is willing to come and speak about what she is doing.

We also had a brief introduction from Jessica Metheringham, the new Parliamentary Engagement Officer. She sees her job as looking at parliament and the political agenda and working on issues that are of interest to Friends often with other campaigning

groups. Recently she has been working on the Lobbying Bill and with QPSW on Trident. She is aware of the issues in relation to Scotland and the referendum and is keen for Friends with particular concerns to get in touch with her.

We heard that QPSW are drafting a statement about the government's welfare cuts but this has not yet been agreed.

We heard a proposal from Quaker Life for Young People's participation days. This had been tried in conjunction with Meeting for Sufferings in December when a number of representatives accompanied young people to Friends House where they then had their own programme during the day. It was proposed that this be repeated annually. While there was support in principle for involvement of young people, many representatives had reservations particularly with regard to safeguarding issues.

Finally, in relation to YM, we were told that the agenda would include the third year of our consideration of what it means to be a Quaker today and the start of discussion on living out our faith in the world. Preparation documents will be sent out in March and we were encouraged to register as soon as possible.

As usual all the papers for the meeting are on the website.

Janet Grimwade

Quaker Faith & Practice for those considering membership

It has long been our practice to offer *Quaker Faith & Practice* or another suitable book to those who come into Quaker membership. In practice this is nearly always 'another suitable book' as those who have reached that stage have already acquired *QF&P*.

The new guidance leaflet *Thinking about Membership* indicates that experienced Friends who are supporting attenders in their exploration of our faith and traditions (an Elder or Overseer from their local meeting, for example, or someone facilitating a *Becoming Friends* exploration) may supply them with a copy of *QF&P*.

A stock of *QF&Ps* is kept at 7 Victoria Terrace for this purpose, and experienced Friends may obtain one on request to Meeting house staff and on entering their name and the name of the recipient on a record sheet.

Phil Lucas
Area Meeting clerk

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. As a nudge in this direction, during 2014, we are suggesting particular Sundays when Friends might like to visit each other. The list below details these plans. Even if you cannot go to the Meetings listed, please hold them in the Light and give them your prayerful support.

Local Meeting	Date	Time	Place
East Lothian	13 April	11:00	East Linton Community Hall, 73 High Street
Kelso	18 May	10:30	Abbey Row, Kelso
Tweeddale	8 June	10:30	Tweedbridge Court, Margaret Blackwood House, Dukehaugh, Peebles
Barony Street	22 June	7 pm	33 Barony Street, Edinburgh
Portobello/Musselburgh	13 July	10:30	CHANGES, 108 Market Street, Musselburgh
Polmont	31 August	10:45	Greenpark Community Centre
Central Fife	28 September	10:30	Hunter Halls, Kirk Wynd, Kirkcaldy (opposite old Kirk)
Penicuik	5 October	11:00	Valleyfield House, 17 High Street (bring & share lunch)

All are warmly welcome!

Marilyn Higgins and Mary Woodward
Co-clerks of Area Meeting Elders

Polmont Meeting: All Age Worship, 2 February 2014

Our children are very dear to us and they often contribute spontaneously at the beginning and ends of Meeting. One of the things they do is shake hands right round our Meeting as we close, a lovely warm way to finish Worship.

Recently, it was Laura's turn to lead the Study Group and she arrived the week before with the idea that her week should be all age worship. And so on 2 February, the older Meeting held a short period of worship, aware that in the next room our children, their mums, and Laura were preparing for the next stage of the morning. The children and their adult helpers arrived and we began. We split into three groups, each with a child facilitator. (Our youngest child was a roving facilitator, dancing and smiling from group to group.) Our facilitator interviewed each of us about Gratitude, and then invited us each to draw something to show what we felt grateful for.

There followed a period of about twenty minutes of concentration, reflection, laughter and deep discussion between the generations about what we were grateful for. I left Meeting that day with a heightened sense of gratitude for many things, especially for the blessings of an all age Meeting.

Mariot Dallas

It may be taken for granted, I think, that Fox was unaware of his immense debt to the contemporary movements and spiritual interpreters. The ideas and central truths which burst into his consciousness as "openings", "insights", and "incursions" were in the air. They were in books and were being preached in closets, if not from housetops, but they were not real to Fox, and did not move him to action until they surged up in him and were born of his flesh and blood ... He did not originate the ideas which his movement incarnated, but he personally discovered them, identified himself with them, poured his life through them ...

