

SESAME

Number 188: July 2014

Discernment and the Referendum / Words from Silence / Not Knowing/ Review Trapped/
Meeting for Sufferings/ May AM Minutes / Funerals Committee / Visits /



Act of Union 1707

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 2 September, for distribution week commencing 14 September. 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

Area Meeting Saturday 5 July 11.30 am, Kelso Meeting House

**Engaging with Yearly Meeting Gathering
and the Scottish Independence Referendum**

Area Meeting starts at 11.30 am to allow those travelling by bus from or *via* Edinburgh to arrive in good time. The Perrymans bus number 52 leaves Edinburgh bus station at 9.00 am, stops at Cameron Toll at 9.20 am and arrives in Kelso at 11.05 am.

The morning agenda includes an item led by those who have been preparing for Yearly Meeting Gathering (to be held at Bath in August) and will help those of us not intending to be there to engage with its theme. The afternoon agenda will include a worship-sharing session concerned with the Independence Referendum (please see my thoughts on discernment below). I will circulate the full agenda by email.

We shall also hear reports on the work of the John Wigham Trust and on the Meeting for Sufferings held on 7 June.

I look forward to seeing many of you in the beautiful Border country.

**Phil Lucas
AM Clerk**

**Personal discernment and the
Scottish Independence Referendum**

Quaker worship gave me time and space to dissolve my hard shell of self-centredness to be sensitive to discern things with fairness and unaffected by prejudice. I felt the need to be faithful to truth instead of relying on existing judgment. (from Q.F.& P. 24.16)

This brief quotation comes from the testimony of a Japanese conscientious objector but it captures one of the essential elements of what it means to be Quaker: the practice of personal and corporate discernment. Whenever we face decisions, either personally or corporately, we are called to submit ourselves to this discipline. Faced with the challenging choice between yes and no as September 18th approaches, how is this working for us?

I guess it has been clear to Scottish Quakers from the start, as it has been within other faith traditions, that this is a matter for personal rather than corporate discernment. Our individual backgrounds, experiences of life, emotional and

family ties, sense of being Scottish, British, European, World citizens all vary as will our interpretations of the implications of Scottish independence. The possibility of us discerning together whether yes or no is 'right' or 'the will of God' for all of us was never on. So it comes down to personal discernment, to my giving 'time and space to dissolve my hard shell of self-centredness to be sensitive to discern things with fairness and unaffected by prejudice.' In a matter as complex and loaded as this, with so many known knowns and known unknowns (to misquote Donald Rumsfeld) am I able to find my way to a sense of being led, of being 'faithful to truth'?

Sensitive listening is key to the discernment process. We listen to the voices, insights, experience, knowledge of others, both those who are ex-pert in one field or the other and those whose sense of rightness comes from a less analytical place. I guess all of us have been and will be listening hard to the conflicting voices demanding our attention in the long lead up to the Referendum; listening, reading, weighing, balancing. And then we submit all that to the Light within and listen to the still small voice.

In January, we worked together from our understanding of Quaker testimony to envisage the kind of society we would like to live in. Is it possible that the decision taken in September may help open the way for Scotland and/or for the whole UK to move in the direction we hope for? Our July Area Meeting will give us opportunity to continue listening to each other as part of this discernment process.

True godliness don't turn men out of the world but enables them to live better in it and excites their endeavours to mend it... Christians should keep the helm and guide the vessel to its port; not meanly steal out at the stern of the world and leave those that are in it without a pilot to be driven by the fury of evil times upon the rock or sand of ruin.

