

SESAME

Number 218: August 2018

Area Meeting on 14 August / White Poppies / Equipping for Ministry: handmaidens, listeners, prophets & fools / Liliás Skein / Quaker Life Rep. Council/NFPB in Glasgow/Quaker dress, 1698/ AM June Minutes



Rembrandt's 1640 drawing of the Abbey Church at St Albans, in Hertfordshire.
(A version of it is included in the current exhibition, *Rembrandt: Britain's Discovery of the Master*, at the National Gallery until 14 October.)

See page 19

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SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

Area Meeting will be held on Tuesday, 14 August at the offices of Scottish Churches Housing Action, 44 Hanover Street, Edinburgh EH2 2DR, from 7 pm to 9 pm. The offices are close to Princes Street, on the left hand side as you go towards George Street. There is a marked buzzer at street level.

We will be receiving and signing off the annual financial report for 2017, deciding how much money to pass on to Yearly Meeting and, it is hoped, appointing a treasury team to manage our finances when Mark Hutcheson finishes his service in September. Other important issues we are taking forward include our response to Yearly Meeting's call to increase the diversity of our membership and the principles and process we should adopt to manage the legacies we have recently received. The draft agenda is as follows, (with one or two additional items expected).

DRAFT AGENDA

1. Worship
2. Minutes of last meeting
3. Receipt of 2017 financial report
4. Contribution to BYM 2018
5. Diversity in our Area Meeting - taking the process forward
6. Management of legacy money - agreeing principles and a process
7. Catriona Collins memorial minute
8. Area Meeting treasury post
9. Visit of Quaker World Relations Committee, 1 - 3 March 2019

Clerking Team: **Kate Arnot, Alastair Cameron, Phil Lucas**

White Poppies at Venue 40

Members of the Quaker Art Group are leading an event during the festival Fringe. "Collateral Damage - White Poppy Project" will run Monday to Saturday, 13–18 August inclusive. We will be in the Meeting Room from 2.00–5.00 pm each afternoon that week. Visitors can join in and make a poppy which they may choose to keep, give to a friend or add to our display. Members of Meeting are invited to join us and perhaps help for a short while. If Friends have any spare white material or lace and would like to donate it, please leave it at the Meeting House. A box for collecting items has been left with the staff. Also, there are patterns for making poppies in the leaflet, copies of which are on the table. If any Friend would like to make some poppies or even part make some which can be finished during the event, we would be most grateful.

A Four-course Banquet

(My autumn 2017 *Equipping for Ministry* courses)

This is the final instalment of Mary Woodward's report of her participation in the two-year Equipping for Ministry programme; Year 1 was described in Sesame 202 and 203; the first part of Year 2 in our last issue (217).

Handmaidens of the Lord was fascinating and inspiring. Stuart Masters and Betty Hagglund introduced us to a number of early Quaker women, most of them previously unknown to me, who made major contributions to the development and spread of the Quaker message in the 1650s and '60s. Katherine Evans and Sarah Cheevers fell foul of the Inquisition in Malta, but were more than a match for their interrogators; Lilius Skeine, wife of an Aberdeen magistrate, wrote excellent poetry [*among other things – see page 5*]; the members of Aberdeen Women's Meeting, whose correspondence with London's Women's Meeting showed their relationship developing from subservience to the London women's greater experience to seeing them as equals rather than superiors; Dorothy White, a recognised prophet, writer and leader of the early Quakers, the most prolific female writer after Margaret Fell, but who seems to have been censored by her own community and was not included in Quaker historiography; Sarah Blackborow, a prominent Quaker minister in London, who used feminine imagery and typical female vocabulary and expressions of the time; and Elizabeth Bathurst, a young theologian who wrote clearly, concisely and intelligibly in her defence of the Quaker position – "*a loving God would not locate the source of salvation solely in a text vulnerable to concealment, mistranslation, or misinterpretation*" spoke clearly to me! All these women were inspiring in their following of their individual leadings and their fearlessness in speaking out under compulsion. Do we need to be more circumspect these days – or are we simply too afraid of the consequences?

Welcoming the Soul was about Deep Listening and how to introduce it in my Meeting. I chose it because I thought I would be Doing a Good Thing for My Meeting, rather than because I wanted to do it for myself. Big surprise! – as we practised listening for what was beneath the words people were saying to us, the whole weekend prepared us for taking part in a Meeting for Clearness. My slightly hesitant offer of being a focus person if no-one else came forward was taken up, and my frequently-recurring question "do I stay with Portobello & Musselburgh Meeting, or go elsewhere?" was the focus of a really helpful and well-directed clearness meeting. The questions asked gave me much food for thought and confirmed my underlying feeling that I am meant to stay where I am and Simply Be, modelling the changes I'd like to see rather than trying to force change to happen. I made deep connections with new people, though most won't

continue beyond the weekend, and was delighted to re-encounter one of them when visiting Judith in Wales.

