SESAME

Number 216: May 2018

Area Meeting on 14 May / April Meeting for Sufferings / Sustaining Dunbar / CO Memorial – *unveiling the design* / The Changing Face of Faith / NFPB at Huddersfield / Recent Books / AM March Minutes

I was made to appeal to the Father of life in the speakings of my heart likewise thus: Father thou knowest that what I have writ or spoken, concerning this light, that the earth should be restored and become a common Treasurie for all mankind, without respect of persons, was thy free revelation to me, I never read it in any book, I heard it from no mouth of flesh till I understood it from thy teaching first within me. I did not study nor imagine the conceit of it; self-love to my own particular body does not carry me along in the mannaging of this businesse; but the power of love flowing forth to the liberty and peace of thy whole Creation, to enemies as well as friends: nay towards those that oppress me ...

Gerrard Winstanley *A Watch-word to the City of London and the Armie* (1649)

"[The Diggers'] chief spokesman, Gerard Winstanley, dedicated his book, *The Law of Freedom*, to Oliver Cromwell. When brought before Oliver, the Diggers refused to remove their hats. For this and other reasons, Winstanley has been held by some to have been the real founder of the Quakers." (E.E. Kellett, *A Short History of Religions*, 1933)

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SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

You are invited to the next South East Scotland Area Meeting, to be held on Monday 14 May from 7 to 9 p.m. at Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2JL.

We expect to hear of several interesting British national Quaker events, to be informed of proposed developments in relation to legacies and to continue the ongoing work of our Area Meeting.

"Core representatives" from the various parts of our Area Meeting are asked to be present, but all attenders and members of our Area Meeting are very welcome.

Kate Arnot and **Phil Lucas** Co – Clerks

DRAFT AGENDA

- 1. Worship
- 2. Introductions
- 3. Minutes of last Meeting: 17 March 2018
- 4. Matters arising:
 - a) General Meeting for Scotland: proposed dates, June 2019 March 2020
 - b) Reporter on behalf of SE Scotland Area Meeting to General Meeting for Scotland to be held in Inverness on 16 June 2018
 - c) Homelessness, particularly rough sleeping
- 5. Quaker Committee for Christian and InterFaith Relations (QCCIR) Conference held at Woodbrooke 16-18 March 2018 report [see page 8]
- 6. Nominations and Appointments
- 7. Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) Spring Conference report
- 8. Membership matters
- 9. Meeting for Sufferings, 7 April 2018 report [see opposite]
- 10. Data Protection
- 11. Short Annual Report
- 12. Recommendation from Trustees regarding Marjorie Farquharson's legacy and CAAT [Campaign Against Arms Trade]
- 13. Information from Trustees regarding Catriona Collins's legacy
- 14. Falkirk Peace Pole and agreed request for hospitality costs
- 15. AOCB

New Assistant Editor of Sesame

Joanna Swanson, of South Edinburgh Meeting, has been appointed Assistant Editor, to follow Kim Smith, who had served since 2015. Any changes to our postal distribution list, due to death, a new reader's wanting a printed copy, a change of address or for any other reason should be notified to Joanna at **jmswanson69@gmail.com**, or c/o 7 Victoria Terrace.

My thanks to Kim for all her work.

Meeting for Sufferings: 7 April 2018

All the papers for the meeting are available online at

http://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/mfs-april-2018-agenda--papers-package

This includes, in particular, the two Review Group reports discussed below.

The minutes and other follow-up material are available from

http://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/mfs-april-2018-follow-up-package

Meeting for Sufferings Appeal Review Group final report

Quaker Faith & Practice provides for a process of appeal to MfS with respect to decisions of an Area Meeting and disputes between Area Meetings. Experience with this process has been less than wholly positive, and MfS commissioned a review. The Review Group reported with recommendations for a narrowed and simplified process, including a preference for a "conflict transformation" approach (as distinct from "conflict resolution") and an explicit place for mediation before things get to Sufferings.

We approved these recommendations, and specific changes to *Q.F.& P.* will be forthcoming.

We called Area Meetings' attention to the recommendation in *Q.F. & P.* that they should have a "conciliation group".

There as some questioning of the value of the phrases "conflict resolution" or "conflict transformation" or any other language which raises expectations of success which cannot be met and sometimes leads to a fear of coercion on the part of the appellant.

In this context Friends are reminded that Quaker Life can provide help and guidance to Meetings which are taken by surprise/taken aback by apparently irresolvable internal conflict, and that asking for help *early* is essential to avoid exacerbating aspects of a situation through ignorance.

The Review Group also suggested that beyond the narrow matter of an appeals procedure, the larger question of how we deal with conflict as a Society, as Meetings and as individuals needs to be considered.

In this context we were reminded that difficulties around Membership often arise from "lack of familiarity with Quaker ... processes" and that accordingly care for a Ministry of Teaching in our meetings is necessary to help promote this familiarity.

Report of BYM Sustainability Group Review Group

The Review Group reminded us of the Canterbury Commitment:

http://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/minute-36-leaflet-2011

The Sustainability Group was established by Sufferings to lead/guide Britain Yearly Meeting in taking the Commitment forward.

The situation is complex: the Sustainability Group has achieved much, but also struggled much. The Review Group recommended laying the Sustainability Group down, probably soon after the next Sustainability Gathering, in favour of mandating coordination between the different areas at the central level which can and do support sustainability. Concern was expressed by myself and others that giving responsibility for overseeing this coordination to Sufferings without any detail on how this to be carried out leaves a very significant gap and risks simply recreating the Sustainability Group under another name.

Actually deciding to lay the Sustainability Group down without a clear picture of what is going to take its place seemed premature, and was in the end not supported by MfS, which *did* support the recommendation for "a specially convened meeting/meetings of the clerks of BYM Sustainability Group, QPSWCC, ESP sub-committee, QLCC, QSC, BYM Trustees, the Board of Friends House Hospitality, MfS and all members of Management Meeting", after which we will need to come back to the question of the future for the Sustainability Group and/or the form of its replacement.

The need for a clearer articulation of the largely unspoken spiritual basis for the Commitment was raised.