William Penn, 1682 Q.F. & P. 23

Phil Lucas

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

11.30 am at Kelso Quaker Meeting House on Saturday 5 July 2014

AGENDA

1. Worship
 2. Introductions
 3. Minutes of last meeting, held 24 May 2014 in Peebles
 4. Preparation for Yearly Meeting Gathering 2014
 5. Matters arising from previous meetings.
 - a) The Area Meeting Social Responsibility Group (Minutes 2014/04/07 and 2014/05/04b refer)
 - b) Supporting each other in the Area Meeting (Minutes 2014/04/12 and 2014/05/04c refer)
 - c) Proposed Susan Stein performance about Etty Hillesum (Minute 2014/05/11a refers)
 6. Report on the John Wigham Trust : Annie Miller
LUNCH probably here
 7. Appointments
 8. Membership matters
 9. Intention of marriage : Anna Mitchell and Brian Cleland
 10. A request for grant aid
 11. Report on Meeting for Sufferings : Janet Grimwade
 12. Wool Against Weapons - update and appeal for support
 13. Personal discernment and the Independence Referendum:
a worship-sharing session
 14. AOCB
- Correspondence and notices
- Concluding minute

Words from Silence

Many people regard meditation as something 'Eastern', but there is a long history of the practice of silence in Western traditions. One example of it, from 16th century Spain, can be seen in the book entitled *The Interior Castle*. The author describes the self as like a castle made of diamond, or of very clear crystal, and describes a journey to its centre.

The first outer set of rooms in the castle is full of noise and disturbance, and things that block the light. Those who are to get inside need to learn self-knowledge, a love of what is good, and, above all, humility. They also need to let go of unnecessary cares and desires.

The second rooms are reached by those who are drawn there, but are still conscious of how hard it is to avoid evil. A state of recollection or reflection can't be reached by effort, but comes gently. People expect this to be rewarded, but that is to miss the need to align the will with what is good, rather than what we would desire.

In the third set of rooms are people who have learned to help rather than harm others, who reflect on their lives, and who find a sort of peace, yet still find silence dry and empty. They begin to see how hard it is to curb desires, and to accept loss and setbacks.

The fourth rooms are places of quiet. Despite some troubling thoughts, people here can experience a deep calm and peace linked to a delight in what is good, and a love of what is right. They find a wish to go where there is silence, and to escape from the world. This can't be done by reasoning with oneself, nor by making efforts to stop thinking, but by gently accepting the stillness. Yet people here can still take a wrong path, or just confuse drowsiness with a state of calm and peace.

In the fifth rooms are those who leave all conscious thoughts behind, who are not aware of any activity, who are neither drowsy nor curious to understand. There is nothing here to see, or hear, or understand. Neither reason, or imagination, or memory intrude, but they are led to a true state of peace, and a real joy, which is quite different from ordinary pleasures. Though such a state might not be lengthy, it seems to have been much shorter than it actually was. This may not happen often, yet it leaves behind a sense of certitude. This stillness can't be reached by effort, only by allowing oneself to be taken there. The author is quite emphatic about this, as also about the risk of coming so far, and then going astray.

Her book goes on to describe a sixth and a seventh set of rooms, but by now is in territory few might reach. Many troubles which can afflict those who have gone so far are vividly described. She also describes pain or wounds inflicted by the fire of the divine love. Words may be heard such as 'Be at peace' or 'All will be well'. There is a careful discussion of how to test such things, and about visions of several kinds -

carefully differenti-ated. There is also advice not to neglect meditation on specific themes.

The seventh chapter describes the final stage of the journey. Here she de-clares God resides in the centre of the self. The language of revelation and illumination is used to describe what is a presence, rather than a vision of the imagination. The language of spiritual marriage is also used here, and the enduring nature of that is contrasted with a union like that of two candles, joined for a while to give a single flame, and then separated. The final stage is described as like rain falling into a river, or a river joining the sea. But this is then qualified: there is no certainty of not failing; though there is peace at the centre of the self there can be suffering elsewhere.

The book contains a good deal of conventional Catholic doctrine and piety, as well as the writer's careful analysis of her own experience out-lined above. There are frequent apologies for the difficulty of explaining what is written, and a good deal of repetition and changes of subject. I have focused on what might be most of interest to readers of *Sesame*, and passed over much else. But I hope that enough has been outlined here to show that this book is one from which much can be learned, even by those whose tradition or viewpoint might be very different from that of the author. She is rightly regarded as a quite remarkable explorer of regions to which the reader should wish to travel. And the name of the 16th century Spanish author? Teresa of Avila.