Everyday Prophets followed on from the Marge Post Abbott and Maud Grainger course in 2015 which was the catalyst for my applying to do EfM. This year's participants were all EfMers, so we could go much deeper than might usually be possible in a Woodbrooke weekend. Much of the course confirmed things already known rather than introducing new stuff – there was more confirmation of the need to BE the change, and not to nag but to show by example. A private conversation with Maud suggested that it's okay to feel alone – that it's not surprising, given the intensely personal nature of my experience at Pendle Hill – and that I need to consider how to find/create support for myself, and ask myself whether I actually speak out at Meeting about my experience of how community can be: can I find ways to invite others in? Can I meet people where *they* are? Marge's 2016 Backhouse Lecture gives me this pertinent reminder: *I know I need practice, and external reminders to remember to still my mind enough to let go of the internal commentary and my tendency to pronounce judgement on everything, especially my own behaviour. In the constant chatter there is almost no room for the Inward Guide to get a word in edgewise.* There is a lot more to be gleaned from this course, not least the need to LISTEN DEEPLY – linking up with the two previous courses ...

A Gathering of Fools was extremely challenging and stretching, as I knew it would be – but it was also a delight! Much care of others and self was built into this week's introduction to clowning, so that although it was tiring, it wasn't destructively exhausting. It spoke deeply to me about removing boundaries, and being authentic: it was a delight to the performer in me, and reminded me how much I love being in front of an audience. It was lovely to find deep connection with two previously unknown Quakers, who enriched my week by their interactions with me: while sharing with someone of whom I'd initially been very wary enabled deep communication, and the formation of a nourishing connection. I was badly shaken by the extraordinary behaviour of someone on the first evening – I didn't know how to handle it at the time, and found it very upsetting: I told the course leader, but my continuing discomfort led me to escape from the second morning session next day. I was greatly helped by the concern and support of one of the Friends in Residence, and though very apprehensive about returning after lunch I made myself go – and it all worked splendidly and I really enjoyed the afternoon.

The course stretched me in many ways and catalysed astounding openings which tied in with 2016's "open up and say 'yes'", and my "bring down the walls and build connections" ministry in Berlin – but the unsettling incident and subsequent events while FiRing showed me the vital necessity of working out how, while taking down barriers, to surround myself with self-protective boundaries. I'd been so open during the course that the

rocking off balance was greatly heightened – the higher you’ve risen, the deeper you fall. (Soon after my return home I was rocked in another situation, but recovered far more swiftly than I had done on previous occasions – I’m learning!) I also learned more about ‘how to be’ in a group of people – something I’ve always found hard - and began to have an idea that my singing voice might not be as completely lost as I’ve long thought: altogether there was an incredible depth of content in this course, which will richly reward me when I revisit it.

The interconnectedness of many of the threads which emerged in these courses is also becoming clearer, and again I need to spend more time considering the tapestry they are enabling me to weave... I’m pretty sure that most of the threads are things I already know, but have yet to embed in my being/integrate into my life: this is my post-EfM task, I feel, and it will continue equipping me for whatever ministry I am called to undertake.

Mary Woodward

Lilias Skein (1626/7–1697)

Lilias Skein (or Skene) was the daughter of the minister of Kirkcaldy, John Gillespie, and joined Friends in 1666, when she was already a wife and the mother of ten children. Her conviction is described by Joseph Besse in his *Suffering of the People called Quakers* as follows – the reference to *professors* is to “professors of religion”, *i.e.* churchgoers, rather than academics.

About this time Lilias Skein, wife of Alexander Skein, one of the magistrates of Aberdeen, a woman much esteemed for her religious accomplishments among the professors there, and especially by George Meldrum their priest, came under a true concern of mind to join herself in society with the despised Quakers. ... [She] happened to be taken sick, and kept her chamber in an apartment under the same roof where Barbara Forbes, one of that people, dwelt, at whose house the Quakers sometimes met, so near ... that she could distinctly hear what passed; and attentively listning [sic], plainly heard two English women exercised both in preaching and praying, whose lively testimonies she observed to be full of scripture-expressions, and their prayers and petitions put up in the name of Christ, and attended with life and power. From thence forward she was effectually reached, and throughly [sic] convinced of the falsehood of those slanderous accusations wherewith her formerly admired preachers had been accustomed to vilify and calumniate that people.

