

SESAME

Number 246: March 2023

AM on 18 March/Privileged Bodies/NFPB/Shindig/Local Development Work/All change at Edinburgh QMH/Mtg for Sufferings/General Mtg/BDRC/'Options for Scotland'/Woodbrooke: *Trustees' Minute*/SFAR/World Day of Prayer 2023/Parliamentary Engagement in 2022/Fàilte/Antonine Friendship Link/XR – *'The Big One'*/Quaker Activists (*of the 1820s*) /Yearly Meeting *booking details*/January Minutes/Library Recommendation/... &^c.



Woodbrooke – see page 22

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SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

The next Area Meeting will be on Saturday 18 March, hosted by Portobello & Musselburgh Local Meeting at Bellfield, 16B Bellfield Street, Edinburgh EH15 2BP, and online. The business will start at 2.30 pm, and all are invited to stay for a meal and a ceilidh afterwards, finishing around 8.30 pm.

DRAFT AGENDA

1. Worship and introductions
2. Minutes of the meeting of 16 January 2023 [see page 37]
3. Matters arising from previous meetings
 1. *Climate Justice – an ‘opening the door’ day, 27 May 2023*
(2022/11/10 refers)
 2. *Festival Committee (2023/01/11.2)* [see page 11]
4. Future of 7 Victoria Terrace – *report from AM Trustees* [see page 12]
5. Decisions by between-meeting procedure
 1. *Visitor for membership applicant*
 2. *Memorial meeting for Ida and David Turner* [see below]
 3. *Staffing Link Friend*
6. Membership matters:
 1. *Reports on visits for membership*
 2. *Resignation*
 3. *Transfer*
 4. *Deaths*
7. Tabular statement for 2022
8. Appointment of marriage
9. Matters from local meetings
10. General Meeting matters
 1. *Peace education exhibition* [see Zoe Prosser’s report, page 9]
 2. *Enquirers’ meetings*
11. Report from AM Treasurer
12. Appointments: from Nominations Committee
13. Closing minute

*A memorial meeting to celebrate the lives of IDA (1929-2022) & DAVID (1924-2023) TURNER, late of Portobello & Musselburgh local meeting, and previously of South Edinburgh, Inverness, and Borders, will take place at the Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2JL on **Sunday 16 April at 2.00 pm.** It will be a blended meeting: Zoom details will be circulated nearer the time. All are welcome.*

The Religious Society of Friends: a 'Privileged Body'

ON 9 MARCH, twelve Quakers, including two from Scotland (Angela Stather of Islay & Jura LM, and Adwoa Burnley, as Yearly Meeting clerk) were at Buckingham Palace to present an address to the King on behalf of the Religious Society of Friends, which, as a 'privileged body', has "the historic right to present an Address to the Sovereign in person." At the last occasion when Friends were called on to exercise this right, on 27 March 2012, the late Queen heard twenty-seven such addresses congratulating her on her Diamond Jubilee (see the supplement to the *London Gazette*, online at <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/60160/data.pdf>) delivered on behalf of twenty-eight bodies – the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Anglo-Jewish Association were treated as a single one. The Privileged Bodies are a mixed bag: as well as Quakers and Jews, the faith groups included are the Church of England (through its General Synod), the Church of Scotland (its General Assembly), the Roman Catholic Church in England & Wales, and the Free Churches Group. The Deans and Chapters of St Paul's and Westminster Abbey are privileged bodies in their own right, and the Dean and Canons of St George's Chapel, Windsor, are another, even if they, like the 'Military Knights of Windsor' – eighteen retired officers occupying accommodation at the Castle who form part of the Royal Household – might seem close enough to the throne not to need privileged access. Oxford, Cambridge, London and the four 'ancient' Scottish universities (St Andrews, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh) are on the list. So too are the Corporations of the cities of London, Westminster and Edinburgh (though Edinburgh's was abolished in 1975 and the Council takes its place); the Greater London Authority and the Lieutenancy of London; and the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead and the Royal County of Berkshire. Last, there are three *sui generis* institutions: the Royal Society, the Royal Academy of Arts and the Bank of England. (To say that this list is unrepresentative of the modern United Kingdom might invite the retort that "modern United Kingdom" is a contradiction in terms.)

In *The Later Period of Quakerism* (1921), Rufus M. Jones writes that sending a deputation to address the sovereign was for Friends "*an ancient custom, running through the entire history of the Society, and recognised as an established privilege*"; and that in the nineteenth century it was first used in 1812, to present an Address to the Prince Regent on the subject of war. He adds:

It was the custom then, and for many years afterwards, for Friends of the deputation to wear their hats, which were taken off at the door of entrance by the 'Yeomen of the Guard' who, for their various services in connection with the deputation, usually received a fee of five guineas. On this occasion William Allen of Plough Court [see page 33 for more about this Friend] read the Address and received from the hand of the Prince Regent the written reply prepared in advance.

Further deputations, in 1820, 1830 and 1837, addressed George IV, William IV and Victoria at their accessions, the latter two again led by William Allen.

Rufus Jones does not mention the deputation of 1849, which urged Queen Victoria to use her influence against slavery, by that time abolished throughout the British Empire but an evil still existing, notably in the United States. This was a significant audience, however, because it was the last one to take place at the instigation of a privileged body rather than by royal invitation. When, in 1981, Friends were called upon to make a Loyal Address on the occasion of the engagement of the Prince of Wales, it apparently came as a surprise to members of Meeting for Sufferings, although such addresses had been delivered for the Silver Jubilee in 1977, at the Golden Jubilee of 1887, and at various other times in the intervening ninety years. With the example of 1849 in mind, it was decided that the privilege of access ought not to go unused between such official celebrations. An address of some 700 words was prepared on the subject of the then-intensifying arms race. It cited Lord Mountbatten's 1979 speech at Strasbourg, in which he had said that nuclear weapons served no military purpose, and quoted the Queen's own Christmas Message of 1976; its style was conspicuously more reverent than usual, with capital letters for pronouns referring to the Queen. The full text (reprinted in the *American Friends Journal*, March 15 1984, p. 19) can be read at

<https://www.friendsjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/emember/downloads/1984/HC12-50755.pdf>

The address was sent to the Palace in October 1983, and in November an acknowledgement was received, stating that it had been laid before the Queen, who had taken note of the contents. Since the matters raised were "clearly ones for Her Majesty's Ministers", however, she had instructed that the address should be forwarded to the Secretary of State for Defence, and the request for an audience was refused. Later, an anodyne reply from the Ministry of Defence, dated 1 December 1983, stated that the Government sought "*a relationship with the Soviet Union aimed at genuine détente*"; and later still, the Home Office clarified that the right of access enjoyed by privileged bodies is now limited to the occasions when they are invited to attend, on the basis that since the introduction of universal suffrage the members of the privileged bodies have themselves an influence on events which they did not have previously. The Diamond Jubilee address, mentioned at the start, can be seen as written in the light of this rebuff. Though it does of course convey good wishes, it speaks also of equal marriage, of the climate crisis, and peace; and the picture in the *Gazette* shows it being handed to the Queen by a very straight-backed Joycelin Dawes. Similarly, this month's address to the King – its full text is included in Katrina McCrea's report of Meeting for Sufferings [see page 14] – refers to present Quaker concerns, ending with the hope that the monarch will not just "*serve wisely and lovingly*" but "*can counsel [his] governments to do the same.*" Let us hope he can; and that they do. (But let us not hold our breath.)

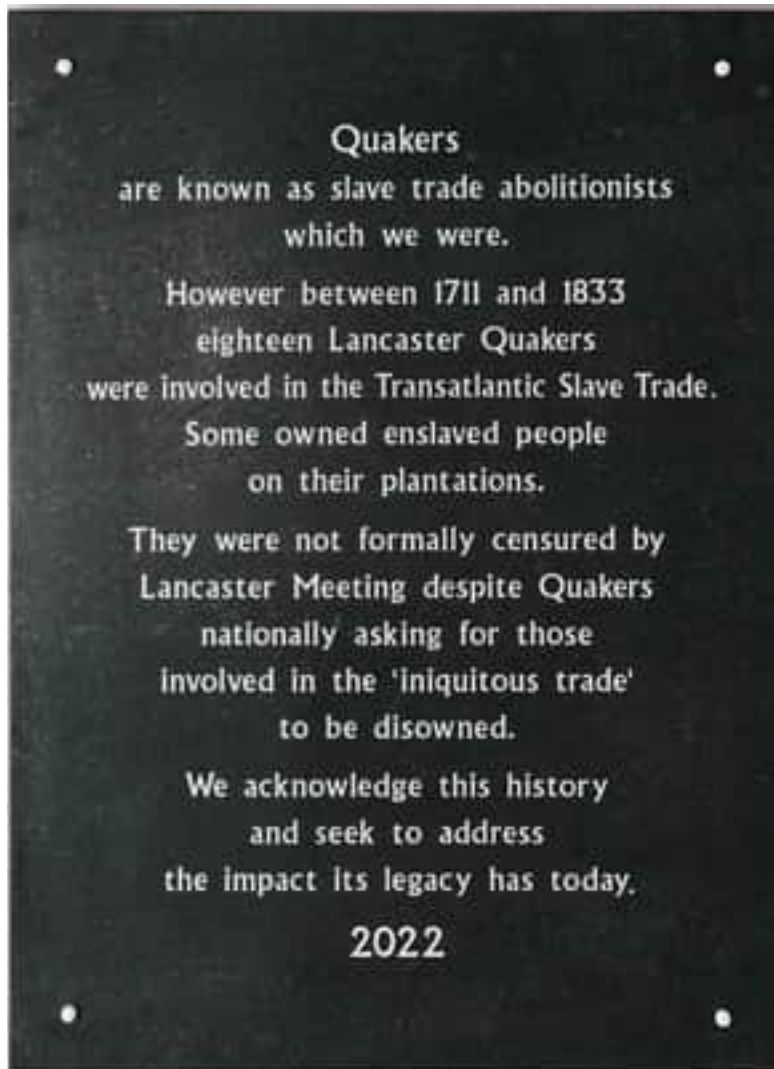
Editor

See also, on the Quakers in Britain website:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/blog/a-privileged-body-quakers-and-the-history-of-loyal-addresses>