The account above is not an attempt to reflect everything in the book mentioned, but rather to focus only on those elements where the author seems to be writing most directly from her experience.

David Mealand

Book Review

Trapped – My Life with Cerebral Palsy by Fran Macilvey (Skyhorse Publishing, 2014)

In this book our Friend Ann Forsyth, writing under her pen name Fran Macilvey, gives an astonishingly honest account of her life with the dis-abling condition of cerebral palsy, or CP as it's often known. (To quote from Wikipedia: "CP is a general term for a group of permanent, non-progressive movement disorders that cause physical disability, mainly in the areas of body movement")

Fran's fluent, sometimes ironic style, is tinged with humour and easy to read. It gripped me from the first sentences in which she describes some of the exigencies of her life today. This is not a book to be taken lightly, however, for whilst Fran makes us aware of her deepest feelings and discloses intimate details of her life, she is subtly

challenging us to confront our own attitudes and so to uncover our prejudices regarding people with disabilities.

From birth, extreme physical and emotional pain, trauma, endless indignities and lack of respect have plagued her life, yet she has often confronted them with tremendous courage, searching for the positives in any situation. That birth was also traumatic for her parents living in the Congo in the 1960s; Fran was the unexpected second of premature twins. She writes feelingly of her mother's pain and frustration and her father's sense of powerlessness, thus introducing us to her natural family.

Reading the book I understood Fran's sense of self-deprecation, her intensity of inner struggle, aiming high despite her natural limitations, and blaming others for their lack of understanding of her feelings, yet realising how hard it was for them to do so. Her honesty shines through and I found myself trying to imagine what I might feel in a body with twisted lower limbs, finding myself being subjected to hospital treatments "expected to make me better" but never having the chance to question the outcome, or to know that great pain and immobility might follow for weeks, or even months afterwards.

You have to read the book to discover how Fran has found self-respect and real love and what she has achieved despite the odds seemingly being stacked against her. I loved reading of her moments of joy, for instance when she went to yet another dreaded hospital appointment, but on arrival found a pair of crutches laid out for her so that, at last, she could stand upright and see the world as others did. Or when she and her twin, Martha, guzzled endless sugary drinks on a flight to join their parents for a school holiday.

Reading this will not only bring you closer to Fran, this brave soul, but make you more aware of the sensitivities of people you know who have disabilities. Whilst Fran's is obvious, many are invisible or, at least, less apparent. Don't be afraid to challenge your own perceptions!

Trapped is available from Waterstones or any other bookshop (order through Perseus Distribution) or obtain it online from W H Smith or Amazon. The audiobook narrated by the author is available from Audible. Prices: £8.99 - £13.99 depending on preferred format.

Marianne Ferguson Rice

Not Knowing

In the light of recent discussions I find myself perplexed: am I a theist or a non-theist? It all depends on what you mean by '-ist'. I take an -ist to be someone who has come to a conclusion: in this case, about the nature of ultimate reality. For them there is, or there is not, a dimension called God, and they view all the complexities of existence through this lens. But supposing I'm not an -ist?

Suppose that when I'm offered an either/or choice, I find myself to be a 'sometimes this/sometimes that' person, or even a 'both at once' person?

My god-image is not of any agent or actor external to me. But it is a place – the place of unity and truth. I find it within me. The truth about myself, about my relationship to other people and to the world; the indivisible unity of all beings. I try (and fail rather too often) to live in this awareness. It's a place I choose to approach whenever I can (of course I can't be fully there – it's absolute, I'm a mere human); in times of quiet reflection, during Meeting for Worship, with others, or on my own. In prayer. too. And then, because it comes more naturally, I speak to this Being-that-isn't-a-being. I voice my thoughts, doubts and joys in words, though seldom aloud. I hold myself and those I care for in God's light. When in difficulty, I call upon God's help. Do I believe I have a listener? Or am I myself the listener, 'deep calling to deep'? I honestly don't know. Does it matter that I don't know? I'm not sure that it does.