Besse notes that, whereas elsewhere, *Quakers, who could not swear in any case, [might] be made a prey of by wicked and malicious prosecutors for any claim however unjust ... the [Scots] judges determined to prevent such impious designs by ordering that a simple declaration of the truth should be taken from that people in such cases. A favour they had not then obtained in England, and by which those of that persuasion were early exempted from many sufferings ...*

This judicial reasonableness was ascribed by Friends to *the interposition of Providence as tended to defeat the malice of their enemies*, as were the “sudden and surprizing” deaths of magistrates and clergymen whom they saw as persecutors: Besse lists four such, and a case of temporary paralysis. Nevertheless, persecution of Friends did go on, and, in 1676, Alexander Skein was one of more than thirty Quaker men accused of keeping illegal meetings in and around Aberdeen over the previous two years. Despite the intervention of Charles II, who forwarded a submission in the Friends’ defence by Robert Barclay (whose father was among the prisoners), the Privy Council in Edinburgh refused to interfere. Heavy fines were levied – Alexander’s, indeed, was increased by half because of Liliass’s “transgressions” – and the Friends originally charged, together with others of lower social standing arrested later, were imprisoned.

Of the many protests addressed to the authorities, Besse quotes in full “A W A R N I N G to the MAGISTRATES and INHABITANTS of Aberdeen, writ the 31st Day of the First Month, 1677” by Liliass Skein. In it, she dismisses the excuses that cruelty is justified by obedience to the law, and guilt lessened if what was done might have been worse:

Hereby it is manifest to all who will open their eyes, that Christ suffers in his members many times, when people believe it not, nor are concerned therewith, which ought to make all who had but the letter of Scripture, tender and cautious, for one answer shall be given to all, both to those who have not showed mercy, and who did not all the Good they had the power to do, and to those who have done Evil, and are willing to do more. Inasmuch as ye did so and so unto the least of these little ones, ye did it unto me. And it will be no cover to you, that the magistrates are under the authority of others above them: Nay, examine your own hearts ...

She goes on to urge her readers

to acquaint yourselves better with the histories of the Church in former ages; and of the remarkable judgments that have befallen persecutors in Old and New-England; and search the Scriptures of Truth: Where are all the persecutors of the people of God in former ages now?

A modern essay on Liliass¹ deplores the fact that “As a woman and a Quaker, she has been doubly marginalised from the main currents of Scottish literary and historical scholarship; as a Scot, she has been little noticed by historians of English and American Quakerism”. The writer notes that “though her surviving works of poetry and prose are few ... they constitute one of the largest bodies of literary work by a non-aristocratic Scottish woman of her era”. It would be interesting to read more of them.

Ed.

1. DesBrisay G. (2004) Liliass Skene: A Quaker Poet and her ‘Cursed Self’. In: Dunnigan S.M., Harker C.M., Newlyn E.S. (eds) *Woman and the Feminine in Medieval and Early Modern Scottish Writing*. Palgrave Macmillan, London

Quaker Life Representative Council Woodbrooke, 27 – 29 April 2018

“Small Steps, Big Changes – how can Quaker Life help you and your Meeting to make change happen?”

Quaker Life Representative Council connects Yearly Meeting and the ‘ordinary Quaker on the ground’. Every Area Meeting is represented: the representatives tell YM how things are in their AM and take back to AM the things they discover over the weekend.

We were offered food for thought with the following extract from Chapter 7 of *Christian Faith & Practice*, section 317 (emphasis added):

*Fellowship in a common faith has often brought a religious society into being before it was in any way organised into an institution. It was so with the primitive Church and with the Society of Friends. **Organisation is a good servant, but a bad master**; the living fellowship within the Church must remain free to mould organisation into the fresh forms demanded by its own growth and the changing needs of the time. Where there is not this freedom the Church has its life cramped by ill-assorted clothes, and its service for the world becomes dwarfed or paralysed. William Charles Braithwaite, 1905*

This weekend we were given space and time for worship, worship-sharing, and getting to know each other. There were no Saturday morning presentations, giving longer for our choice of two workshops from the eight on offer, and a clear reminder that the Saturday evening activities were OPTIONAL. Sunday morning started with worship, so that people who had to leave before lunch didn’t miss it. It was thus a considerably more relaxed and prayer-filled weekend than the ones I’d been to before. For the first time, Elders – Jocelyn Burnell and Roy Stephenson – were appointed to uphold us all: I was particularly grateful that they called a meeting of home group Elders after Saturday’s supper and asked us how we were doing.

In the final home group ‘get together’ I said I’d felt on both a seesaw and a tightrope during the weekend. I seesawed to the heights in my first workshop and plunged into the depths in my second while also trying to balance the demands of being an AM rep with my appointment as Elder to a home group. On Saturday evening I didn’t watch Martin Sheen walking the Camino in *The Way*, go down to the bonfire, or join the home-made entertainment in the Cadbury Room – I just went to my room!

The Saturday workshop subjects included the resource *Being Friends Together*, mental health in our meetings, the vibrancy project’s ‘first aid kit’, Friends House library/resources, and electronic communications. I chose Alastair Fuller’s *Nurturing our meeting; nourishing ourselves* and Helen Drewery’s *Simpler Meetings*.