Northern Friends Peace Board, 25 February 2023

IN THE PORCH at Lancaster Meeting House, where the Board met for its first meeting of 2023, having been kept away last year by rail strikes, there is now displayed the plaque below:



(Friends who were at Yearly Meeting 2022 will remember Ann Morgan's report of her researches which had uncovered these deplorable facts: members of the Religious Society of Friends could be – and were – disowned for non-attendance, falling into debt, 'marrying out', putting guns on their ships, and piracy; but not for treating other people as property. The positive side of the Quaker record is summarised at:

[https://
www.quakersintheworld.org/
quakers-in-action/55/Anti-
Slavery-in-Britain](https://www.quakersintheworld.org/quakers-in-action/55/Anti-Slavery-in-Britain)

– which includes interesting details, such as William Wilberforce's disapproval of the equal status of women among Friends – but it is right we are aware there was a negative side as well.)

More recent history was uppermost in the minds of Board members: we were meeting on the day after the anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine, and this was our first item of substantive business.

Ukraine

Our online session (planned for November, but postponed, owing to the office move, to 8 February) at which responses to the war were shared, had had more than 50 participants and attracted positive comments; we agreed to make available the prepared ministry which had introduced it [see: <https://nfpb.org.uk/ukraine-nfpb1/>] and to arrange further events. There was discussion of what the Board, and Friends individually, can do to promote peace while recognising the ambivalence of those most affected by conflict. Our belief is that war never brings a positive outcome; and that this war is no different from other wars.

Young People

At present, we have only one Board member under 30, and YFGM [Young Friends General Meeting – see Q.F. & P. 5.08] decided last year to stop appointing a representative to NFPB, as part of a process of ‘simplifying’ its own work. Our coordinator, Philip Austin, was asked to write to YFGM urging Young Friends to reconsider, and members are to talk to young people in their own meetings to identify any peace-related interests and concerns that exercise them but which we are not currently addressing.

Trustees’ report

Trustees presented an overview of our finances for 2022 and for this year to-date; the office move has been completed and the new space at Bolton Meeting House is very much more suitable.

Trustees had noted the death in January of Rowland Dale, who was NFPB Secretary, 1976-1985. (There was a re-structuring after his departure, with the Chairman becoming Clerk, and the Secretary, the Coordinator.) In his time, the Board focused very much on East-West relations, although it also supported Leonard Bird’s research, which resulted in a book, *Costa Rica: The Unarmed Democracy* (1984).

The Alternative Security Review/Global Campaign on Military Spending

Philip Austin reported. The Alternative Security Review (ASR) is an initiative of Rethinking Security: “a 3-year project to create public dialogue in the UK on human and ecological security [which] through research and civil society engagement ... will produce a ‘human security strategy’ for the UK and its people and their engagement with the rest of the world.” (More information is at

<https://rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/find-out-more/alternative-security-review/>.)

It is ‘alternative’ to such plans as the UK Government’s Integrated Review, published in March 2021 – condemned at the time by Church leaders and GCOMS-UK (see Sesame 235) for raising military spending and increasing the cap on the number of Britain’s nuclear warheads, it has also since been criticised by those who share its fundamental assumptions (e.g. Andrew Marr, *New Statesman*, 1/2/23) for having “lacked almost all strategic understanding”. ‘Security’, however, is never to be found by relying on advanced weaponry; a preliminary to the ASR is ‘Visualising Security’ (see

<https://rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/find-out-more/visualising-security/>)

which aims to bring out through photography and discussion what the concept mean for individuals and communities; Board members were urged to get involved in workshops, as hosts or participants.

GCOMS sponsors the ‘Global Days of Action on Military Spending’ over several weeks in April/May each year (see: <https://demilitarize.org.uk/global-days-of-action/>). In the current climate, military spending is a challenging issue, so it is perhaps all the more important to be encouraging discussion about it – it can be a chance to ask questions about how resources could be used differently to address the underlying causes of war and insecurity.

Members Forum

Among the matters raised, were the following:

Several members plan to attend the **XR 'Big One'** on 21 April [see page 32, and also <https://xrpeace.org/thebig-one/>] and we heard too that Quaker Roots, as well as planning to witness against the **DSEI arms fair** in London in September, is running a number of preparatory events online, including one on 15 March on knowing your rights in relation to protest – see <https://www.quaker-roots.org.uk/events/?civiwp=CiviCRM&q=civicrm/event/info&reset=1&id=48>

Witness in the form of meetings for worship takes place at **Faslane** [2023 dates in *Sesame* 245], and at **Menwith Hill** and **Fylingdales** [supported by Harrogate Friends and Pickering & Hull AM respectively; for more details, see <https://nfpb.org.uk/2023/03/08/worship-and-witness-in-yorkshire/>].

In Manchester, Friends have a group campaigning on **conflict minerals**, focusing largely on their impact in the Democratic Republic of Congo; in Glasgow, there is concern about the development of the **Rosebank oil and gas field**, west of Shetland, with a day of action planned for 10 April – see <https://www.stopcambo.org.uk/>

Work to promote the **TPNW** [*Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*], and to encourage local authorities to endorse it, is being done in Sheffield and Stockport.

Outreach and engagement

We considered what events, activities and resources we might prepare for Friends and others in the coming year and beyond. Board members shared ideas in the meeting and were asked to contact our Coordinator with any further suggestions.

We ended our meeting in worship, and plan to meet again in June, at Darlington Meeting House.

Alan Frith

WAR IN UKRAINE

Pax Christi International issued a statement on the anniversary of the Russian invasion which is here:

<https://paxchristi.net/2023/02/21/statement-on-the-first-anniversary-of-the-war-in-ukraine/>

Quaker work is outlined at <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/peace/ukraine;> and the **NFPB** has links and resources at https://nfpb.org.uk/ukraine_2022/.

Opposition to the war within Russia (and Belarus) is reported at

[https://wagingnonviolence.org/2023/01/russians-indigenous-belarusians-are-unite-to-resist-war-in-ukraine/;](https://wagingnonviolence.org/2023/01/russians-indigenous-belarusians-are-unite-to-resist-war-in-ukraine/)

and the **Parley Policy Initiative** has been tracking the diplomatic moves of both Russia and Ukraine since before the invasion:

<https://www.parleypolicy.com/post/tracking-ukraine-russia-ceasefire-negotiations.>

Summer Shindig 2023

NORTHERN Young Friends' Summer Shindig is a week-long residential event for young people (between 11 & 16 years old on 30 June) who are connected to the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).

The event is primarily for those who live in our catchment area of Scotland GM and Northumbria, Teesdale & Cleveland, Wensleydale & Swaledale, North Cumbria, West Cumbria, and Kendal & Sedbergh AMs; but we welcome youngsters from further afield if we have space (and we usually do).

Summer Shindig 2023 will be from 29 July – 5 August, at Ackworth School in North Yorkshire. This is a fantastic venue with plenty of space both indoors and out. It's also lovely to hold the event in a Quaker school.

There is an overall theme for the week and on three mornings there are sessions facilitated by guest speakers followed by discussions in small groups. The speakers can interpret the theme quite liberally, allowing their particular knowledge, experiences and style of presentation to bring it to life.

The programme for the week also includes activities, sports, various entertainments, evening worship and unstructured free time. On Wednesday we have day trips: last year, some went to Flamingo Land, some to York.

Our experience is that, as the week progresses, young people develop friendships with strong foundations that last throughout the year and beyond. We are a community within which participants learn about honesty, trust and acceptance of themselves and others. We also have lots of fun!

One main aim of Summer Shindig is to give young people a view and experience of Quakerism as a whole, helping them to develop a fuller understanding of the Society of Friends, its beliefs and manner of worship.

COST

The cost for the event will be **£330** for the first child and **£300** for others in the same family. If required, please select the 'bursary help' option on the application form. *COST SHOULD NOT PREVENT ANYONE FROM ATTENDING.*

APPLICATIONS

APPLICATIONS SHOULD BE RETURNED BY 3 APRIL AT THE LATEST. The form collects basic information and secures your young person's place at the event. We also ask for optional additional details which will allow us to consider how many staff to recruit, what sessions may be of interest, and what support to put in place to make young people feel welcome and happy at the event. We ask parents and carers to fill in as much information as they feel comfortable with. In doing so, we hope that we can put together the best event for our participants.

Queries on any matter regarding Summer Shindig should be sent to the Coordinator, **Alex Orr**: 07983 505 492 or summershindig@gmail.com.

Further information, and a link to the application form, is at:

<https://summershindig.wordpress.com/>

From our Local Development Worker

General Meeting in November set **priorities for Local Development work** in 2023, which are:

1. Expanding role-holder networks;
2. Supporting Quaker community building – locally, for families, and for everyone;
3. Pointing the way to information about available resources and materials, including videos and non-traditional resources, to help Quaker Meetings and role-holders identify what they need.