The oft-remarked tension resurfaced between a feeling on the part of many that we ought to put sustainability at the centre of our efforts and a recognition that many others don't seem to be interested in doing so.

Some quotes from the floor:

"It's not surprising that we struggle, and blame each other, and get stuck." (Laurie Michaelis)

"This is the biggest thing we've ever tried to deal with." (*Laurie Michaelis*)

"Giving responsibility but no authority to working groups [such as the Sustainability Group] is Kafkaesque, not Quakerly" (Lis Burch)

"The major problem has been in how we connect a YM concern with the existing BYM work plan." (*Lis Burch*)

"What is it that has caused us to try to do this and fail five times?" (*Peter Morris*)

Restoring Integrity to the Public Sphere

We were asked to consider a concern from an AM on this topic, which asked whether BYM should be a "public champion of truth"?

We have had a testimony to truth since the 17th century, but the complex history of our more recent engagement with this issue begins in 1990 with a concern which created a central "Truth & Integrity in Public Affairs" [TIPA] programme. This was laid down in 2004.

We agreed to ask for input on this from Area Meetings, regarding both difficulties experienced and actions being taken.

Trustees' Report

There's a *lot* of work that Trustees do for us, it's quite amazing.

Here are just two points of particular interest:

The first is expressed in a single three-line paragraph in the middle of a ten-page report:

We agree that trustees, with the support of Management Meeting, should prepare a multi-year strategic plan. This should be done in careful consultation with committees and Meeting for Sufferings.

This is explained as

We acknowledge that there is a lack of an overall strategic framework below the very high level *Our Faith in the Future* and above the operational plan, which makes prioritising difficult and which we now need to address.

The second was a reflection about diversity:

[Trustees] are diverse in gender and geographical spread, [we] do not know on sexuality, and are not diverse on ethnicity.

In terms of age, we are better than many Quaker committees and half of us are in paid employment, but we do need younger Friends. We recognise that time constraints can be a problem for younger Friends who have less flexibility in their work schedules and often have family commitments.

At present only 15 of the 400 places in the BYM committee structure are occupied by under-35s.

We need to be radical as BYM trustees and experiment. Young Friends will bring themselves and bright thinking to being a trustee and learn in the process. We can and will adjust our meeting schedules to accommodate individual trustees.

Although filling jobs is hard enough without adding additional constraints, it's worth reminding ourselves that AMs have been asked to look to their own structures in this regard and report back to the centre, and at AM in November we agreed to consider this. As MfS intends to take this up later in the year we should not delay too much longer in doing so if our input is to be available in time.

Henry S. Thompson SE Scotland AM representative

EXPLORING COMMUNITY RESILLIENCE

Introducing the work of Sustaining Dunbar

"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe." John Muir

When South East Scotland Area Meeting visited Dunbar on 17 March I was pleased to have the opportunity to give a short presentation introducing the work of **Sustaining Dunbar**, a community development trust with an explicitly green agenda.

Sustaining Dunbar's aim is to inspire people with the positive opportunities that the urgent necessity of rapid decarbonisation presents – to come together to create a better, stronger community. Since 2008, Sustaining Dunbar has been supporting a range of new initiatives, aiming to make it easier to work locally; to cut energy consumption; to grow more (and healthier) food locally; and to improve public transport as well as making it safer and easier to walk and cycle. One of our first funded projects was a two-year community engagement exercise, which produced what we call our 'Local Resilience Action Plan'. This paints a picture of what a more localised, low-carbon economy could look like, and a gives a plan of how to get there. We sought to show how this would provide numerous opportunities: to re-connect with each other, with our place and with nature, and to share and learn new skills and develop meaningful local livelihoods – all crucial components of well-being.

We have incubated a number of new initiatives and enterprises including Dunbar Community Bakery (a community-owned co-operative with some thousand shareholders), CoWheels East Lothian car-share club, which is pioneering a 'pay as you go' alternative to car ownership for rural towns, OurLocality (a networked web platform for local community councils, projects and businesses), Mixer CIC (a social enterprise which is diverting waste from landfill to make it available for reuse, repair and upcycling) – and many more. We have also done a lot of work with schools to support them with embedding 'learning for sustainability' in the curriculum and as a means of reaching a wide range of households to provide advice and support on home energy efficiency, food growing, active travel and so on. We have transformed wasteland to create a community garden and orchard as a therapeutic space in the grounds of Belhaven Hospital. Currently, our main project is seeking to take over an empty building on Dunbar High Street to create a community-owned, co-working space.

It hasn't all been plain sailing and we face many barriers to implementing our action plan fully, not least structural issues around the planning system, land ownership, land prices and developer-led housing schemes, plus the lack of any meaningful, truly *local* democracy. There is also the challenge of lack of core funding.

I see climate change as a symptom of our social, economic and political systems becoming less and less fit for purpose. My belief is that 'bottom-up' action is going to be vital in creating the fertile ground from which new social, economic and political systems for a sustainable, zero-carbon society can emerge. Creating that fertile ground means nurturing our own individual resilience along with the cultural and economic resilience of the places where we live. And it means joining with other communities in an open and sharing spirit of mutual inspiration and support. Perhaps, fundamentally, it means really seeking to embed our understanding that everything really *is* hitched to everything else.

Philip Revell

Further information is at: www.sustainingdunbar.org



Opposing War: Memorial Design Launch, 15 May 2018

The design by Edinburgh-based artist **Kate Ive** for a Memorial to Conscientious Objectors, and all who oppose war, will be unveiled at the Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, on **15 May, 6:30–8:00 pm**; doors open at 6:10 pm for a cup of tea. Come meet the artist. Hear about her creative process, view a maquette of her engaging design, and find out how you can get involved in creating the sculpture and supporting the project. Historian Dr. **Lesley Orr** will speak about opposition to the First World War in Scotland and introduce Kate.

The event follows the Conscientious Objectors Day vigil, 5–6pm (by the National Gallery, off Princes Street), where there will be singing by Protest in Harmony, a reading of names of COs, descendants of COs speaking, and silence as we collect signatures on postcards calling for over 300 South Korean COs who are currently in prison to be allowed to do alternative service.