And here's the mystery. I don't recognize the god of my childhood – the god with supra-human attributes, the god who intervenes in our affairs or responds to our pleas. But I have had direct encounter, three times, with something that might be named as 'God'. An all-encompassing Presence, more overwhelming, more intense than I have words for. As limitless as space and as tiny as a molecule. With a direct, personal relationship to me. A void and yet – a voice. Each time, it was not comforting but terrifying.

I neither believe nor disbelieve: these have been my experiences. Words are words, thoughts are thoughts, notions are notions: they are not the thing itself.

Dear Friends, a binary choice is too limiting for me. I'm content to live with not knowing; with the understanding that whatever I think, it's entirely possible – even probable – that I may be mistaken. And in case it closes a door, some of us don't wish to be any kind of -ist.

Jane Pearn

(This article has previously appeared in The Friend.)

Quaker Funeral Arrangements Committee

Funeral Arrangements Committee exists to help Friends plan for their own funeral or that of other Friends. The advice might be about Quaker practice, or about undertakers, local burial grounds and crematoria, or other practical details.

One of the things which impressed me when I first got to know about Quakers was the inclusion in the Advices of down-to-earth matters, such as what television you watch, or being sure that your finances are in order. I was particularly struck by the reminder to make a will, to simplify things for those you leave behind. Leaving advice on what arrangements you would like for your funeral might not be on quite the same level of practical necessity as the need for a will, but it can be very helpful

for your family and friends. It is not something we are keen to think about while we are fit and healthy, but in truth that is probably the best time to contemplate it.

Funeral Arrangements Committee has prepared a form and some helpful notes which will help you through the process, guiding you about issues you may wish to think about. These documents can be obtained from several different sources. The most direct for those who have internet access is go to www.quakerscotland.org/south-east and look for the links under "documents" at the right of the page. Alternatively your overseer should be able to supply you with a copy, as should any member of the committee. The completed forms are kept in a safe at the Meeting House at 7 Victoria Terrace, and are treated in the strictest confidence.

If you have not done so already, please consider completing and returning a form as soon as possible. If you have previously returned a form some time ago, it is worth checking if the responses need to be changed because of the passage of time.

Bob Harwood

(former convener, SESAM Funeral Arrangements Committee)

Meeting for Sufferings

Our June meeting started as usual with a period of worship, a reading from *Quaker Faith & Practice* and remembering any former members who had died. Having approved the agenda, we considered a number of minutes from AMs. Concerns about economic inequality and sustainability were passed to QPSW and one about End of Life care was passed to Quaker Life. There has been on-going concern about education which had been discussed at our meeting in December. A conference has been arranged at the end of August to follow this up and there will also be a session at YMG.

One AM had sent a minute expressing concern about the situation in Ukraine. We heard the Europe and Middle East Section were supporting two Friends in investigating the possibilities of mediation. We minuted our support for this. Financial support is also required and can be done via EMES website (www.fwccemes.org)

The Long Term Framework Working Group was appointed to look at how to set up a framework for the work of all Quakers in Britain to follow on for the Framework for Action. This would involve a wide consultation with AMs and Local Meetings. We considered their draft document which would include questions for Meetings to consider such as "What do Quakers hold in common?" and "What is your five year vision for your Local Meeting, Quakers in Britain, and for the world?" We considered the consultation document and various suggestions were made. The group will be meeting to revise the document and AMs and LMs are encouraged to set time aside in the autumn for this consultation.

During lunchtime we could either find out from staff what action had been taken on various minutes that had come to Sufferings over the past year or to hear about the work of Friends House Hospitality Company (this included tasting a new range of sandwiches).

In the afternoon we heard a report from the clerk of Central Nominations Committee. There have been difficulties in finding people willing to serve on this committee and in involving younger Friends due to the timing of their meetings. As a result they are suggesting that the numbers on the committee be reduced. This requires a review of their terms of reference and a small group was set up to find Friends to do this. We were asked to distribute the new Quaker Service Information Forms and encourage Friends to complete them

The Clerk of Trustees reported on their recent meeting. They have reviewed standing committees, such as QPSW Central Committee, and have agreed that the numbers on committees should be reduced. They have considered the preparation needed for the review of the Book of Discipline and have funded a part-time post from the autumn to help with this. Helen Rowlands, who is about to leave her post at Woodbrooke, will be taking on this role. We were told that the YM investment policy would be on the website in August.