Alastair is a great believer in the power of stories. His workshop encouraged us to share with each other what nourishes and nurtures us, and consider how this might be extended to our meetings. We were invited to tell our neighbour the stories behind one or more of our names – it was emphasised that we need only reveal what we were comfortable sharing. We talked with our other neighbour about what we do in our daily lives that nourishes us: imagine my delight when my neighbour revealed that he was as energised by theatre as I am! We were given a handout – a guide to help us hold a similar workshop to facilitate deep sharing at LM or AM level, which is full of helpful ideas and advice. Something I needed to have pointed out to me is that some people can find the words *spiritual* or *religious* very off-putting, and that there are other ways of inviting and encouraging people to talk about “the deep stuff” ...

I was hoping that Helen’s workshop would give me ideas about how to simplify things in the light of the diminishing number of people willing and able to take on tackling an ever-increasing number of jobs in both local and area meetings. Alas, there was no quick fix! What is interesting is that BYM is funding (with legacy money) a three-year investigation of our structures and methods of doing things, with a view to seeing where or how things could be simplified, thus freeing Friends to do the stuff they are really interested in – the growth of life in the Spirit, rather than the end-of-year figures. The job advert has appeared in recent copies of *The Friend* – if you’re interested, have a look at it! I ended the afternoon weighed down by all the things that had been talked about... maybe after going to Yearly Meeting I can let myself feel more hopeful?

One of the really interesting things that kept being mentioned all weekend was the game of Snakes and Ladders used in the mental health workshop: Friends spent time considering what things lift them up [ladders] or bring them down [snakes] and incorporating them into a board game. I’d really like to try this – but need to remember the importance of making clear what is and is not appropriate to share, to avoid opening cans of worms ...

A huge plus for me came as the weekend was drawing to a close. I felt affirmed in my eldership by some of my home group members telling me how much they appreciated things I’d felt prompted to say to them – reminding me that I do follow faithfully the nudges I receive, don’t need to fret about Doing It Right, and need simply to BE.

It was, as ever, a good and challenging weekend, with much to think about. Perhaps the most important thing is its title – *Small Steps, Big Changes* – and the invitation to consider what small steps we might take, and the ways in which Quaker Life can help us take those steps and start making changes.

Mary Woodward

The peace and hope to end war

November 19–21, 2018

at Charney Manor Conference and
Retreat Centre in Oxfordshire



A time for reflection on the shadow of the first world war, in its challenges to peace and to conscience. The peace testimony continues to test us and to provide openings for positive action. We shall reflect, share stories, dilemmas and visions, and support one another in building hope and nourishing action.

*Facilitated by Philip Austin, Coordinator,
Northern Friends Peace Board*

Cost: £195 (deposit £95)

www.charneymanor.com/events/

Northern Friends Peace Board Glasgow, 23 June 2018

The weekend after the killing of Jo Cox MP the Board met in Edinburgh, an occasion overshadowed by that shocking event and the impending referendum. Two years on, we were in Glasgow, on the day of the 'Great Get Together' an initiative of the Jo Cox Foundation inspired by the much quoted sentence from her maiden speech to Parliament that "We are far more united and have far more in common than that which divides us". Personally I find that sentiment induces a prickly grumpiness: even without going beyond Brexit, I have no wish to seek common ground with those who think a passport's usefulness as a travel document is less important than the colour of its cover, say, or who trust and admire Boris Johnson; and as for anyone who *is* Boris Johnson ... Nevertheless, our meeting began with reflections on the theme of getting together, and Friends reaffirmed the value of hearing one another, gaining insights from different perspectives but also being energised and challenged to be more than we are alone. As ever, members brought news of peace witness around the North; we heard of a variety of creative initiatives, from public talks and meetings, to gatherings sharing music and food, and of plans and experiences of taking a stand and speaking out.

Work continues on getting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons implemented, and Janet Fenton updated us on the activities of ICAN [see <http://www.icanw.org/>] Its partner bodies are taking different action around the world: in Scotland, campaigners are exploring the scope for the Scottish Government to implement some aspects of the Treaty, despite its being beyond the power of Holyrood to sign or to ratify it. On Saturday 22 September (a date which unfortunately clashes with our next all-day Area Meeting), an international rally, *NAE NUKES ANYWHERE!* will take place at Faslane, with related events before and after – for further details see <http://www.nuclearban.scot/sep-rally/>. The NFPB is taking forward the suggestion of publishing an awareness-raising leaflet from a faith perspective, and will be exploring other opportunities to contribute to this collective effort.

Mairi Campbell-Jack, Parliamentary Engagement Officer for Friends in Scotland, reported to us on the progress of the Petition that Friends and Forces Watch submitted to the Scottish Parliament in 2016 regarding armed forces visits to schools. Such visits, the Public Petitions Committee has now recommended, should be subject to Child Rights and Welfare Impact Assessment; data on them held by the Ministry of Defence should be made public; and careers information provided to young people should be more balanced. Mairi is also at the early stages of looking into what work she could usefully do to advocate for peace education in Scotland. In discussion, we were reminded that both peace education and military re-

cruitment of young people exist in a wider context, with other factors also shaping the opportunities and outcomes for the young people concerned.