Registration for the event at the Meeting House is not required but helps us. Register on EventBrite at: opposing-war-design-launch.eventbrite.com Share the Event: https://www.facebook.com/events/1682842095134502/ Twitter: @EdinPandJ #opposingwar

The Changing Face of Faith in Britain: how should Quakers respond?

Woodbrooke, 16-18 March 2018

Conference arranged by the Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations and Woodbrooke

The Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) is "given the task of keeping Britain Yearly Meeting informed of the various movements towards co-operation within the Christian church and opportunities for interfaith dialogue, and responds on their behalf to other Churches and faith communities" (Q.F. & P. 9.13) Our own Kate Arnot of Polmont Meeting is the Scottish QCCIR representative.

The times they are a-changing, and the religious landscape of Britain is changing, too. QCCIR is looking to see where British Quakers fit in to this changing picture – what are the implications of the changes for us? Does QCCIR need to consider changing the way it works, or the people with whom it works? Research was commissioned: a review of academic literature, a survey of people new to Quakers, a review of current contacts with religious or spiritual groups, and research on new faith and faith-based organisations with values similar to Quakers' with whom QCCIR might wish to work in future. The first three parts of the research have been completed: the fourth part, which is the most complex, is as yet incomplete.

Friday night was largely getting to know each other and some members of QCCIR. On the Saturday morning Grace Davie, Emeritus Professor of the Sociology of Religion at Exeter University, spoke about the changes that have taken place in the British religious landscape in the last twenty years, while Ben Pink Dandelion and researcher Francesca Montemaggi summarised the first three parts of the research. In small groups we considered our reactions to the picture Grace Davie had painted and then one of a range of questions – I chose *How can we better share our faith as Friends?* – before coming together to share our conclusions. On the Sunday, Ben described the fourth, as yet incomplete, part of the research – trying to identify new "groups which have some kind of spiritual element" with whom we might liaise. We shared our responses to the questions *Where do we go from here?* and *What might QCCIR do next?* and closed our weekend in worship.

I was a little confused during the weekend, as we seemed to be focusing on outreach rather than ecumenical and interfaith relations: I realise now that it is the fourth, as yet incomplete research which is of greatest interest to QCCIR. Some of the conference participants were deeply involved in ecumenical and interfaith work at very local or AM level (or both) while others, like me, had come from a position of relative ignorance to learn

about QCCIR and ecumenical/interfaith relations. I had greatly enjoyed the previous weekend's interesting and wide-ranging session at General Meeting for Scotland when we considered whether ecumenical and interfaith relations should be one of GM's priorities in the next few years. The general feeling at GM was that yes, we should be continuing with building and developing relationships with both ecumenical and interfaith bodies – and that many people were already doing a lot in a quiet way in their own areas in addition to Quakers' representation at major gatherings of other bodies like the Church of Scotland's General Assembly.

Despite my confusion, I enjoyed the weekend. I had a splendid time strengthening links with other Scottish Friends, and had a lovely Harry Potter conversation with a participant in another course I'd met on last autumn's *Handmaidens of the Lord* course. There was also the opportunity to sign up to be kept in touch with the work of QCCIR and, similar to the email list proposed at the recent GM for Scotland, an opportunity to express willingness to attend ecumenical and interfaith events to which Quakers have been invited.

It was fascinating to hear Grace Davie's clear account of how the 'faith landscape' in Britain has changed in the last twenty years, and to learn from the research what had attracted people who'd recently come to Quakers. The members of QCCIR seemed very appreciative of the feedback they received, and I found sharing in the small groups enriching – but the question of how we as Quakers should respond to the changing face of faith in Britain remains unanswered! There is plenty of scope for more conversation, more sharing of experience, and more consideration of the results of the research project and how this might affect our approach to and relations with non-Quakers.

Summary of Grace Davie's findings and QCCIR commissioned research Grace Davie gave us a lucid and fascinating account of the changes she has noticed since the first edition of her book *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without Belonging* (1994). These have been incorporated in the second edition, now subtitled a Persistent Paradox (2014) making it, in effect, a totally new book. There have been changes not just in the nature of society – in 1994 John Major was Prime Minister and George Carey Archbishop of Canterbury – but also in the nature of religion both in Britain and the wider world, the way scholars regarded the subject in the light of new data, and in Grace Davie's own scholarly development in the light of her opportunities to see her own country from outside while working abroad. She identified five factors contributing to the change: Britain's cultural heritage, which was in essence Judaeo-Christian [days of the week, organisation of the calendar, the parish as the building block of society] has

changed radically. To many people Friday is now the most important religious day of the week - but this is not taken into account in the workplace.

To many, the current view is that religion is "a public utility", there to be sampled at will, with a few people sustaining the denominations while the many on the fringes dip in and out. There has been a shift in attitude towards religion "from obligation to consumption" in which people choose to be involved in religion rather than feeling obliged to take part. The inmigration of people from other countries brings in different religions and cultures but also in some instances contributes to the renewal of existing denominations (e.g. the Polish contribution of renewal to the Catholic church in Britain) and there are an increasing number of secular alternatives. She noticed two growth areas within Christian denominations – that of evangelical/charismatic groups who offer experiential religion; and cathedrals, which offer art, music, anonymity in addition to being part of the growing pilgrimage tradition both here and in Europe. It's a very complex, and two-way situation – it's not always the obvious who gains from this cross-fertilisation: the changes are occurring throughout Europe, but the rest of the world is "significantly religious", and not likely to change.

Her overriding message to Quakers is that we have to be worthwhile and have something definite to offer! What can we do, she asks, to make people want to be with us? Generally people talk more about religion than they used to, and don't simply want cerebral engagement with notions. There are extremes of religion, but the important area to look at is the middle ground: find places where faith of all kinds is valued, and debates can take place, not with a view to conversion but as a two-way exchange.

Grace Davie summed up her findings thus:

The centre of British society is gradually shifting away from Christianity, but remains deeply coloured by it. New forms of accommodation [i.e. expressions of spirituality] are beginning to evolve, which are more likely to be secular than religious.

Within these new formulations, engaged Christians are likely to become one minority amongst others, but will have the weight of history on their side.

In short, the cultural deposits can still be felt but in new ways: in what might be termed a hierarchy of minorities, one of which finds expression in an established church.