Our representative to The Quaker Council for European Affairs, which is the Quaker voice in Europe, told us about their meeting in April. She particularly highlighted concern about the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) which could have a variety of serious implications. Friends were encouraged to respond to the EU consultation. More information can be found on their website: www.qcea.org.

We considered the final draft of the report of the Minute 36 (Canterbury) Commitment Group which they will present to YMG. We were happy with the four key areas they identified for implementation and the proposal that a group be set up to provide support, guidance and inspiration to all parts of the Quaker community to take this work forward.

Finally, the Recording Clerk brought a proposal that there should be a review of "listed informal groups". There are currently 49 groups listed in the Book of Meetings. There are criteria for inclusion but no process for removing them. There are some 180 British groups that have some relationship to Quakers with a range of governance arrangements. There is a need to be clearer about this, to offer support and to help manage risk. We agreed to set up a group to review the situation and to propose new arrangements. Terms of reference for it will be brought to our next meeting in September and Nominations Committee will be asked to find names.

The meeting ended with time for us to enjoy tea, cake and some conversation before heading home. As usual all the papers and the minutes are available on the website and there are reports in *The Friend* of 13 June.

Janet Grimwade

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
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
Clerk of Area Meeting Elders

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

Minutes of Area Meeting held at 2 pm on Saturday 24 May 2014 in the Andrew Leckie Church Hall, Peebles

2014/05/01 Worship

During opening worship extract 2.66 from *Quaker Faith & Practice* was read to us. Written by Marrienne McMullen in 1987, this reminds us of the nature of spoken ministry during meeting for worship

2014/05/02 Introductions

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

2014/05/03 Minutes of our last meeting, held 12 April 2014 at Edinburgh Meeting House, have been signed and entered in the minute book.

2014/05/04 Matters arising

d) **Jane Pearn's application for a QPSW relief grant (minutes 2013/12/08 and 2014/04/05 refer).**

e)

We have learned that Quaker Peace and Social Witness have de-clined Jane Pearn's application this time. We are glad that nonethe-less we have agreed to donate some of the profit from this year's Festival Committee activities to the work of the Mines Advisory Group.

Jane was disappointed with the way in which she was informed of this decision, the email to her being wrongly addressed, the minute wrongly dated (as November 2014) and suggesting she was a mem-ber of Dunblane rather than Kelso meeting. We ask our clerk to share this disappointment with those responsible.

f) The formation of an Area Meeting Social Responsibility Group (minute 2014/04/07 refers)

Some of the Friends who have been taking forward our concerns on environmental sustainability and economic justice have met to consider how best to take forward our concerns. They have borne in mind that, whatever the outcome of the Scottish independence referendum in September, we will need to work towards building a society which better reflects Quaker testimony, and in particular our concerns for a more economically just and environmentally sustainable society.

The group brings us the following recommendations:

- 1) that we lay down the Sharing our Stories on Sustainability and the Economic Justice Working Groups;
- 2) that we establish a Social Responsibility and Justice Working Group of six members to take our work on these issues forward over the next two years from July 2014 to July 2016;
- 3) that we ask our Nominations Committee to bring six names for appointment to this group to our next meeting, suggesting three should have particular interest in each of the areas of concern;
- 4) that the new Group should further refine the suggested terms of reference, which have been shared with us, at its first meeting;
- 5) that the new Group should organise a day conference in Edinburgh Meeting House on Saturday 22 November 2014, two months after the independence referendum, to involve the whole Area Meeting in taking forward these concerns for the future of our society.

g) Supporting each other in the Area Meeting (2014/04/12)

Local Meeting clerks have received a proposed rota suggesting at which Area Meeting, from September 2014 through 2015, each Meeting should present snapshots of its life and work. Responses from most are still awaited.