I am “accompanying” the **OfS2 working group** [see page 20] – while not a member of the group, I attend its meetings, providing contacts and advice when this seems useful.

Can you provide a space for a travelling exhibition on Peace Education?

The Parliamentary Engagement Working Group and Britain Yearly Meeting Peace Education staff are working to put on a touring exhibition that will go to the Scottish Parliament, 6-28 September 2023.

It will feature multimedia examples of peacebuilding at the heart of schools, from young peacemakers mediating disputes to action on global issues. Peace artefacts will encourage curiosity and critical thinking. Accompanying workshop opportunities will give children and young people the chance to interact and add to the exhibition.

To find out more please go to <https://www.quakerscotland.org/news/peace-heart> and please contact me (ZoeP@quaker.org.uk) if you have any questions.

My bi-monthly **drop-in sessions on Zoom**, in which you can have a chat or ask me a question, will be at the following dates and times:

Time of day	Dates	Zoom details
Morning (10.30 am)	9 May 2023	Join Zoom Meeting https://quaker.zoom.us/j/82830061734 Meeting ID: 828 3006 1734
Afternoon (2.30 pm)	13 July 2023	Join Zoom Meeting https://quaker.zoom.us/j/81742505630 Meeting ID: 817 4250 5630
Evening (6.30 pm)	14 March 2023 September 2023 (<i>date tbc</i>)	Join Zoom Meeting https://quaker.zoom.us/j/82150494485 Meeting ID: 821 5049 4485

If you would like to find out more about me I have a webpage and interview video on the *Quakers in Scotland* website. My most recent quarterly report (from February) is online, as are the ones from 2022. The page is at:

<https://quakerscotland.org/our-work/support-for-meetings>

Zoe Prosser

Goodbye and hello at 7 Victoria Terrace

ON 3 MARCH we said goodbye to Sue Proudlove and Tony Wilkes, who have been managers of the Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House since January 2016. Their last week working in the Meeting House was spent handing over to our new manager, Miranda Girdlestone.

Sue and Tony have put a tremendous amount of thought, care and attention into running the Meeting House over the last seven years, a time which included the very difficult period of the pandemic. As well as the obvious aspects of being managers, such as looking after groups and taking bookings, they have done a lot of hidden work: making sure that the staffing rotas for nine members of staff each month cover the variable times the Meeting House is booked for, dealing with building work and equipment repairs, arranging outreach material, organising cleaners, and invoicing and keeping track of the finances. The building's being Venue 40 has involved not just intense activity during the Fringe itself, but also, with Festival Committee, a good deal of planning throughout the year.

Before COVID, bookings were going up steadily, and the Meeting House was getting excellent testimonials from clients. COVID flipped Sue & Tony's role overnight from making bookings to cancelling bookings, from creating rotas to supporting staff on furlough, and from setting up rooms to setting up Zoom accounts. There followed a year of stop-start uncertainty, punctuated by updates to Scottish Government guidance which Sue & Tony turned into plans for reopening the rather lonely Meeting House.

Inspired by their involvement in the Quaker Centres Gathering of venues including Friends House, Woodbrooke and larger Meeting Houses, Sue & Tony have worked on a number of obvious improvements to the Meeting House, such as the new library and the new chairs in the hall. They have also set up a new electronic diary and transferred the booking and invoicing system from paper to a more efficient electronic system.

Sue & Tony have used their talents to beautify the Meeting House and its environs. Sue has transformed the shady courtyard behind the Meeting House (visible from Riddell's Court) into a green haven. Tony is the creator of the Lego models of meeting for worship that have appeared in the Meeting House window and on the [@EdinburghQuakerMeetingHouse](#) Facebook page (maintained by Sue) [*and also on the cover of Sesame 229*].

At the Central Edinburgh Ceilidh on 21 January, we presented a picture of Victoria Terrace to Sue & Tony, with the remainder of the collection, in the form of Theatre tokens, presented to them after Meeting for Worship on 19 February, the last Sunday they were in residence in the flat in Upper Bow.

They are delighted with the picture, and looking forward to being theatre-goers rather than theatre-managers. Although they are leaving Edinburgh, they will be just over the Forth, and we hope to see them back soon. We wish them well in whatever the next phase of their lives brings.

Our new manager, Miranda Girdlestone, joins us after working for Citizens Advice in South Lincolnshire. Previously she worked for Britain Yearly Meeting, in both Quaker Peace & Social Witness, and Communication & Services. Miranda was an attender at Spalding Meeting and knows Victoria Terrace well, having volunteered at the Venue 40 café in 2005 and 2006. She brings a wealth of experience in managing staff, systems and communications, and we are looking forward to working with her.

David Sterratt

Convener, Management Committee

Sue Proudlove & Tony Wilkes write:

After a few very busy weeks of packing, moving, handover, and unpacking (well, this last item is still ongoing), we are getting used to being based in Dalgety Bay. We'll miss lots of things about being in the city centre, but we're also rather enjoying the background sounds of curlews and oystercatchers – it makes a change from bagpipes and glass recycling! We'd like to say a huge and heartfelt 'thank you' to Friends for the leaving gifts and good wishes. It has been a privilege to be Meeting House managers for seven years, and we wish our successor, Miranda Girdlestone, all the best as she takes over.

Venue 40 to Fringe Central

FESTIVAL Committee and Meeting House Management Committee have agreed with the Fringe Society for them to use the Meeting House as “Fringe Central” for a fee of around £17,000 for the six weeks around the Fringe. Fringe Central hosts a programme of professional development events throughout August, as well as offering one-to-one support and guidance to participants. The Meeting House is of great interest to them due to its location and variety of spaces available. They will use the building for events, workshops and masterclasses; drop-in support; a space for quiet work and small meetings, to relax, or to warm-up for shows; for a facilitated Mental Health support programme, including bookable one-to-one Mental Health First Aid sessions; and as office space for Fringe Society staff. Meeting House Management Committee and Meeting House managers will be working with the Fringe Society on the details of the arrangement. Friends will have access for Meetings for Worship at midday on Wednesdays and on Sunday mornings. This means the Meeting House will not operate as Venue 40 in 2023. The arrangement is just for this year and will be reviewed by all involved after the Fringe.

Janet Grimwade

Festival Committee

(More on the Meeting House overleaf ...)

AM finances and Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House

Background

This year's Annual Appeal mentioned the pressures on our finances, and also that a major concern comes from the cost of maintaining our Meeting House in Edinburgh at 7 Victoria Terrace. My aim here is to give a bit more detail, and to describe the processes that Trustees have set in motion to consider possible responses. We are keen to hear feedback and new ideas.

The financial sustainability of the Meeting House has caused concern before, and has been the subject of previous reports of which the most detailed was in 2009. On average, over the seven years before COVID (2013-2019), the income from meeting house lettings to outside groups roughly balanced regular expenditure. There was some variation during the period – in the years 2013 to 2015 expenditure exceeded income, whereas in 2016 to 2019 income exceeded expenditure as the number of lettings increased.

However, every few years there has been a need for major repairs or upgrading, the cost of which has been covered by legacies, external grants, and special appeals. This is very episodic but has averaged £45,000 *per annum*. Raising grants and managing appeals need time and organisation, and trustees were concerned, even before COVID, that we could not in the long term rely on volunteers for this, as we have in the past.

During the COVID pandemic, the situation deteriorated, with the Meeting House closed for a long period. Lettings, though now increasing, are still well below the level of 2019. Inflation has added to the problems. In the three financial years 2019, 2020, and 2021, AM's average deficit was around £50,000 each year. 2022 figures are not available yet but looking similar, and nor is 2023 looking much different.

We have only been able to sustain such losses by the fortunate chance that we were holding a substantial legacy as reserves, until we were able to plan how best to use it.

On the positive side, the Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House brings considerable benefits, not only to Central Edinburgh Local Meeting and our Area Meeting, but also to General Meeting for Scotland – and to Quakers in Britain, as the building has also been used for activity by Friends young and older from outwith Scotland: for instance, in 2019, the Book of Discipline Revision Committee, Quaker Life Central Committee, and even Quaker World Relations Committee and Young Friends General Meeting.

What can we do?

In the medium term we do not think it likely that regular giving by Friends could meet the shortfall. Legacies are unpredictable, so can only be seen as an occasional but very welcome bonus. On the other hand, we hear that giving up the Meeting House should be considered only as a last resort.

Trustees have therefore convened a small group to consider how we can improve the affordability of the Meeting House by (1) changing how we

operate the building in its current configuration, for example changes in staffing; (2) using the building differently. The group is being convened by David Sterratt (*current convener of Edinburgh Meeting House Management Committee*), Neil Turner (*Clerk to Trustees*), Henry Thompson (*nominated convener of Management Committee from April*), Miranda Girdlestone (*new Meeting House Manager*), Phil Lucas (*former Manager*) and Rachel Fitzgerald (*lettings manager at Augustine United Church*).

Our Treasurer and Clerk of Trustees have also commissioned updated valuations for the Meeting House, and for the staff flats we own in the adjoining tenement. They have asked the surveyors for general advice on how we might improve income so as to provide information for the group.

We welcome suggestions from Friends – please contact David Sterratt or me, Neil Turner. The group will report back regularly to both Area Meeting and Central Edinburgh local meeting, so that all Friends have a chance to assess proposals and – we hope – come up with their own ideas.