QCCIR research

Part 1

Francesca Montemaggi's research began with Census data, which showed a drop of four million in the number of people identifying as Christians – 71.7 % of the population in 2001 down to 59.3 % in 2011 – while the number of people declaring no religious affiliation rose by 6.4 million. Quakers also reported a decline in numbers. It must be noted, however, that people declaring themselves to have 'no religion' does not necessarily mean they are atheists or humanists, merely that they don't identify with the main-

stream religious organisations named on the census forms! The rise of "none"s is significant, says Francesca, but "symptomatic of a wider shift in religious organisation and religious narratives rather than a sign of an increasingly irreligious society. Christian discourse, symbols, and authorities have far less relevance in today's Britain."

Part 1 of the research also reviewed academic literature, and sought to identify how people see and understand 'religion' – not just as "a creed, a statement, a belief system" [which many people find unsatisfying] but also the experiential, emotional and community aspects of religion, which are not always seen. Francesca reminded us that people don't always have a choice of religion – in some communities one 'version' may be the only one on offer – and that many people come to see "my version, my reality" as the only one!

Part 2 of the research invited people who had been attending Quaker meeting for less than three years to respond to a survey, and follow that with a personal interview if they wished. Francesca found that 71 % of respondents had a Christian background, but had not necessarily simply 'jumped ship' – only 50 % had been current adherents of a Christian denomination before coming to Quakers. Some were 'lapsed Christians' who had been curious about other denominations and other faiths. Interestingly, 50 % of respondents were over 60 years old. (The Quakers in Britain survey found that 87 % of people came to Quakers as adults, and their average age when they did so was 43.) There was no single clear route by which people came to Quakers, but they were attracted by what they saw as 'meditation' and 'questioning'. Respondents liked our theological openness, our searching, our diversity; our spirituality, with silent worship central – open, and nondirected; and the feeling of 'finding a home' - theologically, spiritually, politically and maybe socially. Quakers' acceptance of everyone was very important, particularly of LGBTQI and disabled people. It was also clear, however, that becoming a Quaker could break up families (if other family members didn't want to change the *status quo*), and that like-mindedness could become cliqueiness.

One third of new attenders applied for membership within three years: others were very content to remain 'on the fringe'. Questions that Francesca raised – are we serious enough? Do we offer enough incentive to stay? New people are often left to float, and so float away... Coming home is comfortable, but what is the extra we can offer to invite people to stay. Do we spend time developing new attenders, teaching them, offering opportunities for learning? Comments included "the ministry was not from God, it was more like chatting"; there is no opportunity except during worship for people to say anything – coffee time is too short; there are no opportunities to learn, or to discuss what it means to be a Quaker. Some people have a very negative experience of religion, and we need to be mindful of this, thinking and talking about what words mean to us or might mean to others (overseer is a

good example!); learning more about Christianity and its origins could also help. Many people are not comfortable with 'god language' – again, talking about what words mean to us, and how we 'translate' language that doesn't sit comfortably with us, can be helpful. Our ethics appeal greatly, and many people are active in non-Quaker organisations – this is good, but we don't often take the opportunity to TALK about our Quakerism and what we learn through it.

Part 3 of the research, done by Ben Pink Dandelion, looked at the current state of ecumenical and interfaith involvement at both national and local level in five categories – friendship, mutual learning, joint work, joint worship, and ecumenical work to invite people to return to their faith roots (very few Quakers were involved in this last category). He concluded that much of the work was done at LM level – there are fewer opportunities for engagement and involvement *via* AM. Simple ways include engaging with the groups using your Meeting House – saying hallo and welcoming them as they come in, engaging them in conversation if appropriate, exchanging ideas, and having simple literature on display.

Ben reiterated that a high percentage of newcomers apply for membership within three years, but there is no data on how many "stick". He added that some Quakers move on elsewhere and these fall into three categories: one third moved on to another faith; two-thirds still felt they were Quakers, and still worshipped after the manner of Friends, either on their own or with their AM (having resigned their membership) – but they felt that either BYM had left them behind as it moved on, or that BYM was not catching up with them fast enough!

The incomplete **Part 4** tried to identify groups with "some kind of spiritual element", with which Quakers might consider liaising. So far Ben has identified at least seventy, ranging from the Metropolitan Community Church and the Sibyls, working in the LGBTQI community, through Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Scientists and Unitarians, to 20th century groups like the Christadelphians and Christian Scientists, while also including pagan, Buddhist, Daoist and Sufi groups, and groups like the Woodcraft Folk and twelve-step programmes. He pointed out that some of these might not want to engage with Quakers – and *vice versa*! Some groups fit under the interfaith umbrella, some do not; and the range and extent of the groups is such that it would take a massive amount of time and energy, beyond the scope of the research project, to make meaningful contact with all of them.

Mary Woodward

Benjamin Lay – Quaker Abolitionist

Mary Woodward has drawn my attention to this interesting article on the BBC website – http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-essex-42640782. A biography was published last year: The Fearless Benjamin Lay by Marcus Rediker (Verso, £17.99, ISBN 978-1786634719 – due in paperback in September.) Ed.

Northern Friends Peace Board Gathering Huddersfield, 14 April

Snow having prevented the Board's March meeting at Carlisle, the trustees agreed to plan two additional events before the next regular meeting, at Glasgow in June. The first was at Huddersfield Meeting House in April, and although neither of our AM reps was able to be present there were some twenty participants who were warmly welcomed by local Friends.

The gathering was taking place as news broke of the missile strikes against Syria: a development that was much in participants' minds throughout the day. Partly for the benefit of new members, there was reflection on the Board's activities in 2017, and sharing of information on current concerns.