The meeting heard a short report of a conference on *Rethinking Security* that took place the previous weekend, and agreed to put further effort into offering workshops and supporting work to run a similar conference in Glasgow on the same themes. 'Rethinking Security' is now the name of the conference organisers, formerly known as the Ammerdown Group (see <https://rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/>; and see also *Sesame* 198 (October 2015) for the 'Ammerdown Invitation' which set out its founding principles).

Our final item for consideration was the issue of identity and peace. In 1997, NFPB published a pamphlet, *Who Am I? Who are You? Views of National Identity in Britain* – a collection of individuals' thoughts on what identity means, or seemed to mean in the year of the referendums that brought about the reconvening of the Scottish Parliament and the creation of the Welsh Assembly. It perhaps goes without saying that some of the points addressed remain the same, others have shifted dramatically. Early on in our discussion Janet Fenton recalled her frustration at how discussion at General Meeting for Scotland in advance of the 2014 Independence Referendum was framed wholly – simplistically, she felt – in terms of identity: the point of independence is to do things differently, not in order to assert "Scottishness" but because the existing ways simply *do not work*; it is trivialising the issues to suggest that the impetus for change arises from a concern for emblems, or the desire to pit 'us' against 'them'. Nevertheless, identity, and the awareness of difference it entails, is a consideration in the peace work of many Board members, resisting Islamophobia, supporting vulnerable minority communities and seeking to sustain refugees. We were urged to hear and engage honestly with differences.

On the day following the meeting, NFPB members were among the nearly thirty Friends at a Meeting for Worship at Faslane; and some joined the protest on Tuesday morning outside the arms fair (billed as a 'conference' on Undersea Defence Technology) at the Scottish Events Campus on the Clyde.

This was my last Board meeting as representative for South East Scotland AM; my successor is Pol Yates of South Edinburgh who was also in Glasgow. The next NFPB meeting is at Lincoln on 29 September.

§

Alan Frith

The thing is just to live the highest life we know and leave everything else.

George Lloyd Hodgkin, 1912

Plain Dress

A testimony issued by Aberdeen Quarterly Meeting in 1698 advises Friends in great detail of the way they should dress. The spelling in this extract is unchanged, except that needless appears in the original as "needles" which might be confusing and is amended. Certain words are explained at the end; definitions of Scots words are from the Concise Scots Dictionary, 1985.

First Among the Men ... [In] their Apparell Wee condemn all broad ribbands for Hat bands, All Cocking up the side of their hats, all vaine powdering of Wiggs or their own hair: As also all their bushie and Long Cravats fringed or speckled; Wee condemn their false shoulder peeces, Like Necks of Shirts called by severall Cheats, And desires they may putt comely necks to their Coats; Wee condemn their hand bands or cuffs Like Shirt sleeves: Wee desire their coats may be buttoned to the tope, And not some buttons kept loose to make a show with their Cravats: Let all superfluous buttons and blindholes be put away, And no buttons further down than needs for fasning their Coats: Let the pockets of their Coats be in the Inside, and so needless Slitts and shows of ranges of buttons be prevented on the outer side of their coats, and all needless Lyps and superfluous Cloath be forboren in their Coats: And all rows of heads of Stockings at their knees be altogether forboren, And let plain buckles be in their Shoes.

And as to the habits of Women either Younger or Elder; Wee Jointly doe desire, They forbear vaine Cutting or shedding their hair to sett it out on their faces or forheads; But that it be put straight back: And that they wear on their heads, a plain Queff, without any ruffling or needless lyps in the Frons of it: And their hood above it without any wiers or pasboord to keep it high, but Let it be tyed strait and Low, and not waving Loose about their faces; And Let no Long Lapps, not maserind Lapps be on their hoods or head cloaths (an ell and ane halfe being Judged to be fully sufficient for their hoods about their faces Lapps and all Let non wear rufled Neckcloaths, but either plaine bands or plain Napkins: Let their Mantows or other gowns be made plaine, without broad or rufled lyps on the shoulders of them; And without Lead or great rows on the sleeves of them, but only a plaine uplay thereon: And without short taites, or lying over lyps in the pinning of them, to make them fitt out bigg behind: Let them be pinned stait that they may Lye plaine and broad behind: Let their be no side or Low trains, neither at Gowns or Coats. Let the Long Scarffs be cutt, It being Judged, That two ells and ane halfe, is fully sufficient for a Scarffe; Let no Stamenger be of any other collour but the same with their Gowns: Let no coloured plaids be used any more, but either Mantles or Lond hoods: And the Poor that

cannot reach to that, Let them wear white plaids, without fine collared Sprains in them: Let non want aprons at all, and that either of Green or blew or other grave cloath collors and not white upon the Street or in publick at all, nor of any spainged or speckled silk or cloath nor any silk aprons at all.