Neil Turner

Clerk, Area Meeting Trustees

Meeting for Sufferings, 4 March 2023

Papers for the meeting are at:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/mfs-2023-03-agenda-papers-package>

and the minutes can be read at:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/mfs-2023-03-follow-up-package>

The highlights of this energetic and very interesting day are listed below.

Spirit-led employment practices

Jon Martin and Lisa Whistlecroft of Lancashire Central & North AM are working on 'Spirit-led employment practices' in Quaker workplaces. They shared their reflections on ethical employment practices and how these might be realised. A group from their Area Meeting is planning to produce resources to help Friends and employers consider spirit-led practice: in particular, the importance of respecting confidentiality and the need to engage with and manage conflicts.

To be put in touch with the group, please email sufferings@quaker.org.uk and your details will be passed on.

Quaker Chaplains

Sarah Bower, Robin Fishwick, Emma Roberts, and Oliver Robertson described their ministry in different types of chaplaincies.

Quaker chaplains can be found in a variety of settings: prisons, universities, colleges, schools, hospitals and hospices, as well as on the streets, in sports clubs and in workplaces, often as part of an ecumenical or interfaith chaplaincy team. The work offers challenges, both for individuals under-

taking often demanding tasks, and for Quaker processes in collaborating with secular organisations. We were reminded that this service opens up Quaker communities that may be invisible to the wider Yearly Meeting.

Woodbrooke

The Centre will close at the end of October 2023. [See page 22]

Changes to Quaker Faith & Practise

The Church Government Advisory Group (CGAG) will not attempt to replace the words *overseer* and *oversight* in the current text; they appear in numerous places to describe both current and historic practice. Instead, a note will be inserted near the start of Chapter 12, explaining the decision to stop using the term ‘overseer’.

Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture (Q-CAT)

The Q-CAT Trustees informed us they wish to lay down the charity as they have been unable to find new trustees. This was agreed.

A Loyal Address

The Recording Clerk told us of preparations for a group of twelve Friends from Britain and Ireland Yearly Meetings to make a loyal address to Charles Windsor, on 9 March 2023. The text, sharing information about the current concerns of Quakers in Britain and Ireland, is as follows:

AS REPRESENTATIVES of Quakers across Britain and Northern Ireland, we give thanks for the grace of God as shown in the life of the late Queen Elizabeth and we offer prayers for you on your accession.

We thank you for speaking out for the environment over many decades. Quakers believe that a just solution to the climate crisis requires interrogating and disrupting our existing economic systems, which are not operating within ecological limits or upholding the wellbeing, dignity and equality of all.

For us, equality means everyone feeling welcomed and valued for who they are, that we see their equal spiritual worth as a child of God. Who are we to reject what God has created? Our differences are a blessing, and we should rejoice in them. When we connect with other people then our differences do not divide us.

We have welcomed trans and gender diverse people within our Quaker worshipping communities. We have committed to being an actively anti-racist church, and to making reparations for our past involvement in slavery. It is a moral imperative on us all to try to repair the harm done, as echoes of that harm are still felt today.

We are grieved to see the harms caused by fighting in Ukraine and the many other armed conflicts throughout the world. Every casualty, civilian or soldier, is a valued human life lost or damaged. We may think wars end through force of arms or negotiation, but peace is maintained by building relationships, mutual dependency, and shared prosperity.

We hope and pray that you will be guided by the example of Jesus Christ and serve wisely and lovingly, and can counsel your governments to do the same.

As Robert Card, the new Clerk of Meeting for Sufferings, said: “May the Light reveal our shortcomings and encourage our growth in faithfulness”.

Katrina McCrea

General Meeting for Scotland, 11 March 2023

The new Clerk, Michael Hutchinson, welcomed Friends meeting in person at Glasgow, as well as those joining online. After opening worship, membership matters were dealt with. The new Book of Members & Attenders has been printed, and copies are being distributed. It costs £4, but may be purchased only by those whose details are included in it.

Proposed dates and venues 2024-5

The following dates and host Area Meetings are suggested:

2024:	9 March	South East (<i>already agreed</i>)
	8 June	West
	14 September	North
	9 November	East
2025:	8 March	South East

These will be confirmed (or not) at June's General Meeting.

Families weekend, 5-7 May at Pitlochry

The Families Weekend is planned to be held at the Atholl Centre, Pitlochry PH16 5BX, from 5-7 May 2023, taking as its theme *Peace at the Heart*, the title of a QPSW report last year on Peace Education, and now of a touring exhibition [see page 9]. Email QCYPadvocate@gmail.com to book places.

GM Trustees annual report

The report of Trustees for 2022 was presented by Martin Burnell, the retiring clerk; the most important work had been on safeguarding [see below].

Use of the Fund for Healing

The GM Fund for Healing – currently it stands at £1,627.42 – is little used. Trustees had recommended that it be donated to the Friends Fellowship of Healing, possibly as a restricted fund for the benefit of Friends in Scotland. This was agreed.

Safeguarding

GM Trustees had sent to the Meeting for adoption a 2-page model safeguarding policy, posted online at:

<https://www.quakerscotland.org/sites/quakerscotland.org/files/documents/Scottish%20Safeguarding%20Guidance%20%20final%20working%20group%20draft.pdf>

and a 52-page safeguarding guidance manual, which is at:

<https://www.quakerscotland.org/sites/quakerscotland.org/files/documents/Scottish%20Safeguarding%20model%20policy%20final%20working%20group%20draft%20%20E2%80%A6.pdf>

and these were duly adopted.

Parliamentary Engagement

The departure of Andrew Tomlinson (to become Campaigns, Advocacy, Young People and Education Manager, at Christian Aid Scotland) leaves us

without a Parliamentary Engagement Officer (PEO). The process of finding his successor is in hand: interviews are to take place on 23 March. In the meantime, work continues on Peace Education [see Zoe Prosser's note on page 9 about the touring exhibition]; on the Government's Energy Strategy consultation; and on fostering links with MSPs and other campaigning groups [see *Correspondence, below*]. At the start of each week's parliamentary business, there is a 'Time for Reflection' and three Friends – Mark Bitel, Martin Mansell and Lesley Morrison – have been nominated by their constituency MSPs to lead one.

Meeting for Sufferings report

Ann Kerr reported on the meetings in December [see *Sesame 245*] and on the March meeting [Katrina McCrea's report in on pages 13-14].

Ecumenical and interfaith update

Progress towards establishing a Scottish Christian Forum to replace ACTS has been described by our Trustees as 'glacial'.

Mary Woodward sent an update on her work as Ecumenical Officer, attending the Synods of the United Reformed Church and the Episcopal Church, and the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and participating in meetings with EOs of other churches.

Bob Dixon reported on the work of the Iona Community, which has a new Executive Director, Torsten Haak, and has recently revamped its website at <https://iona.org.uk/>.

The report of Lynn Barty, our representative at Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees, was held over. [See, nevertheless, page 24 for news of a SFAR event.]

Correspondence and other business

The Church of Scotland has withdrawn from the project to encourage 'Christian reflection on Scotland's constitutional future' [see *Sesame 245*]; and without Kirk involvement, it is thought to be no longer viable.

On Friends' behalf, the Clerk had signed two letters to each of the three candidates for the leadership of the Scottish National Party. One, drafted by Together [the Scottish alliance for children's rights, of which GM is a supporter], asked them "to reassure us of your ongoing commitment to the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill*"; the other, which was also signed on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting, had been drafted by Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS), to which we belong, and urged the candidates publicly to confirm that they will prioritise action to combat the twin crises of climate and biodiversity collapse.

Forthcoming business

The next General Meeting is due to take place on 10 June, in Edinburgh: the report of the OfS2 Working Group will be considered, and reports heard from GM representatives on bodies concerned with social witness.

[With thanks to Rachel Frith for help with these notes – Ed.]

Book of Discipline Revision Committee

IT BEING WINTER, your committee met in January using Zoom. Jess Hubbard-Bailey was back into our midst, with her son Walter making a brief appearance. His sister Norma keeps us up-to-date with how long we've been working together: born the day Jess was appointed to the committee, she was four at the beginning of February. Andrew Williams (and *his* one year-old son) joined us for the first time. Andrew, from Crail, in Fife, was on the Revision Preparation Group, which paved the way for the work we are doing now.

Our clerks told us about their presentation to December's Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) [*see* Sesame 245]; they had also had discussions with the Recording Clerk and YM clerks on the projected timeline for our work, and how future Yearly Meetings will consider draft text as we produce it.

The Communicating with Friends group reported briefly on recent visits to Area Meetings, and the challenge of getting Friends from all of Britain involved in giving feedback on the draft texts.

Members of the Reviewing Text and Glossary Group felt that they had got as far as they could in their work on some of our 'yet-to-be-banked' draft texts, written before we had developed clear guidelines on how to address a topic. Readers were appointed to look at these texts in the light of the guidelines before they were banked. Having carried out the tasks it had been charged with, the group was laid down.

It was decided to make a 'Glossary' folder on Teams so that each topic group, as it worked on text, could add words it felt needed to be explained. Tas Cooper volunteered to look through all the already-banked texts for words that might need adding to this folder. Writing explanations for them will come later.