Many of these come under the broad heading of *Challenging militarism*: the need to encourage more countries to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW); and promoting conversion and diversification in industries involved in armament manufacture, in part though encouraging divestment, as in the "Don't Bank on the Bomb" campaign. QPSW have produced a briefing ahead of the Geneva conference which will review the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Friends were reminded of the link between the independence movement and attitudes in Scotland toward Trident, and of the demonstration at Faslane planned for 22 September. On the arms trade, there was news of vigils – in Bolton, outside a missile factory, and in Huddersfield, focussing in particular on sales to Saudi Arabia. A film *Shadowland* was commended as a means of raising awareness of the issues [evidently not, then, the 2008 Hollywood picture of that title] as was a production by the Ice and Fire theatre group, Arming the World. Quaker witness is planned for the Eurosatory arms fair in Paris in June, under the banner Stop Fuelling War; some Friends present had been involved in protests at the DSEI [Defence and Security Equipment International] fair in London in September, and plans are in hand for the next one, in 2019. Militarism and young people has been a particular area of concern: QPSW and Forces Watch have jointly produced a resource pack, Take Action on Militarism, and there was news of Peace Education activities. in particular by East Cheshire AM and the Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre. Information was shared about the Prince William Award scheme in schools, which seeks to instil a military ethos, but also Friends were told of visits to schools by Veterans for Peace. Conscription is a live issue for young people in many countries, and the plight of young Israelis in particular was highlighted; Friends were reminded that 15 May is International Conscientious Objectors Day [see page 7 for news of events in Edin*burgh*]; and that the UK's Armed Forces Day now lasts a week – 23-30 June. There was general discussion on two themes: Roots of violent conflict and Routes to Peace – I suppose the pun was intended. Among the roots, various

factors were mentioned: climate change, unequal distribution of resources and the 'need' for enemies; and, particular to the UK, wealth inequality, the role of the media, the insecurity faced by those not seen as British and the "calculated cruelty" of austerity. As routes, several specific things were cited – the Sanctuary movement; campaigns against the detention of refugees, against fracking, and for international solidarity; constitutional reform – as well as general principles, some of which were reasserted in the closing reflections on what helps Quakers and others to act for peace.

Here, participants talked of the vital importance of linking with others, knowing that we don't have to do it all. Persistence is essential – we never know when a significant breakthrough may come – and we must continue to explore ways of making it easy for people to find information and resources that will enable them to take action.

The second interim gathering will be at Lancaster on 12 May.

Alan Frith

[from notes by **Philip Austin**, NFPB Co-ordinator]

Links to some of the information and resources shared during the Huddersfield gathering are given below.

- QPSW briefing calling on the government to take part in the UN high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament 14-16 May 2018
 - https://quaker-prod.s3.eu-west-

1.amazonaws.com/store/5b2d6dc05eaf1f3b7b8...

- Don't Bank on the Bomb 2018 report
 - https://www.dontbankonthebomb.com/2018-report/
- NAE NUKES ANYWHERE! International Rally at Faslane, 22 September

 http://www.nuclearban.scot/nae-nukes-anywhere-international-rally-at-fas...
- Stop Fuelling War Quaker witness at the Eurosatory arms fair, Paris, 11-15 June 2018 https://stopfuellingwar.org/en/
- West Yorkshire Campaign Against Arms Trade
 https://www.facebook.com/WestYorkshireCAAT/
- Report of vigil at MBDA weapons factory near Bolton –
 http://www.theboltonnews.co.uk/news/bolton/16119231.Silent_anti_war_prot...
- Arms to Renewables
 - https://www.caat.org.uk/campaigns/arms-to-renewables
- Information about conscription and Conscientious Objection in Israel

 https://www.wri irg.org/en/programmes/world_survey/reports/Israel
- Veterans for Peace UK http://vfpuk.org/

- Take Action on Militarism resource pack
 https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/peace/challenging-militarism-1#heading-1
- Collateral Damage: A project for Remembrance 2018
 http://ppu.org.uk/collateral-damage/index.html
- Rethinking Security national conference, 15 June
 https://www.quaker.org.uk/events/rethinking-security-national-conference

Books of possible interest

Moscow Diary – Marjorie Farquharson, Matador (Troubador Publishing), 2018. The diary kept by Marjorie during her time in the Russian capital, where, in 1991, she set up Amnesty International's first Information Office in the city, becoming the first westerner working in the human rights field to be permanently based there. [We hope to have a full review of Moscow Diary in our next issue.] ISBN 978-1-78803-867-6 (pbk: 352 pp. £10.99)

Nonviolent Resistance to the Nazis – George Paxton, YouCaxton Publications, 2016. As its preface states at once, this is not a work of original research; the case studies which make up the middle third of the book, "Resisters and Rescuers" are drawn from published sources, and much of what is recounted in the first third, about the opposition in Germany before the war, is familiar. Nevertheless, working on the basis that "the traditional method of dealing with large scale conflicts has such massive defects, both practical and moral, that it makes sense to explore alternatives with urgency" the author makes an impressive case for the effectiveness of protest, persuasion and non-cooperation, even against a regime as brutal as the Third Reich in the middle of a war. ISBN 978-1-911175-18-6 (pbk: 244 pp. £10.00)

It's Basic Income: The Global Debate – Amy Downes & Stewart Lansley (eds), Policy Press, 2018. Among the 38 chapters here, there are five by "dissenting voices" setting out why Basic Income cannot work, seven of case studies from North and South America, Africa and Europe (although not all have yet taken place: whereas the Brazilian experiment began in 2008, the report from Kenya is entirely in the future tense), several by politicians, one by a rock star (Brian Eno of Roxy Music) and one by our Friend Annie Miller. Desmond Tutu calls it "a vital contribution and guide to the growing global debate." ISBN 978-1-4473-4390-5 (pbk: xix + 225 pp. £14.99)

See also the note at the foot of page 12. The book's full title is *The Fearless Benjamin Lay: The Quaker Dwarf Who Became the First Revolutionary Abolitionist.* (The hardback has 224 pp.; the forthcoming paperback may have more as it includes a new preface.)

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

Minutes of Area Meeting held on Saturday 17 March 2018 at the Bleachingfield Centre, Dunbar

2018/03/01 Worship and introductions

We began our business meeting with a period of worship.

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

2018/03/02 The minutes of our last meeting, held on 22 January 2018 at Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House, have been signed and entered in the minute book.

2018/03/03 Recording a decision made by Between Meetings Procedure We record the following:

19 February, 2018

Further to minute 2018/01/06, overseers have suggested Alison Chalmers (South Edinburgh) and Simon Jackson (Central Edinburgh) as visitors for Annette May. We appoint these Friends and ask them to report back to AM when the time is right.