Rufus Jones, *Mysticism and Democracy*, 1932

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

Minutes of Area Meeting held on Sunday 23 February 2014 at The Open Door, South Edinburgh

2014/02/01 Worship

During opening worship, *Quaker Faith & Practice* 10.33 was read to us. Written by Donald Court in 1965, it explains why the writer is a Friend. We have also remembered three friends whose deaths will be recorded in these minutes: James Webber, Bill Forbes and Anne Davies.

2014/02/02 Introductions

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

2014/02/03 Signing of minutes

The minutes of our last meeting, held on 11 January 2014 at Edinburgh Meeting House, have been signed and entered in the minute book.

2014/02/04 Matters arising

(a) The future of Scotland (Minute 2014/01/03 refers)

Notes of the discussions which took place during the morning of our January meeting have been circulated and are appended to the minutes of that meeting.

(b) Letter to the Roman Catholic Church (Minutes 2013/09/07, 10/04, 12/04 and 2014/01/05 refer).

A formal reply acknowledging our letter has been received from the office of Philip Tartaglia.

2014/02/05 Nominations and appointments

1. Appointments

The following names have been brought to us by the Nominations Committee.

- (a) We appoint Alastair Cameron of Portobello & Musselburgh and South Edinburgh Local Meetings to serve as our **Assistant Clerk** from 23 February until 31 December 2014;

- (b) We reappoint the following Friends to serve a second triennium from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2017 in the roles specified:
- i. **Elder** - Mary Woodward and Janet Grimwade
 - ii. **Overseer** - Margaret Suddaby
 - iii. **Trustee** - Brian Mayes
 - iv. **Archives** - Rhoda MacKenzie
 - v. **Sesame Editorial Group** - Alan Frith
 - vi. **Safeguarding Co-ordinators** - Madeleine Harding and David Sterratt
 - vii. **Northern Friends Peace Board** - Alan Frith
 - viii. **Children And Young People's Advocate** – Mary Jane Elton
 - ix. **Window Display (Edinburgh QMH)** - Chrissy Jameson
- (c) We appoint Jimmy Smith to serve as an **Elder** from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2016
- (d) We appoint Sue Freshwater to serve as an **Overseer** from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2017.
- (e) We appoint Rachel Fitzgerald and Don Stubbings to represent us at the Canterbury Commitment Conference in Swanwick in March 2014.
- (f) We appoint Callum Booth Lewis to represent us at Junior Yearly Meeting in Bath in August 2014.
- (g) We appoint Mark Hutcheson, our Treasurer, to attend the Annual Treasurers' Conference at Woodbrooke, 9-11 May.
- (h) We appoint the following Friends to represent us at Scotland General Meeting in Glasgow on Saturday 8 March 2014: Margaret Anderson, Alison Burnley, Hilary Davies, Marianne Ferguson Rice, Rachel Frith, Pat Lucas, Phil Lucas, Katrina McCrea. Brian Mayes, Jane Pearn, John Phillips, Ian Robertson, Audrey Sinton, Mary Woodward.

2. *Release from service and thanks*

John Fox has asked to be released from the Library Committee. We agree to his request and thank him for his service.

We note that Michele Gunn (Window Display (Edinburgh QMH)), Kerry Oliver (Overseer), and Bill and Sadie Paxton (joint Elders), have completed their service and also thank them.

2014/02/06 **Guidance on membership process**

A leaflet entitled *Thinking about Membership* has been prepared for our consideration by our Elders and Overseers. It reflects the guidance in Chapter 11 of the 5th edition of *Quaker Faith & Practice*.

We accept the leaflet for use in our Area Meeting and thank most warmly the group of Elders and Overseers who produced it.

2014/02/07 **Tabular statement report**

Sue Sierra, our Assistant Clerk Records, has reported on the Tabular Statement for 2013. Sue has drawn our attention to the decrease of members from 247 to 232, resulting principally from Central Edinburgh Meeting's tidying its list. We have welcomed ten new members: six by application and four by transfer. The number of attenders recorded has remained fairly constant. No marriages were registered during 2013.