We received two minutes from Meeting for Sufferings. One [MfS22/12/06] ... *ask[ed] all area meetings to cease using the term overseer and to select another suitable term in its place – one example would be pastoral friend – to describe their local arrangements.* The other [MfS22/12/10] recorded that the Meeting *did not reach unity on the question of appointing attenders to central committee service* and encouraged discussion throughout the Yearly Meeting on the issue of membership. The Committee's Membership topic group will pause its work until this has happened.

Having got these 'simple' matters done on Wednesday night (25 January), we started our Saturday sessions with reports from all our topic groups. Some of these were only appointed in October, others have been working for longer; some were making good progress, while others took the opportunity to ask for clarification of aspects of their topic. I'm in the group writing on Worship: we wanted clarity about whether we should include Meeting for Worship in our work (Yes). We also expressed our concerns about how to avoid excluding those who do not use conventional 'god language'

to describe their spiritual experience. Our core text will try to explain Worship clearly and simply: there will be plenty of 'anthology material' – Friends' accounts of their own experience – to show that there is no 'right answer' or 'one size fits all' when we talk about these things.

The Committee felt that the group working on Community had produced a draft that was 'good enough for now'. The groups working on Spiritual Experience, Testimony, Conflict, and Accessibility are proceeding at various speeds. We are aware that there will be considerable overlap between some topics: we will address this more particularly when we start to look at the book as a whole.

On Saturday afternoon we shared our reflections on the process of sharing draft text for the first time. We have already received some feedback, much of it positive, though some Friends obviously have axes to grind! Some responses make it clear that not everyone has grasped what we are doing – we are writing a whole new book, not making changes to *Quaker Faith & Practice*; we are writing a book which contains the core of Being and Doing Quaker, while supplementary material will outline the more detailed matters which may change more frequently. Your committee is NOT sorting out differences in the Society of Friends: our job is to reflect the Society as it is! Others were confused about what 'the voice of the book' is – it's the narrative describing what things are and how / why we do them.

So far we've had a slow trickle of responses. The deadline for responding is the end of May, so there is time for the flood to engulf us! South East Scotland AM had a session with its MfS reps to look at the two draft texts in February – will other Scottish AMs follow? Your committee will consider all the feedback at our July committee meeting.

There will be two sessions about the draft texts as part of the weekend for special interest groups [22 & 23 April] ahead of Yearly Meeting [see page 36]: one for the draft on Marriage and one for the Nominations text. You are also most welcome to send your own feedback after reading the texts or listening to the audio versions – we'd love to hear from you! They are at

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/resources/quaker-faith-and-practice/revising-quaker-faith-practice>

together with details of how to submit comments and suggestions. There is also a wealth of other information, including social media links.

We spent time in small groups reflecting on how things are going for us as individuals – how are we managing? What are we learning? What can we do to make the next stage of the process manageable both for us as individuals and for the committee as a whole?

Our final session on Saturday looked at the guidelines on 'the process of drafting text' on a topic, to enable us to work more quickly and produce text that fits with that already written. We also discussed which topics to tackle next, and how we approach diversity, inclusion and the accessibility

of all our text: questions need to be in our minds as we work, rather than waiting till it's all done.

It was agreed that the next topics should be Diversity and Inclusion; Witness/service in the world; Service in the community (roles in meetings/ other religious service); and Concern. It was also agreed that, as we will not be meeting until July, it would be helpful to have an online session in May to enable Friends working on the new topics to report on progress and ask for clarity on any matters that may have arisen. Our clerks met on Sunday morning to consider how best to share out the work among those of us who had indicated the capacity to take on more: I was delighted to be appointed reader to the group working on Service within the Meeting – Ben Pink Dandelion, Rosie Carnall and Michael Phipps. I've not worked with them before, and look forward getting to know them better.

We also considered our meetings for the rest of this year. Some topic groups had asked for face-to-face meetings for their own work, but we were told it might not be possible to do this *and* have October's meeting of the full committee in person. We felt very strongly that we needed this – our experience last year showed that we discern more deeply and make much greater progress when we are physically together. However we asked whether there might in future be the possibility of small group meetings in addition to two in-person full committee meetings a year.

We now see our next steps more clearly. We will continue working on the topics begun in October, while work starts on the new ones. Readers have been appointed to look at the yet-to-be-banked texts from the Reviewing Text and Glossary Group. Some of us will meet in May to see how the new groups are getting on, and the whole committee will meet again 14-16 July. Our weekend closed with an hour's worship in which there was ministry about cheese, looking at the stars and considering the universe, being "a feather on the breath of God", and the exciting prospect of "writing a testimony to the grace of God in the ongoing life of Britain Yearly Meeting".

Our key messages from the weekend were:

- *We continue our work together to ensure that our new book will reflect many voices, but one community of Quakers in Britain.*
- *We continue to aim to maximise the accessibility of the various formats of the final publication.*
- *We have begun the process of sharing drafts of two topics and will continue to engage with Friends and seek responses to both the written and audio versions of these by 31 May 2023.*
- *We welcome the ongoing dialogues about our work with other Quaker committees and groups.*

Please continue upholding us, Friends: we can't do this without your support, which we really value.

Mary Woodward

Options for Scotland

What holds us together as Quakers?

How can our Scottish Quaker structures better meet our needs?

Friends were invited to consider these questions by the 'OfS2' working group, appointed by General Meeting last year to examine possible changes, following the laying down of the first 'Options' working group after it had reported to GM in March (see *Sesame* 240 and 242). Two Zoom sessions took place on evenings in late January for the sharing of responses, with a third on the morning of 4 February. About ten per cent of members and attenders in Scotland participated in one or other of these, although, in the Saturday session at least, younger Friends – the under-50s – were conspicuously absent. The working group's preparatory notes are at

<https://quakerscotland.org/general-meeting/options-scotland>

and its final report is due to be posted there in mid-March.

When the matter of restructuring was first brought to General Meeting in 2021, Michael Hutchinson, then the Clerk of West Scotland AM, produced the following notes on the central proposal, which was to amalgamate the four Scottish Area Meetings and the General Meeting into a single charitable body with one set of trustees. **This is still under consideration.**

Should we lay down four of the five current trustee bodies in Scotland?

The proposal would mean widening the remit of the General Meeting for Scotland Trustees to serve the whole country. North Scotland Friends, through their AM minutes, have for some years now been asking General Meeting for assistance or seeking change, as they feel they cannot continue to operate a separate trustee body. They cannot find enough Friends willing to serve as trustees. They also find the work involved, particularly on property matters, burdensome.

Some of the reasons for REJECTING the idea of single Scottish trustee body are:

- *A single Scottish Quaker charity would be too geographically large to operate successfully. Having trustee meetings would be burdensome on many serving owing to the distance to be travelled and time it takes.*
- *Friends would feel the trustee body too remote from their local meetings, and hence potentially elitist.*
- *The work of a Scotland-wide treasurer would be too large. And managing all the Quaker properties in Scotland would be complex and too large a task for one body.*
- *More opportunities for mutual support can take place without amalgamation, such as collaboration on issues such as insurance arrangements, risk assessment, safeguarding and other policies.*
- *The process of combining charities is not straightforward, particularly if there is property or other assets which one of the merging bodies regards as its own. It could be a daunting task to accomplish.*

Some of the reasons for SUGGESTING a single Scottish trustee body are:

- *The same issues facing Friends are arising in many Area Meetings and hence there is duplication of effort to face them.*
- *At least two of the four Scottish area meetings (West and North) are already so geographically large that it may not be a very much more significant change to have a fully Scottish one.*
- *Demographic reality is that we have fewer and more ageing members able to take on the trustee role and we need to adapt our structures to match.*
- *Quaker structures are not set in stone. The Society survives because it constantly adapts. Britain Yearly Meeting's Simple Meetings can provide models for action.*
- *Collaboration and sharing of expertise has been important, but there seems some degree of duplication of having five sets of trustees, and five sets of AM/GMS clerks carrying out similar complex work.*
- *The experience of the pandemic, particularly on the use of technology, has shown that we can change our ways to suit new conditions, and in doing so can find that there were unseen advantages.*
- *Area Meeting business is meant to be the Quaker community working for itself, yet for many Friends is irrelevant to their daily Quaker lives. Having one trustee body and one main business meeting for Scotland could release time and effort more regionally and locally for things that matter to Friends: learning, spiritual development, witness.*
- *Networks of cooperation can be established. A treasurer team could manage accounts.*

(The second list twice includes, as separate bullet points, the possibility of duplication (!) and it may be thought its sixth point, on the potential use of technology, belongs in the first list, if such use enables existing structures to work in changed circumstances. Also, it has been pointed out that the process of combining charities may be not just “daunting”, as the first list says, but also expensive. The suggestion which is the second list’s penultimate point, that the change could free meetings for “things that matter to Friends” was a reason for making the Quarterly Meetings in England into General Meetings in 1967, to devote themselves to “conference and inspiration, and ... the life and witness of the Society”. Far from flourishing, however, almost all GMs quickly became moribund, such that it was necessary for the first edition of *Quaker Faith & Practice* (1995) to remind Friends that *General meetings as legal entities must remain in existence ... although they might discontinue holding regular sessions if ... such sessions are thought likely to serve no useful purpose* (5.04 in that edition). The few that *did* thrive, such as London & Middlesex and Yorkshire, had, at least in those two cases, kept responsibility for matters of substance. It’s reassuring to hear that the OfS2 group has *rejected* the separation of business and Friends’ processes.)