Elizabeth Allen, Clerk South East Scotland Area Meeting Alastair Cameron, Assistant Clerk South East Scotland Area Meeting

2018/03/04 Matters arising

a) Newly admitted remand prisoners without personal cash

Further to minutes 2017/08/06, 2017/09/03, 2017/11/03 and 2018/01/04(a), Kate Arnot and Mariot Dallas from Polmont Meeting met with Michael Matheson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Justice, on 23 February.

He accepts and supports our concern for remand prisoners without personal cash, and is considering our suggestion that criteria for the use of the Common Good Fund in each Scottish Prison Service prison be amended to include assisting remand prisoners without personal cash.

His preferred remedy is to reduce the number of remand prisoners and work towards the introduction of a statutory presumption against the use of custodial sentences of twelve months of less. In keeping with this, he has increased funding for supporting and developing alternatives to prison, such as Community Payback Orders and electronic monitoring.

Mariot and Kate have agreed to meet Michael Matheson in a year's time to review the situation and to update him on the sum of money South East Scotland Area Meeting has donated to remand prisoners in HMP Edinburgh.

We record our thanks to Mariot and Kate for their work on this.

b) Militarisation in society - armed forces visits to schools in Scotland

Minutes 2014/10/06, 2014/11/04a, 2015/01/04a, 2015/02/06, 2015/04/04a 2015/05/04, 2015/08/04a, 2015/10/05a, 2015/11/04a and 2017/03/03 refer.

South Edinburgh Local Meeting's concern about militarisation in society, which was taken up by South East Scotland Area Meeting and General Meeting for Scotland led to a petition on armed forces visits to schools being lodged with the Scottish Parliament's Public Petitions Committee, on 20 March 2016 by Quakers in Scotland and Forces Watch UK. The petition called for:

- 1. **Guidance to be provided** on how visits to schools by the armed forces should be conducted so that information presented to children takes account of the unique nature of armed forces careers, ensures political balance, and offers a realistic representation of the role of the armed forces and what a career in the armed forces involves.
- 2. **Information to be collected** to enable public monitoring of the number and location of visits, the purpose and content of visits, and comparison with the number of visits by other employers.
- 3. **Parents/ guardians to be consulted** as to whether they are happy for their child to take part in armed forces activities at school.

After taking evidence on six occasions and receiving 38 written submissions, including four from the armed forces, on 15 March, the Scottish Parliament's Public Petitions Committee agreed that a report on armed forces visits to schools and safeguarding procedures will be published later this year. With the publication of this report, we will have a further opportunity to explore and address our concerns about the military presence in schools.

We have heard from Phil Lucas something of the discussion in the Petitions Committee. We are pleased with this decision on the Committee's part, and thank those who have helped reach this point, including Forces Watch UK and the Quaker Parliamentary Engagement Officer.

2018/03/05 Area Meetings Funerals Committee

Further to minute 2018/01/05, the Area Meeting clerk established that our constituent Local Meetings appointed the members of the Funerals Committee. An email has been sent to Local Meetings asking them to release the Friend they appointed to this committee, thanking them for their service.

Area Meeting Funerals Arrangements

The AM Funerals Committee will make arrangements for funerals until Sunday 25 March 2018. From Monday 26 March 2018, AM Elders will be responsible for this task.

Elders have still to discuss who will be the named contact people to act as the first point of contact for those seeking to arrange a Quaker funeral but in the meantime the Convenors of AM Elders will take on this role, although the request for a Quaker funeral may be made to any AM Elder or Overseer. The named contact people will be responsible for finding two Elders to set up and hold a Meeting for Worship at the funeral and at a Memorial Meeting, if this is requested. They will also notify the Area Meeting and Local Meeting clerks of the death. The Elders appointed to arrange the funeral will Inform Friends of the funeral arrangements, through the AM/ LM Clerks.

2018/03/06 Membership matters

Applications for Membership

a) Annette May

Further to minute 2018/01/06, Alison Chalmers and Simon Jackson were appointed as visitors for Annette, by between meetings procedure. (See our earlier minute 2018/03/03)

Alison and Simon visited Annette on 7 March 2018 and a report of the visit had been read out today. Annette became a Methodist as a teenager but for most of her adult life she has had no formal religion. More recently, through spiritual experience she became aware that what was missing in her life was the love of God. Having found Quakerism, which can be a struggle for her, she greatly appreciates the warmth and peace of South Edinburgh Meeting but is prevented by health issues from coming to Area Meeting. Simplicity and truthfulness are at the core of how she lives her life and she feels that to be true to herself, it is time for her to apply for membership.

We are please to accept Annette into this Area Meeting and ask Sylvia Massey to welcome her and inform South Edinburgh Local Meeting.

b) [We have received an application for membership and ask overseers to bring forward the names to two Friends to act as membership visitors.]

Transfer of Membership (in)

Bridget Ramsay

Our Assistant Clerk (Membership) has received a Certificate of Transfer of Membership for Bridget Ramsay, from North Scotland Area Meeting. We are pleased to accept this transfer and ask that an Acceptance of Transfer of Membership Certificate be issued. We welcome Bridget, who worships at South Edinburgh Local Meeting, into this Area Meeting.

Transfer of Membership (out)

Jasmine Perinpanayagam

Our Assistant Clerk (Membership) has received a Certificate of Acceptance for Transfer of Membership for Jasmine Perinpanayagam, from North Scotland Area Meeting.

2018/03/07 Tabular Statement for the year ending December, 2017

Richard Williams, our Assistant Clerk (Membership), has presented the Tabular statement for the year to 31 December 2017. Copies have been sent to the Recording Clerk's Office at Friends House and to the General Meeting for Scotland Administrator.

We accept the Tabular Statement for 2017 and note the following: The overall number of members is 243, a drop of 12 since 2016.

The total numbers of attenders is 354, which includes 72 children not in membership. This is an increase of 7 since 2016, but the number of children has fallen by 1.

Central Edinburgh Meeting continues to have 40 % of Area Meeting members and 50 % of recorded attenders. South Edinburgh is the next largest meeting. However, there has been a net decrease in the number of members of 5 in Central Edinburgh and 6 in South Edinburgh.