2014/02/08 **Membership matters**

- (a) We record the death of **James Webber**, for many years an attender with Erna, his wife, at Central Edinburgh and Edinburgh Midweek Meetings. His Quaker funeral took place on 5 February 2014.
- (b) We record the death on 13 February of **Anne Davies**, a member of Central Edinburgh Meeting for many years. Anne's funeral, to be attended by close family only, is arranged for 10.30 am on Friday 28 February 2014 followed by a Meeting to celebrate the grace of God as shown in her life at 1 pm in the Caledonian Hall in the Royal Botanic Garden. We ask Central Edinburgh Meeting to prepare a memorial minute for our next meeting on 12 April.

- (c) We record the death of **Bill Forbes** of Hawick, a long-term attender at Kelso Meeting. Bill's funeral took place at Borders Crematorium and Wilton Church, Hawick, on 17 February 2014.
- (d) [An application for membership was received and visitors appointed.]
- (e) We have received transfer certificates for **Hilary Constable**, who has moved from North Cumbria AM and **Rosemary Hartill**, who has moved from Northumbria AM. Both now worship with Central Edinburgh Meeting. We welcome these Friends to our Area Meeting.
- (f) We have received a request from **Eileen Schott**, who has moved to Cardiff, for her membership to be transferred to South Wales AM. We agree to this and ask Sue Sierra to send the necessary certificate.
- (g) Friends have expressed regret that no memorial meeting for worship was arranged for **Marion Morton**, who died on 11 September 2013 and we are asked to discern whether it would be appropriate to arrange one. We agree that this should be done and ask John Phillips and Audrey Sinton to make the arrangements and to inform Friends.

2014/02/09 Recording the death of Friends

We have been advised by our Custodian of Records that there has been no consistency in our records in the ways in which we have marked and recorded the deaths of Friends in the past. We agree it will be helpful for us to spend time addressing this matter in the course of this year.

2014/02/10 Meeting for Sufferings report

Janet Grimwade has reported to us on the Meeting for Sufferings held on 1 February 2014.

[The minute summarises Janet Grimwade's report, which is given in full on pp. 15-17 above.]

Following Janet's report, we have been asked to consider whether it should be made possible for Friends not members of Meeting for

Sufferings to attend its meetings to observe and uphold it. Now that this Meeting is no longer the Yearly Meeting trustee body this could be considered helpful in terms of transparency and openness. Concern was expressed, on the other hand, that this would create a two tier meeting. We ask Friends who have a concern about this matter to bring it to us at a future meeting.

2014/02/11 Revision of *Quaker Faith & Practice* (Minutes 2013/10/07 and 12/04b refer)

A special Area Meeting was held on Saturday 1 February 2014 to begin the consideration of the changes needed in the complete revision of our Book of Discipline. The notes of that meeting have been circulated and will be attached to these minutes.

2014/02/12 Report on *What has God got to do with it?* conference

Lynne Barty represented us at this conference, held in January and organised by the Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations. Three male speakers, David Boulton, Philip Gross and Rex Ambler each made forty minute presentations on the theme and Lynne has given us a vibrant report of each and of the group discussion and plenary session which followed. We ask Lynne to submit her report for publication in *Sesame* [see pp. 10-15] and thank her for it.

2014/02/13 Report from our YMG 2014 Group

Stasa Morgan-Appel has reported to us on the work of this Group, which is helping us connect with Yearly Meeting Gathering, to be held in Bath in August. The Group wishes to engage both those able to attend YMG and those not intending to be there. Group meetings are planned (a) at David Somervell's home (7 Nile Grove, Edinburgh) on Saturday 22 March at 11.30 am; (b) on Saturday 7 June in Edinburgh; and (c) on Saturday 5 July in Kelso (to coincide with Area Meeting).

2014/02/14 Correspondence and notices

- (a) John Fox told us that he plans to show the film *KJB: The Book that Changed The World. The Amazing Tale of the Birth of the King James Bible* on Thursday 8 May at 7.30pm at 7 Victoria

Terrace if there is sufficient interest. The film lasts 90 minutes and comes with John's warm recommendation. Friends are asked to let him know if they wish to attend

- (b) We have received notice of the Beshara Lecture to be given at Augustine United Church on 28 February at 7 pm. The keynote speaker is Jane Carroll, Dip.Arch., who will be joined by a panel and the theme is 'A Heart Capable of Every Form' – atheism, agnosticism and belief. Admission is free, with a suggested donation of £5 and a place can be booked by email: trust@beshara.org.
- (c) Annie Miller has prepared a document encouraging Friends to explore some of the radical ideas being put forward for the future of Scotland. This is available direct from Annie.
- (d) We have received notice of a series of workshops about how Quakers name and talk about God, the Light, the Inward Christ, the Buddha, the Lord ... available free to any Local or Area Meeting and run by Rhiannon Grant under the heading '*... Or Whatever You Call It – Quakers Naming the Mystery*'. Rhiannon has been doing research at the University of Leeds into British Quakers' use of language.