The working group’s report – expected to run to 6,000 words – will be discussed at Area Meeting in May; there will be more about it in the next Sesame. - EDITOR

WOODBROOKE

On 28 February, the Woodbrooke trustees issued a statement. After 120 years as a Quaker study centre, **Woodbrooke is to close on 31 October**, and the land and buildings are to be passed to the Bournville Village Trust.

The statement can be read at

<https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/woodbrooke-centre-statement-feb-23/>.

The trustees' minute of their decision reads in full:

Minute 2023:19 The Woodbrooke Centre

In its 120-year history Woodbrooke has grown and changed to meet the changing needs of Quakers both in Britain and further afield. From its initial conception as a one year experiment, Woodbrooke has enabled thousands of Quakers to learn together as part of a much-valued Quaker community, supported by a dedicated team of staff, associate tutors and volunteers.

In the late 1990s a decision was made to give up the traditional model of term-long programmes of learning and move towards a much broader offering of shorter courses, while at the same time continuing to accommodate Quaker bodies, such as Quaker Life Representative Council and Meeting for Sufferings and other Quaker committees.

Throughout its existence Woodbrooke has struggled financially. The aim of offering courses that Quakers felt they could afford has always conflicted with the costs of running, upgrading and maintaining a grade 2 listed building. Over the years, numbers attending courses began to decline, and in 2019 trustees commissioned a survey as to why this was the case.

The main reasons were cost, time and travel. Other demographic factors also came into play, including raising the retirement age to 66, multi-generational family commitments, and an unwillingness to contribute to climate change through travel. As a result Woodbrooke had begun to move some of its provision online, making it more affordable and more accessible.

The emergence of the devastating Covid 19 pandemic in early 2020 had a huge impact on the Woodbrooke Centre. Across the country the hospitality industry came to a complete halt, and all courses and conferences at Woodbrooke had to be cancelled with the ensuing impact on income. The decision was taken to furlough the hospitality staff while retaining the teaching and learning staff on full pay. All course provision moved swiftly online, together with opportunities for online worship, as meeting houses were also closed. The response to online learning was very positive and has continued as the pandemic wanes. Unfortunately, the demand for in-person events, Quaker and non-Quaker, has not returned. The huge increase in the cost of living, fuel prices, train strikes and other socio-economic factors continue to have an impact and we also need to accept that the way people meet has changed.

Furthermore the closure of both The Beeches and the Baptist residential centre, long-used by Woodbrooke as overflow accommodation, has meant that larger Quaker groups such as Quaker Life Representative Council would not be able to be accommodated at Woodbrooke, were these to return to in-person gatherings.

We are also aware that our provision for guests with requirements for accessible facilities is not as inclusive as we need it to be. An old building requires not only

maintenance but upgrading, and we do not have the capital to do this. We have been made aware that the cost of bringing the existing buildings up to a good, environmentally-sustainable standard would be in excess of £6 million, and to expand the site in order for it to become profitable would require at least the same amount again.

Over the last three years staff and trustees have worked tirelessly to look for alternative solutions for the Woodbrooke Centre, while at the same time focusing on developing the learning and research work which we see as our core charitable purpose. Our efforts with regard to the Centre have been limited by uncertainty over the wording of the founding document, which appears to suggest that if Woodbrooke were no longer to operate from the site then the trustees would no longer have a right to use it or dispose of it. It has taken until February this year to achieve clarity on this.

The Bournville Village Trust's position is that Woodbrooke should revert to their care if it is no longer to be used as a centre for Quaker learning. We recognise that challenging this position in the courts would be a risky strategy, and would be likely to be very costly even in the event that we were successful. We are also mindful of what might have been behind George Cadbury's thinking when he included this clause in the founding document in 1903, and his desire to protect the stewardship of the Bournville Estate. We would much prefer to work constructively with the Bournville Village Trust to ensure the best possible outcome for the site and believe that such a course of action would be more likely to be in the best interests of the Woodbrooke charity.

Having considered in depth our current financial position and the level of bookings for 2023, trustees have decided that the Woodbrooke Centre shall close to the public by 31 October 2023, subject to a staff consultation.

We are already in the process of exploring options for transferring key collections from the Woodbrooke Library so that they will remain accessible for research and learning, including private research.

We need to inform our trading subsidiary of this plan and we ask Sandra Berry and Kevin Smith to seek appropriate advice and work with the Directors as required.

We wish to thank all of those who have been involved in this long and painful process, in particular our director, Sandra Berry, who has been ably supported by Kevin Smith, our finance director.

We are aware that this decision will be met with sadness by the many Friends whose lives have been enriched spiritually, educationally and socially by the opportunities offered at Woodbrooke. However, we would like Friends and local communities to be able to celebrate all that has been possible at the Woodbrooke Centre, and we ask Peter Allen-Williams, Val Brittin and Catrin Davies to work with Sandra to draw up a programme of events.

We ask our Finance and Compliance committee to work with staff on the closure of the site and disposal of artefacts, and transfer of ownership, once any future arrangements are agreed with the Bournville Village Trust.

We believe that the decision to close the Woodbrooke Centre will best enable Woodbrooke learning and research to continue to thrive. The vision of our charity is to be a "learning organisation which supports and informs Quakers, as individuals and as a community, to enable our work in the world and in local communities from a place of understanding and spiritual renewal". We are grateful for funding from Britain Yearly Meeting, the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust

and other funders who support our growing learning and research activities. We are also thankful for the many Friends who support Woodbrooke financially, as well as by giving their time and prayerful support to our work.

We are confident that we can continue to meet the core aims of Woodbrooke and its founders through our programme of online learning, as well as Woodbrooke Where You Are and Woodbrooke Places.

Woodbrooke's accounts may be viewed on the Charity Commission website:

<https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/313816/financial-history>

Trustees may be contacted at Trustees@Woodbrooke.org.uk

For information about Bournville Village Trust and its contact details see:

<https://www.bvt.org.uk/contact/>

SCOTTISH FAITHS ACTION FOR REFUGEES

Journeying with New Scots:

Building community with refugees and asylum seekers

St Mark's Parish Church, Raploch, Stirling FK8 1RE

Saturday 25 March, 10am – 3.30pm

A one-day event at which churches and New Scots from across Scotland will be gathering to worship together, share experiences, grow in knowledge, and strengthen ties as people with a shared passion for creating welcoming communities. The past few years have been an exciting, but also busy and exhausting time for churches accompanying refugees and asylum seekers. We want this event to be a blessing, a space where people will feel supported, encouraged, as well as equipped for the future.

For more information, contact David.Moodie@churchofscotland.org.uk.

To sign up, and to see additional details, go to:

<https://journeyingwithnewscots.eventbrite.co.uk>

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER, 3 MARCH 2023

“I have heard about your faith”

This year, the World Day of Prayer service was written by the women of Taiwan. The cover of the service booklet [see opposite] shows two endangered birds – the Mikado pheasant and the black-faced spoonbill – and also pink *Phalaenopsis* (butterfly) orchids, which are “the pride of Taiwan” (and feature well in international competitions).

Taiwan is rich in natural resources and is beautiful, with mountains and forests.

The service was one of thanksgiving for the missionaries who brought Christianity to the island; now there is Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. Taiwanese people pride themselves on their confidence and perseverance.

Many of the hymns were new to me, but there was a goodly sense of thankfulness, peace, wishing for strength, 'all that I am I offer you' and 'help me that I may be strong for Jesus'.

We heard how women and girls suffer from discrimination, but, with strength and help from God, have shown it is possible to be loving to others who also need support. Also, to be able to rise above the discrimination, and work for fairness and equality.



Artwork by Hui-Wen HSIAO (b. 1993)

There were moments of silence, for which I was thankful.

It was a service from a people for whom life is uncertain owing to international politics; from a people many of whom are struggling, but working to improve their lives and the lives of others; from a people who are thankful, and have the courage to face difficulties with God's help.

We were lucky to have with us a woman from Taiwan who spoke about the island, its people, the work being done and where they hope to be strong and faithful.

We finished with the well-known hymn 'The day thou gavest, Lord, has ended' which always makes me choke while singing, as I think of families living in different parts of the world, separated by oceans and mountains.

I was, as ever, glad to be there; sharing, over a drink and a biscuit afterwards, how we have been – how others are, who were not able to be with us – loving, generous and friendly.

Alison Burnley

The service for the World Day of Prayer 2024 will be written by women of Palestine.

Parliamentary Engagement in 2022

Andrew Tomlinson, our Parliamentary Engagement Officer since 2020, has now taken up a post with Christian Aid Scotland. He has (as Alastair Cameron has said) “done a fantastic job, and goes with our good wishes, leaving behind him a legacy of excellent work.” The following is a round-up of work undertaken by him and the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group (PEWG) in 2022: a year which “saw some notable successes, some disappointments, and much work in progress.” – Editor

Peacebuilding

Scottish Peace Institute

The 2021/22 *Programme for Government*, announced the Government’s aim of establishing a Scottish peace institute by the end of 2022. We approached the Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, Culture and External Affairs about this and were invited to engage with the expert working group that was advising the Government on its plans. Our engagement with this group was extremely positive: we were able to see and comment on some of its draft recommendations, and were referenced a number of times in the final report to the Government. However, since the recommendations were submitted there has been very little progress or communication. We wrote to the Cabinet Secretary and received a polite but uninformative response. Similarly, we have worked with opposition MSPs to ask written and verbal questions in the Parliament about the progress of the initiative and when the expert working group’s recommendations will be made public. Responses to these questions have been equally uninformative. As of the end of 2022, a Scottish peace institute has not been established and there is little publicly-available information about what is intended. We will continue to try to engage with government and opposition parties on this issue.