East Lothian and Portobello and Musselburgh have each increased their members by 1.

In 2017, there were 4 people coming into membership by convincement. There were 11 terminations of membership and 3 deaths in 2017.

As requested in minute 2017/03/07, 5 attenders who solely attend midweek meeting at 7 Victoria Terrace, and 1 attender who solely attends North Edinburgh Worship Group, have been counted within Central Edinburgh Meeting.

At the Area Meeting Threshing Meeting on Nominations in December 2017, it was made clear that our Nominations Committee needs to know the number of Friends available for service in the Society. To help give a more accurate picture of our Meetings, we ask Local Meeting clerks to consider these questions:

Are there are some Friends listed in your Meeting's statistics who have ceased to show any interest in the life of the Society and for whom there seems no reasonable likelihood of renewed participation?

Can you be more rigorous in noting current attenders, listing only those who frequently attend your Meeting for Worship?

We thank Richard for his work in preparing the Tabular Statement; also the General Meeting for Scotland Administrator, and those in local meetings who have assisted Richard.

2018/03/08 General Meeting for Scotland

Proposed dates for General Meeting in 2019/20

9 March 2019 (agreed) West Scotland AM (Glasgow) 8 June 2019 South East Scotland AM

14 September 2019 North Scotland AM 16 November 2019 East Scotland AM

7 March 2020 South East Scotland AM

We are asked to consider these dates and will return to this matter at our next Area Meeting.

General Meeting, 16 June 2018 Inverness

We are asked to appoint a Friend to write a report of General Meeting in Inverness for the *Scottish Friend* and *The Friend*. We will return to this matter at our next meeting.

2018/03/09 Nominations Committee Report

Appointments

Nominations Committee has brought forward the names of the following Friends:

To serve from April 2018 to end of March 2021, (2nd triennium)

- (a) Elder Kate Arnot, Polmont
- (b) Pastoral Care & Oversight Mariot Dallas, Polmont
- (c) Pastoral Care & Oversight Cath Dyer, Polmont
- (d) AM Assistant Clerk (Membership Records) Richard Williams, Central Edinburgh
- (e) Quaker Life Rep. Council Katrina McCrea, Portobello & Musselburgh
- (f) Trustee David Somervell, South Edinburgh
- (g) Trustee Ann Forsyth, Central Edinburgh (third tirennium)

To serve from April 2018 to end of March 2021, (1st triennium)

- (a) Pastoral Care & Oversight Chris Booth, Portobello and Musselburgh
- (b) Northern Friends Peace Board Pol Yates, South Edinburgh

To serve from April 2018 to end of March 2019

(a) Pastoral Care & Oversight – Dorothy Buglass, South Edinburgh

We appoint these Friends accordingly.

Release from Service

Marianne Butler, (Kelso), has asked to be released from service as one of our two Quaker Prison Chaplains at HMP Edinburgh. We agree to this request with immediate effect and thank Marianne for her service.

Completion of service

We thank the following Friends for their service to Area Meeting, which they will complete at the end of March:

- (a) Cathy Bell, Central Edinburgh elder
- (b) Michelle Gunn, Central Edinburgh, Clayton Cameron, Central Edinburgh, Mary Jane Elton, Portobello and Musselburgh, and Anna Levin, Polmont – Pastoral Care & Oversight
- (c) Elizabeth Allen Clerk of Area Meeting
- (d) Evelyn Graham Meeting House Management Committee

We thank Nominations Committee for the work it does on our behalf.

2018/03/10 The plight of our homeless neighbours and how we might help

We have been asked to consider our Quaker response to homelessness on our doorstep, and how best to respond to rough sleepers in the vicinity of the Edinburgh Meeting House.

David Sterratt, Convenor of the Meeting House Management Committee and Clerk of Central Edinburgh Local Meeting, has spoken about rough sleeping near the Meeting House and the dilemmas faced by the Meeting House staff. From the perspective of his work at Scottish Churches Housing Action, Alastair Cameron has given us a brief overview of homelessness.

We have heard that there are regular night-time rough sleepers in the vicinity of 7 Victoria Terrace, often using the area in front of the fire doors. They are co-operative and move when asked. Our Meeting House staff keep an eye on them. Sometimes they signpost people to places where they can get help, like the Bethany Shelter. We are asked to consider if there is more that our Meeting House managers can do, taking into consideration the constraints of our use of the Meeting House.

Alastair has pointed out that rough sleepers are the tip of the iceberg. Homelessness is not just in our cities: it is everywhere. It is a systemic problem, the result of a dysfunctional system. In Edinburgh there is a network of organisations to help homeless people. Each has a role to play, in particular Streetwork has a specialist role with people who sleep rough. No matter what facilities are offered, some homeless people do not wish to use them and we must respect this.

In worship sharing, we heard that we should support campaigns for the provision of a variety of accommodation to be made available for homeless people. Working with other churches and faiths is a good practice and we might explore what our neighbours are doing. Providing food for those who help to feed rough sleepers is a practical measure we could take. We have the impression that despite the statistics, the problem is increasing.

We applaud our Meeting House Managers and staff for the approach they are taking.

Our Meeting House Management Committee has set up a special meeting to discuss practical ways of helping our staff at Edinburgh Meeting House engage with rough sleepers; how we might help; and what resources we might have to allocate to this. It is on Sunday, 25 March at 1.30 pm, at 7 Victoria Terrace. Friends are encouraged to attend.

We ask Local Meetings to reflect on how homelessness and rough sleeping affect them locally, as well as in the city centre.

We will return to this at a later meeting.

2018/03/11 Recording the Lives of Deceased Friends

Further to minute 2017/11/12, we have considered the Area Meeting Elders' minute of 7 October, 2017 on 'Memorial Minutes and Testimonies to the Grace of God in the lives of Friends', which was circulated in advance of this meeting.

Our clerk introduced this item, reminding us of the current practice within South East Scotland Area Meeting whereby local meetings write a memorial minute for each deceased Friend who is a member or long time attender, and send this to the Area Meeting clerk to be noted at Area Meeting and archived. We were also reminded of the traditional Quaker practice of writing Testimonies to the Grace of God in the lives of deceased Friends, as described in *Quaker Faith & Practice* 4.29 and of the annual pub-

lication of some of these testimonies in the Yearly Meeting document, *Epistles and Testimonies*.