Cheats (line 5) The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) records that “a kind of Waistcoats are called Chates [*sic*] because they are to be seen rich and gaudy before, when all the back part is no such thing” (1688); however what is alluded to here seems to be some sort of collar.

Queff (line 19) Scots, = coif, a close-fitting cap.

Maserind (line 22) decorated with lace in some particular manner “[Prob. from name of the Duchesse de Mazarin] ... 1694” – OED.

ell (lines 23 & 32) A Scots ell was 37 inches (the standard ell of Edinburgh, which was the national standard from 1661 until the enactment of the Treaty of Union was actually 37.0598 inches); an English ell was 45 inches.

Stamenger (line 33) Scots, = stomacher, a covering or ornament for the chest, especially one worn under the lacings of a bodice.

Spraing (line 37) Scots, = a (*usu* glittering or brightly coloured) stripe, streak or ray of colour; as a verb (**line 39**): variegate, diversify with stripes or streaks.

aprons ... of Green (line 37) A green apron is mentioned in the 1699 comedy *Love Without Interest* as the badge of a Quakeress; and in *A Collection of Several Sermons and Testimonies* (1701) its passing is regretted: “Friends ... how comely did it look in the beginning when Friends generally come to Meetings in green Aprons? Green Aprons are of long standing, our Mother Eve wore a Green Apron, but it is a most out of fashion; Friends can now come to meetings without green Aprons ...” Twenty years later, however, Womens Quarterly Meeting for Lincolnshire recorded “We think green aprons are very decent and becoming [to] us as a people” (21st 4th mo. 1721).

Friends are watchful to keep themselves free from self-indulgent habits, luxurious ways of living and the bondage of fashion. This freedom is the first condition of vigour in all kinds of effort, whether spiritual, intellectual or physical. Undue luxury often creates a false sense of superiority, causes unnecessary burdens upon both ourselves and others and leads to the neglect of the spiritual life. By observing and encouraging simple tastes in apparel, furniture, buildings and manner of living, we help to do away with rivalry and we learn to value self-denial.

But this does not mean that life is to be poor and bare, destitute of joy and beauty. All that promotes fullness of life and aids in service for Christ is to be accepted with thanksgiving.

‘Faith & practice’ of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (1955)

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

Minutes of Area Meeting held on Saturday 23 June 2018 at Greenbank Church Halls, Morningside, Edinburgh

2018/06/01 Worship and introductions

We began our Meeting for Worship for Business with a period of worship during which *Quaker Faith & Practice* 24.58 was read. This was written by J. Duncan Wood in 1962, and ends "that ... we may take up again our unfinished task of declaring the glad tidings."

We record the deaths of Audrey Fessler of Central Fife and Kay Wassell of Central Edinburgh. We hold in the Light those who loved and cared for them.

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

2018/06/02 Minutes of Meeting of Monday 14 May

The minutes of our last Meeting held on 14 May at 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh, have been signed by the Clerks and entered in the Minute Book.

2018/06/03 Between Meetings Procedure

Following requests by AM Treasurer, the Clerks have agreed Bursary Support for three families/young people to attend Summer Shindig and the October weekend organized by AM. The total amount granted is up to £370.

2018/06/04 Nominations and appointments

Our Nominations Committee has brought us the following names for suggested appointment:

1. To serve from April 2018 to end of December 2018
Pastoral Care & Oversight – **Madeleine Harding**, Central Edinburgh
(re-appointment)
2. To serve from July 2018 to end of September 2018
Treasurer – **Mark Hutcheson**, Penicuik (re-appointment)
3. To serve from July 2018 to end of June 2019
Elder – **John Eccles**, Central Fife
4. To serve from July 2018 to end of June 2020
Editor, *Sesame* – **Alan Frith**, Central Edinburgh
5. To serve from July 2018 to end of June 2021
 - (a) Pastoral Care & Oversight – **Marianne Butler**, Kelso (2nd triennium)
 - (b) Elder – **David Clarke**, Central Edinburgh
 - (c) John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust – **Evelyn Graham**, Central
Edinburgh

We appoint the above named Friends accordingly.

6. We note that the following Friends complete their service at the end of June:
 - (a) Anna Mitchell, Central Fife, Elder
 - (b) Kim Smith, Portobello and Musselburgh, *Sesame* editorial team
 - (c) Don Stubbings, Central Edinburgh, Nominations Committee

Clayton Cameron, Central Edinburgh, has asked to be released from service on the Library Committee and we release him accordingly.

We record our thanks to these four Friends for their service.

7. Our nominations committee reports that it has been unable to identify a Friend to suggest for appointment as Area Meeting Treasurer in place of Mark Hutcheson, who wishes to be released from that role in September this year.