2014/05/05 Membership matters

a) Death of Bill Forbes

A minute from Kelso Local Meeting recording the death of Bill Forbes has been received and read to us.

b) Transfers in

We have received transfer in certificates for Catriona Courtier (now living in Edinburgh) from West London AM and for Nan Stewart (now living in North Berwick) from East Scotland AM. We ask David Somervell to welcome Catriona and Rachel Frith to welcome Nan to our Area Meeting.

c) Membership application of Anna Mitchell

Madeleine Harding and Rufus Reade have met with Anna Mitchell to explore her membership application. Neither Madeleine nor Rufus is able to be present today but their account of the meeting, which has been signed by both and by Anna, has been read to us.

Anna was born to Quaker parents but was a church attender in her early life and started attending Quaker meetings with her father when in her twenties.

Employed as a social work adviser and trainer in Edinburgh, Anna lives in Aberdour and attends South Edinburgh and Central Fife meetings. She finds Quaker testimony supportive of her views and work and wishes to continue her spiritual journey in a Quaker context.

We welcome Anna into membership of the Society and ask Sylvia Massey (subject to consent) to welcome her.

d) Presence of attenders during membership discussions (Minute 2013/12/05b refers)

Our elders and overseers brought a request to us in December 2013 that attenders be allowed to remain in meeting when membership matters, excepting perhaps their own application for membership, are considered. We failed to reach unity at that meeting.

We agree to adopt the practice as proposed by Area Meeting Elders and Overseers, in the interests of transparency.

2014/05/06 Report on our work with children and young people

Mary Jane Elton has reported on work with children and young people in our Area Meeting. Several local meetings are attended by children, mostly small in number, though larger at Central Edinburgh.

A welcome event for babies and young children was held at Victoria Terrace in January 2014 with the theme 'Life is full of discoveries'. Rachel Fitzgerald, the new convenor of the Central Edinburgh children's committee, is working with others to bring children from local meetings together. A very successful event for 9-16 year olds was held in April and a family 'meeting for picnic' is planned for June.

There is a healthy group of 13-17 year olds in Scotland, who meet regularly for Link weekends. They met at the Bonaly Outdoor Centre last October, a very good venue with outdoor space, and plan to meet next October in Glasgow Meeting House, with a trip to Troon for a ceilidh. Madeleine Harding is the planning force behind these weekends and we record our thanks to her and to the young adults who help her.

Children from our Area Meeting also took part in a very successful General Meeting family weekend held last year in Nethy Bridge, an opportunity for children and young people to get to know each other and, through this acquaintance, to be confident about attending Summer Shindig, the annual event for 11-16 year olds from Scotland and Northern England. A further family weekend is being planned for October 2014 in Braemar and all families, especially those with 9-11 year olds, are encouraged to take part. We also heard that South Edinburgh Meeting's annual Wiston Lodge weekend is open to other local meetings and provides another opportunity for families to get to know each other.

Our Area Meeting has had representatives at Junior Yearly Meeting each year. The two who attended last year reported to us in September and one will be going to Bath this year.

We are reminded how important it is that Meetings, even those not usually attended by children and young people, are prepared to make any welcome should they turn up. We are reminded also of the importance of having up to date safeguarding procedures in place. We have been assured that our current work with children and

young people is under-pinned in this way and have noted the importance of including reference to this in future reports.

We have been challenged to consider whether our work with families, children and young people can be more fully integrated into the life of the Area Meeting, so that those without children feel included and welcome.

We thank Mary Jane for this encouraging report and express our thanks to all those involved in this work.

2014/05/07 Report on the work of our Prison Minister

Margaret Mortimer, Quaker Minister to Edinburgh Prison, has reported to us on her work over the past year. She continues to offer personal support, with help from others, to a prisoner who was on remand a few years ago and is grateful for the support the John Wigham Trust has been able to offer him. The work of the Prison Chaplaincy had been hampered by the continuing absence through illness of the Prison Chaplain, but the system of making small financial grants to prisoners admitted without money has worked smoothly and Margaret has been able to play her part in that.

The work of the Visitors' Centre continues to thrive and Margaret has been able to use the Area Meeting funding provided to purchase a further table and chairs and some art materials. She has also been able to negotiate a supply of children's books from those withdrawn from elsewhere and hopes to set up some story-times in the Centre during the summer.