Peace Education

In May, Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) launched *Peace at the Heart*, a report on the state of, and case for, peace education across Britain. Working with QPSW colleagues, we met with a number of MSPs to discuss it, and this culminated in a parliamentary motion in the name of Paul McLennan MSP commending the report, signed by over a third of all MSPs. We are now working with Paul’s office to hold an exhibition at the Parliament on Peace Education. In addition to this work, we responded to the Scottish government’s consultation on education reform and again made the case for further integration of the principles of peace education within the curriculum.

Childrens Rights and proposals for a new Human Rights law

On behalf of General Meeting for Scotland (GM), the PEWG remains a member of Together Scotland, a coalition of charities concerned about Children’s Rights in Scotland. As many of you will know, through Together, we campaigned for the incorporation of the UN Convention on the

Rights of the Child into Scots law, and a Bill to this effect was unanimously passed in 2021. However this was subsequently subject to a legal challenge by the UK government, who argued that it would impose duties on UK Ministers and thus was outwith the competence of Holyrood. The UK Supreme Court upheld this objection, and Together have since been trying to help amend the Bill so that it can be re-introduced without this happening again. Our understanding is that there have been detailed conversations between Scottish and UK officials and it was hoped that the Bill would be introduced before Christmas. That didn't happen, and we are waiting for more news.

Many of you will also remember from my 2021 round-up [*in Sesame 240; see also Sesame 242*] that we were involved in a preliminary consultation on a new Human Rights Bill which would incorporate other international Human Rights treaties directly into Scots law. The progress on this Bill has been slowed by the legal challenge to the Rights of the Child Bill. Through Together I have met three times with the civil servants working on it; it is hoped draft legislation will be introduced in 2023.

Economic Justice and Land Reform

Land reform consultation

In September, the Scottish government consulted on a new Land Reform Bill. Working with a group of interested Friends we were able to respond to this consultation, welcoming the draft proposals for the Bill while also saying they were insufficient to meet the stated ambition for the Bill.

Wellbeing economy, doubling Scottish child payment

In November, Elizabeth Allen, on behalf of GM, signed up to an open letter from the Wellbeing Economy Alliance to the First Minister, setting out a vision for a wellbeing economy. She also signed an open letter to the First Minister calling for the Scottish child payment to be doubled, and, during Challenge Poverty week, in October, had been one of the faith leaders who issued a joint statement on poverty in Scotland,.

The Climate and Ecological Crisis

Finance for the global south for loss and damage caused by climate change

At COP27, the Scottish government announced that it would increase its contribution to loss and damage finance to £7 million. This followed intense engagement with the Scottish government from our colleagues in Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS). SCCS is a coalition of over 60 NGOs in Scotland who are concerned about climate change. In my role as PEO I chaired SCCS's policy and advocacy group. Following the announcement we wrote to Màiri McAllan, Minister for Environment, Bio-diversity and Land Reform to ask for more information. From our correspondence it appears that while this money is welcome, and symbolically significant, it is not additional money from the Scottish government as it will be coming out of its already existing climate justice fund.

Decarbonising domestic Heat

In 2022 the PEWG met with Patrick Harvie, Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel and Tenants' Rights, to discuss the new Heat in Buildings strategy. We expressed our support for the overall strategy and our concern for the huge task that the government has in delivering it. We have had similar conversations with civil servants working on the strategy, inviting one of them to speak to the PEWG, and will continue to explore ways to support and challenge the government on this issue.

The fourth national planning framework (NPF4)

On behalf of GM, the PEWG submitted a response to consultation on the fourth national planning framework for Scotland (NPF4). NPF4 is significant as it will set the parameters for local development plans and local planning in Scotland until 2045, and so will have a bearing on Scotland's ability to meet its ambitious climate targets. We produced quite an extensive response, and working with partner organisations we were able to get some significant changes to the proposals: the amended draft taking on board a number of our recommendations.

Climate Change Committee progress report

In December 2022 the Climate Change Committee, the official advisor to the UK and Scottish governments on climate change, published its annual progress report for Scotland. The report highlighted a significant gap between Scotland's ambitious targets and what is managing to deliver, and stated that without a detailed delivery plan Scotland's targets risked becoming largely irrelevant. This is something that has concerned us for some time now; through SCCS I contributed to a statement on the report, and was interviewed on the BBC *Politics Scotland* show giving a response.

Beyond Oil and Gas

Through SCCS we were involved in producing a briefing on phasing out North Sea oil and gas. Thank you to Friends who subsequently shared this briefing with MSPs and asked them to encourage Scotland to sign up to the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance. It has been helpful to see the responses received from MSPs. As always, Friends engaging directly with their MSPs can often unlock conversations that it is harder for the PEWG to do, so we are very grateful for your engagement and continued support.

I hope this is a helpful summary. There are things that I haven't been able to include for brevity's sake, but I hope this gives a sense of the work. For copies of our consultation responses, statements and information about our other work you can go to <https://www.quakerscotland.org/documents/468>, and if you have any questions or would like to discuss any of the above then please do get in touch.

Andrew Tomlinson
Parliamentary Engagement Officer

Fàilte Edinburgh

Fàilte Edinburgh has had two outings recently. On 19 February a group of volunteers of various nationalities met up with the family to take advantage of early spring sunshine at the Botanic Gardens. Everyone enjoyed wandering through the gardens before ending up at the Terrace Café for refreshments.



The parents had made a wonderful meal: two large containers of *Hara Usbao*, a Syrian dish composed of lentils, pasta, onions, garlic and pomegranate molasses, topped with tiny squares of fried pitta bread. Bowls and spoons were handed round and all were invited to share in the feast which was delicious and much appreciated.

Then on 2 March we joined in the CommuniTeas event at The Scottish Parliament sponsored by Paul Sweeney, one of the MSPs for Glasgow. This was one of many such events being held up and down the UK to raise awareness about the different forms of support available for refugees through local initiatives. We heard from a member of the second Syrian family to have been sponsored in Edinburgh – Fàilte Edinburgh is sponsoring the third – and after that from a Ukrainian teenager being hosted by a family in the Borders. She described movingly the challenges of living away from her family in difficult times while she studies for her Highers at the local high school. Both speakers talked warmly about the kindness they have received from their sponsors.

After the main event there was a chance to mingle informally while sampling Parliament Shortbread among other refreshments. The children made short work of a plate of Tunnock's tea cakes and bottles of Irn Bru. We were then given a short guided tour by one of our volunteers who coincidentally works at Holyrood. The family was delighted to see inside the

Debating Chamber (see below) and intrigued by the relaxed atmosphere overall. They told us that it would be impossible in any Middle Eastern country to wander about the Parliament as they had just done here in Scotland.

Lynne Barty



ISRAEL/PALESTINE

The Antonine Friendship Link

MAURICE HOPPER – whose *Working in the Silence* was Rachel Frith's recommendation of a book from the AM Library in January's *Sesame* – served as an Ecumenical Accompanier in Jayyous, in north-west Palestine. Jayyous is west of Nablus (very sadly in the news recently, because of the multiple deaths and injuries inflicted by the Israeli Defence Force) and about 18 miles from the sea – though it might as well be eighteen million miles, as the villagers cannot go to the seaside; they cannot even go unhindered to their own farmland.

About three-quarters of Jayyous's farming land is cut off from it by the wall: the Israeli-built barrier supposed to secure the Green Line (the demarcation line set in 1949 as the *de facto* Israeli border) although in fact 85 % of it runs within the West Bank, up to eleven miles beyond the Line. In 2002, Jayyous was the first village to mount a non-violent campaign against the construction of the wall; in 2004, Scottish Friends of Palestine held a national meeting in Falkirk, following which the Antonine Friendship Link was set up by local people to support Jayyous. The venue for the meeting and the name of the group were chosen to commemorate the fact that our area too had once been divided by a wall built by invaders to perpetuate their rule; despite which, the Romans are long gone. One of those

active in founding the Link was the late Clarence Musgrave, formerly the Church of Scotland minister at St. Andrew's Church, Jerusalem.

Jayyous had been a prosperous agricultural community prior to the Occupation – according to the *Financial Times* (23/9/2006), 50 % of the villagers are now dependent on foreign food aid. Land can now only be accessed by overcoming physical and human constraints. The Israeli army constructed a road, for its own use only, with electrified fences either side and ditches beyond the fences. Access was through one of two electronic gates. Israeli soldiers were meant to open them for those with permits (a minority of farmers) at set times, but these arrangements were very capricious and a key role of the Ecumenical Accompaniers in Maurice Hopper's time was to monitor gate openings – or not – and what happened at the gates.

The Antonine Friendship Link remains a small group and, as such, plans to have two public meetings a year with the aim of raising awareness of life in Jayyous and Palestine (these also usually raise some money) and two fundraising events (which also raise awareness). The people of Jayyous decide what will be done with the money: for the past few years, it has helped fund nursery school provision, although it has also bought olive trees for planting. Cash, usually in £50 Bank of England notes, has physically to be taken to Jayyous as any other form of transfer is just too difficult or costly. AFL is in regular contact with Jayyous and remains inspired by the people's resilience and courage in the face of continued occupation with its humiliations, restrictions and brutality. We have been fortunate to have had several returned Ecumenical Accompaniers who were based in Jayyous speak at meetings in Falkirk. We try to also have Jewish groups speak at our public meetings. As time has gone on, representatives from such groups have been more willing to speak publicly about their work for peace and justice for both Israeli and Palestine. When we began, they were fearful of negative repercussions from within their own community if they spoke in public. This seems to have changed.