One suggested solution to this urgent problem would be to pay an accountant to undertake the work under the supervision of AM Trustees, perhaps through a trustee appointed for this purpose. We ask our trustees to explore taking this route. Our clerk of trustees points out to us the importance of having a suitably informed trustee to oversee the role, in which the exercise of Quaker discernment would be essential.

2018/06/05 Membership matters

a) Requests for release from membership

[Letters of resignation were received from Barbara-Jean Borthwick and Jonathan Parsons, and were accepted.]

b) Transfer of membership

We have received a transfer certificate from Leeds Area Meeting for Alison Hardie, who is worshipping with South Edinburgh Friends. We welcome her to this Area Meeting.

2018/06/06 Data Protection

Ken Jobling, Clerk to Trustees, and Richard Williams, Data Protection Officer, have informed us of the steps being taken to comply with the recent changes under the General Data Protection Regulations introduced on 25 May 2018.

We thank the Trustees of General Meeting for Scotland for their support and the information they have provided.

2018/06/07: Small steps, big changes - a report from Quaker Life Representative Council (QLRC)

Mary Woodward has given us a brief verbal account of Quaker Life Representative Council held in April 2018 at Woodbrooke, which she attended on behalf of Area Meeting.

At the start of QLRC, Section 317 of *Christian Faith & Practice* was read. Fellowship has often brought a religious organisation into being and fresh growth needs freedom. All Quaker Meetings have problems of finding Friends to serve. Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM), for three years, will have a worker who will work with meetings to discern how our organizational structures can be simplified to free up Friends from tasks and roles.

Mary then led us in some exercises to consider the positive and negative influences we feel in our lives. Sharing these snakes (negative - we thought of one) and ladders (positive - we thought of two) can be a start in helping us to address the small steps which can bring bigger changes in our personal lives and in the lives of our Meetings. Change can involve both minor and major aspects of our busyness and business. Nurturing is essential for our spiritual lives.

A fuller, written account of QLRC is included in June's edition of *Sesame*. [Not so – see page 7.] We thank Mary both for attending QLRC and also for facilitating this time at Area Meeting.

2018/06/08 Diversity and Inclusion

Britain Yearly Meeting held in August 2017 at Warwick University sent Minute 38 to Meeting for Sufferings to ask it to “consider diversity in our committee and organizational structures, and particularly to look at how Quakers can remove barriers and actively seek wider participation in the full life of our meetings.”

Sufferings recognized that we will not be able to so increase diversity without addressing wider issues and wishes to learn from other groups so that we are all- age, inclusive and loving communities. Change is managed best when done in a loving and organic way and the Light will guide us.

Questions which will help us :-

- a) In what ways is your meeting (or committee or group) already diverse?
- b) In what ways could it be more diverse?
- c) What would help it become more diverse? What are the opportunities and barriers?

Britain Yearly Meeting 2018 talked often of diversity and newly appointed Trustees of BYM are all younger Friends.

This is, in Scotland, the Year of Young People. The Scottish Government which has designated this year has helpful pointers at each level of Scottish society to draw in a wide range of people from the beginning.

There are many aspects to diversity so diversity is not simple; it is complex. We were reminded that Friends House has produced a *Toolkit for Action – owning power and privilege* which could be a useful aid to helpful dialogue.

Friends are planning for Shindig, a week of worship and events, which is very important for younger Friends. We were reminded that much Quaker activity takes place outwith Sunday worship, e.g. Shindig.

We agree to further discuss these three questions at an all day/half day event (to be decided by the organizing team) in the autumn and ask our Clerks to arrange a date and programme. We hope that younger Friends will also be involved from the start of planning this.

2018/06/09 Prison Ministry

Jenny Copsey has spoken to us of her continuing work with prisoners at Edinburgh Prison. There have been some problems with organizing appropriate payments to remand prisoners but the system seems to be working better now and Jenny expects the money we have given (£750) to be expended by the end of the year.

We have been asked if we would be willing to consider payments being given to convicted prisoners who have no access to money and we agree to this.

We thank Jenny Copsey for the work she does on our behalf and for this report.

2018/06/10 Correspondence and notices

We have received:

- The latest issue of *Our Homeless Neighbour*, the newsletter of Scottish Churches Homeless Action
- The electronic newsletter of the Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility
- Saturday 14 July 10 - 4 at the Priory Rooms, Bull Street, Birmingham: *A Future for All: Implementing the Christian imperative to care for our world*. An ecumenical day of worship, speakers, workshops, conversations and inspiration. Area Meeting would be pleased to one or two Friends were able to attend this day on our behalf and will pay all expenses required.

Liz Law has asked us on behalf of QPSW to consider contributing to the cost of appointing new Peaceworkers and encouraged us to find details on the BYM website.

2018/06/11 The work of Campaign Against Arms Trade

Following our decision at our last meeting to offer £10,000 from the legacy of Marjorie Farquharson to support the appointment of an Edinburgh-based Campaign Against Arms Trade coordinator, we have invited Kirsten Bayes from CAAT to tell us more about the work of the organisation.