Margaret is a member of both the Howard League and Families Outside and commends membership of these organisations to Friends. She is grateful to Area Meeting for its funding of equipment for the Visitors' Centre and for prisoners' financial relief and asks if this can be continued. She has told us that Central Edinburgh Meeting is having a special collection for Families Outside and encourages other Local Meetings to do the same.

We agree to make last year's grant up from £250 to the £280 actually spent and to make a further grant of £500 this year for the work of the Visitors' Centre and grants to impoverished new prisoners.

We note that, further to our decision last year (minute 2013/05/08), the Alternatives to Violence Project is now being implemented in several Scottish prisons.

Bill Taylor, the head of the Scottish prison chaplaincy services, is meeting with the Scottish Quakers & Criminal Justice Group in October. Margaret feels this may well be a time for hope.

We thank Margaret for her report and for the work she is doing on our behalf.

2014/05/08 Report on the work of our Archives Group

Pat Lucas, our Custodian of Records, has reported on the work of the AM Archives Group, which has reached a milestone, being now in a position to transfer many documents which are ten years old or more to the National Archives of Scotland. These include the account book and papers of the Quaker Overseas Relief Committee, set up in 1954, and the minute books of the Scottish Domestic Bureau for Refugees, 1939-46, which was set up by members of Stafford Street Meeting and worked with the Edinburgh Jewish Community to place refugees in domestic service.

The file recording deceased Friends has been updated and the current file is accessible in the Victoria Terrace library. Documents relating to the purchase and history of 7 Victoria Terrace, material relating to Fringe Venue 40 and information concerning The Pleasance and early Quakers in Edinburgh have been retained, as have minutes from 2004 onwards.

Pat asked that we make sure minutes and other relevant records held by individual Friends are transferred to the care of the Area Meeting archive or at least that the Archive Group is informed of their existence. It is hoped that the records retained at Victoria Terrace will be available for reference. The Archive Group has a list of both the recent archives kept there and all the Quaker archives held in the National Archives (which are held under the code CH10).

Guidance papers for clerks and committees have been produced and need to be passed on to new clerks and conveners when post-holders change.

We are grateful to Pat and the Archive Group for all the work they are doing on our behalf, particularly in outlining systems of good practice.

2014/05/09 Report from our representative on Quaker Life Representative Council

John Fox has reported on the meeting of QLRC which took place at Woodbrooke in early April. The theme was 'Developing Quaker Community', much of the content being based on Chapter 12 of *Quaker Faith & Practice*.

Visits to a number of meetings exploring how they work as communities has led to a published resource, *Sharing our Meetings Stories*. A new publication on eldership and oversight will be available later in the year.

John attended firstly a workshop on leadership among Friends, a concept some Friends find difficult. He shared with us some of the work on this done by George Lakey, a Philadelphia Friend. John's second workshop was led by John Gray on new ways of being in community. A resource on this will be circulated to all Meetings later in the year.

We thank John, our deputy representative on QLRC, for his report and look forward to receiving the publications to which he has referred.

2014/05/10 Appointments

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

Re-appointments:

Overseer - **John Eccles**, to serve from July 2014 to June 2017;

Custodian of Records - **Pat Lucas**, to serve from July 2014 to June 2017;

Festival Committee - **Cathie McCurrach** and **Rachel Frith**, both to serve from October 2014 to September 2016;

Edinburgh Meeting House Management Committee

- **Ken Jobling** and **Brian Mayes**, both to serve from October 2014 to September 2016; and
- **Janet Grimwade** and **Martin Burnell**, both to serve from October 2014 to September 2017

We appoint the above eight Friends accordingly.

New appointments - to serve for three years:

Elder - **Rachel Frith**, to serve from April 2014 to March 2017;

Overseer - **Lin Murison**, to serve from July 2014 to June 2017;

Edinburgh Meeting House Management Committee - **David Sterratt**, to serve from October 2014 to September 2017

We appoint the above three Friends accordingly.