Speaking for AM elders, Kerstin Phillips has spoken about the elders' concern about the perceived inequality of writing a testimony for some Friends and not others, and of their awareness that if we cease the practice of writing testimonies, we may we letting down subsequent generations of Friends.

We have considered this. We follow the discipline in *Quaker Faith & Practice*, which includes writing testimonies to the Grace of God in the lives of deceased Friends. We ask our Clerk to remind Local Meetings of the current practice of writing a testimony.

2018/03/12 Correspondence and notices

Yearly Meeting 2018, 4-7 May, Friends House, London

Friends of all ages, members and attenders, are welcome to come to Yearly Meeting but should register in advance at www.quaker.org.uk/ym, where they will also find more information. At this Yearly Meeting we will consider whether it is time to revise Quaker Faith & Practice.

Refugee Survival Trust

Our treasurer has received a letter and newsletter from the Refugee Survival Trust, a charity we supported a few years ago from our Festival takings. We have been asked if we want to remain on their mailing list.

2018/03/13 What we did today

Today we came together as an all-age community, starting our day with worship, during which *Quaker Faith & Practice* 25.01 was read. John Woolman reminded us that the earth's produce is a gift from our creator. To impoverish the earth is to injure the succeeding age.

Philip Revell led us in an exploration of the meaning and challenge of building sustainable communities, drawing from the experience of Sustainable Dunbar. [See page 6.] We enjoyed learning about the dynamics of systems and the sometimes chaotic effect of change, through the systems game. We thank Philip for his presentation this morning.

After lunch, while the adults discussed more church affairs, the children and young people made interesting things with clay.

In the afternoon, we went to see some places of interest in Dunbar including the Backlands and the Zero Waste Shop. Some of us visited John Muir's birthplace and others visited Dunbar Harbour.

We have received the following minute from our children and young people:

This morning we have heard about building a resilient community. We did an exercise to show we are all connected to each other.

Younger ones listened to a story about allowing endangered animals on the train.

We looked at our carbon footprint – What enlarges it and what minimises our footprint?

This afternoon we had fun relaxing with clay. We made model endangered animals.

We warmly thank East Lothian Meeting for being our hosts today.

2018/03/14 Closing minute

32 members, six attenders and six children, representing eight Local Meetings, have attended all or part of this Area Meeting, as indicated below:

Central Edinburgh	Central Fife	East Lothian	Kelso	Penicuik
11 members	2 members 1 attender 1 child	6 members 4 attenders	1 member	1 member
Polmont	Portobello & Musselburgh	South Edinburgh	Tweeddale	
3 members 2 children	3 members 2 children	5 members 1 attender 1 child	-	

We next meet at Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House on Monday 14 May 2018, from 7.00 to 9.00 pm.

(Signed) **Elizabeth Allen** Clerk

"O Lord, as doubtless thou sawest in Thursday's Guardian ..."

is an apocryphal opening to spoken ministry which amuses the Editor, as does the (true) fact that the phrase "the people in the Euston Road who know nothing about Quakerism" was once removed from a draft Yearly Meeting minute lest it be taken as referring not to passers-by outside our doors whom our outreach efforts were failing to engage, but to the staff at Friends House! – or possibly, indeed, the Friends attending London Yearly Meeting (as it then still was). Anyone who is not a Guardian reader will have missed Simon Jenkins's opinion piece on this year's YM (available at https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/may/04/quakersdropping-god): "The Quakers are right. We don't need God"; but also, a more serious loss, will not have had the opportunity to read the obituary by Lynne Barty of Marianne Ferguson Rice, which appeared on 15 March; https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/mar/15/marianneferguson-rice-obituary. Various Friends (and others) have responded to Simon Jenkins, to point out that, among other things, Quaker Oats have nothing to do with us, and some of these letters are also available online.

Quaker Meetings for Worship in South East Scotland

Every Sunday

Central Edinburgh: 7 Victoria Terrace	9.30 am & 11.00 am
South Edinburgh: Open Door, 420 Morningside Road	10.30 am
Polmont: Greenpark Community Centre	10.45 am
Kelso: Quaker Meeting House, Kelso	10.30 am
Every Wednesday	
Mid-Week Meeting: 7 Victoria Terrace	12.30 – 1 pm
First Sunday in the Month	
Penicuik: Valleyfield House, 17 High St., Penicuik Children welcome, bring and share lunch	11.00 am
First and Third Tuesdays in the Month	
Edinburgh University Common Room, Muslim Prayer Rooms (opposite Weir Buildings) at Kings Buildings: contact Sarah Martin 07818050853 or sarah.martin@ed.ac.uk for details	1 – 1.30 pm
Second Sunday in the Month	
East Lothian: St Andrew's Centre, Dunbar	11.00 am
Second and Fourth Sundays in the Month	
Portobello & Musselburgh: Fisherrow Community Centre, South St,	11.00 am
Musselburgh EH21 6AT. <i>Children welcome</i> . Tweeddale: Nomad Beat, 10-11 Cavalry Park, Peebles <i>All welcome, but please phone to confirm 01721 721 050 or 01896 850 389</i>	10.30 am
Central Fife: Hunter Halls, Kirkcaldy (Kirk Wynd, opposite Old Kirk)	10.30 am
Fourth Sunday in the Month	
North Edinburgh Meeting: Broughton St Mary's Church, Edinburgh	7.00 pm
Fifth Sunday in the Month	
Central Fife: Hunter Halls, Kirkcaldy (Kirk Wynd, opposite Old Kirk)	10.30 am
Last Sunday in the Month	
East Lothian: St Andrew's Centre, Dunbar	11.00 am

Distribution of Sesame and 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; if you would prefer to receive it this way, or to change the address to which a paper copy is sent, or if you would like to get one by post and currently do not, please contact **Joanna Swanson** at **jmswanson69@gmail.com**. A large print version is also 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. Printed by Footeprint UK, Riverside Works, Edinburgh Road, Jedburgh TD8 6EE.