Kirsten first challenged us with an arms trade quiz before telling us about CAAT and how it works.

David Turner shared with us the story of the Edinburgh CAAT group. It was founded in 1995 and has campaigned *via* street stalls, protest action

and seeking to influence parliamentarians. In recent years, the group has employed a very part time coordinator and has done presentations in schools. A successful campaign led to the withdrawal of arms trade sponsorship of the Edinburgh Science Festival.

Much recent work has been done on defence diversification - exploring how skilled workers could be better deployed outside the arms industry.

Kirsten highlighted four key current campaigns:

- Stop arming Saudi Arabia
- Arms to Renewables
- Stop the Arms Fair (the biennial DSEI)
- Universities and Institutions – getting arms companies out of association with research and training.

With the aid of a sketch of a warplane, we were led through the complexities of a modern aircraft and its systems and the huge number of skills and trades engaged in their manufacture and operation.

We were given key facts about arms manufacture in Scotland and the companies involved, including Raytheon, Leonardo, BAE Systems, Thales, Babcock and Qinetiq. We were reminded that the Scottish Government has supported and is continuing to support these companies.

We explored what we can do about all this, listing the various kinds of action that ordinary folk like us can do, including working with other groups and exploiting social media:

- Lobbying
- Research (which, as local residents we are entitled to do)
- Outreach at stalls and events
- Vigils and static demonstrations
- Creative actions
- Direct action

CAAT works with other groups and organisations here and around the world. We are called to work to change the national and international narrative.

We are very grateful to Kirsten for her lively and engaging presentation and look forward to supporting the Scottish CAAT coordinator when they are appointed next year.

2018/06/12 What we did today

As part of our introductory all-age worship, *A Child's Garden* [by Michael Foreman] was read. Friends were then invited to use the material provided to create, arising from the story.

Children were outdoors both morning and afternoon session at the Hermitage, playing pooh sticks in the burn. Very enviable.

Adults were indoors, meeting for worship for business in the morning and a most informative presentation, followed by questions and answers, by Kirsten Beyes of CAAT in the afternoon. Equally enviable.

2018/06/13 Concluding minute

30 members, one attender and two children, from seven Local Meetings, have attended all or part of this Area Meeting, as indicated below:

Central Edinburgh 6 members	Central Fife -	East Lothian 3 members	Kelso 2 members 1 attender	Penicuik 2 members
Polmont 1 member	Portobello & Musselburgh 3 members	South Edinburgh 13 members 2 children	Tweeddale -	

2018/06/14 Date of our next meeting

The next Area Meeting will be on Tuesday 14 August 2018 at 7.00 pm in the offices of Scottish Churches Housing Action, 44 Hanover Street, Edinburgh.

(Signed)
Phil Lucas
K.J. Arnot
Alastair Cameron
 Clerks

Following last year's picture of Victoria Terrace (Sesame 212), the drawing on the front page is the second in an occasional series depicting 'Places of Worship as They Never Were'. Rembrandt never left the Dutch Republic, and his sketch of what is now the cathedral at St Albans was based on an engraving by someone else; the flight of stone steps up to the south transept is his own invention. After falling into disrepair, the former abbey church was transformed by Lord Grimthorpe in the 1880s, with pitched roofs and a sandstone west front of his own (execrable) design, but the Norman central tower, of Roman brick from the ruins of Verulamium, was unaltered; this is more or less how it would have appeared in the time of the first Friends. (A 1669 survey of dissenters living in the town reported 60 Quakers 'meeting at a hired house on Sundays and Wednesdays.') St Albans was often a traveller's first overnight stop after leaving London on the Great North Road (later the A1). George Fox was there in 1677 and '78: in the handwritten itinerary known as the Haistwell Diary he refers to the place as "S^t Albaines", although in later 'formal' Quaker writings it was called "Albans", Friends disapproving of sainthood as a title.

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
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First Sunday in the Month

Penicuik: Valleyfield House, 17 High St., Penicuik <i>Children welcome, bring and share lunch</i>	11.00 am
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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
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Second Sunday in the Month

East Lothian: St Andrew's Centre, Dunbar	11.00 am
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Second and Fourth Sundays in the Month

Portobello & Musselburgh: Fisherrow Community Centre, South St, Musselburgh EH21 6AT. <i>Children welcome.</i>	11.00 am
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
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Fourth Sunday in the Month

North Edinburgh Meeting: Broughton St Mary's Church, Edinburgh	7.00 pm
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Fifth Sunday in the Month

Central Fife: Hunter Halls, Kirkcaldy (Kirk Wynd, opposite Old Kirk)	10.30 am
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Last Sunday in the Month

East Lothian: St Andrew's Centre, Dunbar	11.00 am
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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 Footprint UK, Riverside Works, Edinburgh Road, Jedburgh TD8 6EE.