We ask our Clerk to contact her to explore the possibility of putting on such a series in our area.

- (e) Quaker Peace and Social Witness is encouraging Friends to take part in an ecumenical campaign promoted by Church Action on Poverty: a fast, aimed at shifting public opinion and promoting the debate on food poverty in the UK. Details are on the website www.endhungerfast.co.uk which presents a range of options from missing a meal to a full day's fast on Ash Wednesday, 5 March. Participants are invited to wear something purple to signify their participation.

. 2013/12/15 Concluding minute

34 friends, including two attenders, from six Local Meetings have attended all or part of this Area Meeting, as indicated below:

Central Edinburgh 14	Central Fife 1	East Lothian 4	Kelso 1	Penicuik -
Polmont	Portobello & Musselburgh 4	South Edinburgh 10	Tweeddale -	

We next meet in Edinburgh Meeting House at 11 am on Saturday 12 April 2014.

(Signed)

Phil Lucas, Clerk

Conscientious Objectors in World War I

We have received a request from **Margaret Roy** that any *Sesame* reader with information about C.O.s in Lanarkshire, and the Biggar area in particular, should contact her; it is for a project being run by the local history department at Biggar Museum.

Friends who are interested in the history of opposition to war may like to know about the researches of Cyril Pearce: a new edition of his book *Comrades in Conscience* is to be published in May (ISBN 978-1-903427-82-8: pbk, £15). The first edition, published in 2001, examined resistance to the Great War in Huddersfield, said to be a hotspot of resistance: as well as Quakers and other religious non-conformists, there were also politically-motivated objectors who refused to serve. The new version finds example of similar hotspots elsewhere: in Hertfordshire, for example, Watford rural district was one (it included the Seventh Day Adventists' training college at Garston) and Hitchin rural district another (Letchworth, the first garden city, was home to many pacifist idealists).

Cyril Pearce is also compiling a register, currently comprising some 16,500 names, of conscientious objectors. This is eventually to be accessible online via the Imperial War Museum's "Lives of the First World War" website (www.livesofthefirstworldwar.org).

Experiment with Light in Scotland

Scottish Gathering, 28 June 2014

Glasgow Meeting House

38 Elmbank Crescent, Glasgow G2 4PS

<http://www.quakerscotland.org/glasgow> Tel: 0141 248 8493

The day Retreat is aimed at practitioners and is an opportunity for Experimenters to gather, practise and share together in a new way. Come and meet practitioners from all over Scotland (and possibly further afield). Share experiences. Share practice with others. As well as Light groups, the event is open to Friends who practice on their own.

We shall gather in time for welcoming refreshments before the Retreat starts at 11am, and we intend to finish by 5pm.

Over the day we shall be reflecting on and sharing our experience of an Experiment in retreat. A simple art technique will enable us to physically process our experience in the Experiment. We shall then reflect further on the emergence of deeper meanings in the work we produce and share together. Materials, assistance and support will be provided.

Retreat leaders: Helen Meads and Andrea Freeman

To book, contact Margaret Roy: margaret.roy@btinternet.com or Tel: 01899 220 931 (mornings)

Resources on the website:

www.experiment-with-light.org.uk/resource.htm

Donations towards costs on the day: £15 guideline

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
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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

Tweeddale Tweedbridge Court, Margaret Blackwood House, Dukehaugh, 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: East Linton Community Hall		11.00am
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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, Details as Second Sunday above

Central Fife Hunter Halls, Kirkcaldy as above		10.30am
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Portobello & Musselburgh CHANGES Community Health Project		
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108 Market St, Musselburgh, East Lothian EH21 6QA		10.30am
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Barony St Meeting 33 Barony Street, Edinburgh		7.00 pm
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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, Mark Hutcheson. An email version of *Sesame* is more ecological and is free! A large print version is available on request. Published by the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain: South East Scotland Area Meeting, Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2JL. Scottish Charity No. SC019165