Release from service

Tom Nisbet has asked to be released from service on the Festival Com-mittee and Madaleine Moffatt has asked to be released from service as an Overseer.

We release these Friends and thank them for their service. We also thank the following Friends , who have finished their terms of service:

- Alan Davies, Andrew Farrar and Jim Pym (Elders);
- Brian Bleakley (Edinburgh Meeting House Management Committee)

2014/05/11 AOCB

- a) **Mary Woodward has suggested we might invite Susan Stein to include** Edinburgh in a projected tour of her one-woman show about Etty Hillesum, a Jewish woman who died, with all her family, in Auschwitz and who wrote diaries describing her spiritual explor-ation. Etty's life and writings have been an inspiration to Mary for a number of years and Susan Stein's show was mentioned in *The Friend* of 21 March.

We agree to ask Mary to explore with Susan Stein and the Meeting House managers the possibility of including Edinburgh in a pro-posed Autumn tour and to consult with the Area Meeting clerks as appropriate.

- b) Margaret Mortimer has told us of the death of **Anders Gibson**, son of Gill Reid and formerly of this Area Meeting. He was active in Young Friends and died last Sunday of complications following a lung transplant. A memorial meeting will be held in Glasgow, the time and date to be announced.

2014/05/12 Correspondence and notices

- a) Tweeddale Meeting is losing its meeting place in Tweedbridge Court at the end of May and will for the time being be using other small meeting places and unable to accommodate more than one or two visitors.
- b) A conference at Woodbrooke, 11 - 13 July 2014 on Hurt and Healing run in partnership with Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs. Any interested in representing the Area Meeting to contact the Clerk.
- c) A new Life of Joseph Rowntree published by the Rowntree Society. Details from the Clerk.
- d) A one day workshop at Victoria Terrace on 12 July on speaking out on behalf of Quakers. We have booked an AM place. If interested, contact the Clerk.
- e) April issue of Our Homeless Neighbour received.

2014/05/13 Concluding minute

27 members and 1 attender from 6 Local Meetings have attended all or part of this Area Meeting, as indicated below:

Central Edinburgh 10	Central Fife -	East Lothian 2	Kelso 1	Penicuik
Polmont -	Portobello & Musselburgh 4	South Edinburgh 3	Tweeddale 8 (inc 1 A)	

We next meet in Kelso on Saturday 5 July 2014 at 11.30 am

(Signed)
Phil Lucas, Clerk

Tweeddale Local Meeting for Worship

As Friends already know, we have not had the use of Tweedbridge Court since May. After considerable effort we still have not found the ideal replacement place, but have made a temporary booking to cover the months of July, August and September. T

Our Meetings for Worship will be held at 10.30 am at
Nomad Beat, 10-11 Cavalry Park, Peebles, EH45 9BU

On the following dates: 13 & 27 July;
10 & 24 August; 14 & 28 September

Unfortunately there is no bus service to Cavalry Park from the centre of Peebles on Sunday, and it is quite a long walk! If you need a lift, please phone 01721 721050 or 01721 722329 before 10.00 am.

Looking forward to seeing you.

John and Daphne Foster, Co-Clerks

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
<i>Children welcome, bring and share lunch.</i>		

Portobello & Musselburgh: 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: contact Sarah Martin 07818050853 or sarah.martin@ed.ac.uk for more details		1pm- 1.30pm
---	--	-------------

Second Sunday in the Month

Portobello & Musselburgh CHANGES Community Health Project 108 Market St, Musselburgh, East Lothian EH21 6QA		10.30am
--	--	---------

Tweeddale Tweedbridge Court, Margaret Blackwood House, Dukehaugh, Peebles All welcome but please phone to confirm. 01721 721 050 or 01896 850 389.		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
---	--	-------------

Fourth Sunday in the Month

Portobello & Musselburgh CHANGES Community Health Project 108 Market St, Musselburgh, East Lothian EH21 6QA		10.30am
--	--	---------

Tweeddale: Tweedbridge Court, Margaret Blackwood House, <i>Details as Second Sunday above</i>		10.30am
--	--	---------

Central Fife Hunter Halls, Kirkcaldy as above		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