I too have a copy of Maurice Hopper's book, if anyone would like to borrow it. There is a panel in the style of the Quaker Tapestry, also entitled *Working in the Silence*, which was on display in Kendal when I was last there [although it does not yet feature on the website of the Tapestry Museum at <https://www.quaker-tapestry.co.uk/virtual-tour/tapestry-panels/>].

The Antonine Friendship Link is always glad when new people join us and we are also very grateful for donations which can be sent to myself as Treasurer. My contact details are in the new Book of Members.

Kate Arnot

The online Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture has anecdotes by Maurice Hopper from his time at Jayyous at:

<https://pij.org/articles/15/working-with-the-barrier>.

Rachel Frith's latest recommendation is on page 43.

Counting The Cost 2022: A year of climate breakdown

CHRISTIAN AID has produced a report on last year's climate-related disasters. The ten most financially costly events all had an impact of \$3 billion or more. Most of these estimates are based only on *insured* losses, meaning the true financial costs are likely to be higher; the human costs are often uncounted.

In this report, you'll find:

- The 10 costliest extreme events influenced by the climate crisis in 2022 – which each caused more than \$3 billion in damage
- 10 other extreme events that caused massive human and environmental damage, mostly in the poorest countries
- Christian Aid calling on world leaders to decide how the loss and damage fund agreed at COP27 will be managed, and get money flowing into it

While this report focuses on financial costs, which are usually higher in richer countries because they have higher property values and can afford insurance, some of the most devastating extreme weather events in 2022 hit poorer nations, which have contributed little to causing the climate crisis and have the fewest buffers with which to withstand shocks.

The report can be downloaded at:

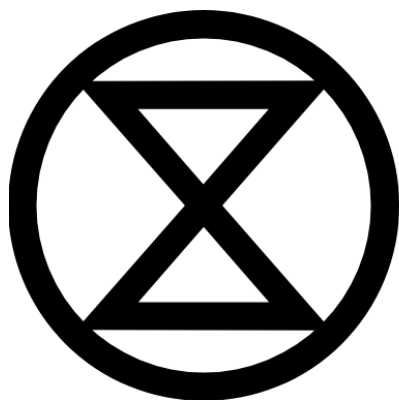
<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-12/counting-the-cost-2022.pdf>

'THE BIG ONE' – starting Friday 21 April 2023

EXTINCTION REBELLION is planning an open-ended action which it is hoped will involve at least 100,000 people ...

"Gathering at the Houses of Parliament day after day in large numbers means we can leave the locks, glue and paint behind and instead demonstrate faith in a critical mass of people to create a moment that's impossible to ignore."

"The invitation is to all humans, all movements, all organisations to come together and stay for as long as you can."



**extinction
rebellion**

For more on this event, see <https://extinctionrebellion.uk/the-big-one/>

For more on Extinction Rebellion, see <https://rebellion.global/>

“The Greatest Man in Europe” (and other Quakers), 1815-26

Extracts from the diary of James Grahame appeared in the Bulletin of the Friends Historical Society in 1946; see: <https://journals.sas.ac.uk/fhs/article/view/4327/4279>. In his introduction, Geoffrey F. Nuttall quotes from notes by P.A. Spalding, who had acquired a typescript of the diary: “Neither Grahame nor his father were Quakers, though both, especially the father, were on intimate terms with a vast number of Quakers, and very much in sympathy with their spirit.” Several times mentioned in these extracts is Thomas Clarkson (1760-1846), also not a Friend, but a leading figure in the Anti-Slavery Society, a pacifist, and author of A Portraiture of Quakerism (1806). Kirkman Finlay (1773-1842) referred to at the start, was Tory M.P. for the Clyde Burghs (which included Glasgow) 1812-18, and spoke for the city’s business interests; and the third Duke of Montrose (1755-1836) was Lord Justice General (an office which, at his death, was combined with that of Lord President of the Court of Session) and Chancellor of the University of Glasgow: he is credited with having secured the repeal, in 1786, of the Dress Act 1746 which had banned the wearing of tartan and the kilt. Mentioned later is Anna Lætitia Barbault (1743-1825), described in an obituary as “unquestionably the first [i.e. best] of our female poets, and one of the most eloquent and powerful of our prose writers.” Her husband, a Unitarian minister, had killed himself in 1813, after which she had largely given up writing.

JAN. 1815. The Duke of Montrose said lately to Kirkman Finlay, “I can’t understand how Grahame (my Father) has such influence with the Quakers of England. He commands all their vast Parliamentary interest, and seems to make them do whatever he pleases.” My Father, though anti-Quakerish enough in many of his feelings and expressions entertains a high reverence for the sect, and, through his friend Mr. Clarkson, enjoys an extensive acquaintance with them. They seem to like my Father fully as well as he likes them.

1822. Visited William Allen, the distinguished Quaker philanthropist at his house at Stoke Newington. Mr. Clarkson, in speaking of him to me lately, said, “William Allen is the greatest man in Europe. He does more good than any man living.” He received me with calm kindness, and leaving some Quaker guests whom he was entertaining, retired with me to his study. ... He communicated to me his plan for subdividing a large extent of ground into small lots of an acre each, to be cultivated by spade husbandry by men collected together in small communities, possessing Infant Schools and holding part of their property in common.

Sept. 1822. Breakfasted with my new friend, Prior the Quaker, and his wife. Prior told me that some time ago he accompanied an old rigid Quaker to the Mail coach for Brighton. ... As they approached the coach, Prior (tempted, he said, by some evil spirit) asked his friend if it were *lawful* to travel under the protection of an armed *guard*. The old man instantly uplifting his voice, to the great shame of Prior, and the great delectation of the mob, thus addressed the guard, “Mark me, thou man of war, I renounce thee and thy weapons. And verily, Friend, I assure thee that at the end of our

journey I will not give thee a single copper." The honest Guard could hardly attend to his business for laughing.

Aug. 1823. Visited Newgate, and heard Mrs. Fry address the female prisoners. She has a very sweet voice. ... I thought the criminal portion of the audience seemed little impressed, and indeed the discourse was far from impressive. ... After the discourse, I was introduced to Mrs. Fry, who talked to me with a mild loftiness of what *she* had done, and of what she had induced many ladies of quality to do in various parts of the kingdom. She talked of that having been done at Edinburgh which I know has not been done at all. She told me that the prisoners whom I had seen never begged from visitors. Yet I was detained at the door, within her hearing, by the importunate begging of a number of the women. ... Many respectable Quakers have declared to me that Mrs. Fry appeared to them to bring herself on all occasions too prominently forward ... as the agent of all the good that is done in Newgate. ... I have learned too that her children are not well educated, and of this I received some proof when I met in William Allen's house one of her daughters. I mentioned a portrait of Mrs. Fry, "Oh, that's a very bad one," said the young Quakeress, "Mamma says it makes her look like a tipsy Methodist!" I was shocked at this: some others of the company appeared hurt and displeased, and one old Quaker lady said to me in a low voice: "Be assured, Friend Grahame, that Elizabeth Fry never said so." ... Yesterday evening I met the same young lady at the door of Mrs. Barbauld ... I asked if her vivacity were quite accordant with the canons of Quaker manners. She seemed highly diverted, and answered, "Why you must know that there are bad as well as good people among the Quakers, and I happen to be one of the bad." In various companies I have found that irreligious and dissipated persons dwelt with high gratification on the neglected morals of Mrs. Fry's domestic circle.

Aug. 1823. Mrs. Barbauld ... seemed to entertain but little respect for the Quakers, remarking of them that they liked to have Quakerism confined to the upper and middle ranks of society, and had no desire to make converts to their principles among the poor, which would present them with occasions for almsgiving attended with no *éclat*.

April 1824. You will find less warmth of manner in Quaker friends than in friends of other religious persuasions. ... Yet from their sectarian plainness and simplicity of speech, you seem to be admitted to a surprising degree of intimate familiarity. Young men, not Quakers, are apt to be misled by this. They are surprised to hear themselves addressed by their Christian names by young Quaker ladies, and at other marks of intimacy more apparent than real. Many young Quakeresses are quite aware of this and eagerly practice the coquetry which it aids. They encourage and even provoke the attentions of gentlemen who are not Quakers, and then retreat from responsibility behind the plain freedom of Quaker manners, and the implied bar created by difference of religious persuasion.

1825. He (Prior) related with high satisfaction the conduct of his own mother, a Quakeress, who once stopped George III on Windsor Terrace and enjoined him to promote peace and abolish the Slave trade, whereby, she declared, he might perchance lengthen his tranquility and bring a blessing on his person and his reign. "He disregarded her admonition," added Prior, "and you see, he died insane."

1826. Mr. Prior admits only two portraits in his house – one of Mr. Clarkson, whom he greatly reveres; the other of Bonaparte, whom he admires as the greatest genius that ever appeared in the world, and respects as a useful instrument in the hands of God for humbling the Pope, and other great and excellent ends.

1826. Mr. Clarkson was once the intimate and attached friend of Southey and Wordsworth. He now speaks of Southey with much regret and disapprobation, but of Wordsworth with strong aversion and contempt.



L-R: Thomas Clarkson, from a mezzotint of 1824; William Allen, an undated engraving; and Elizabeth Fry, painted by Charles Robert Leslie, c. 1823. (It is not known if this is the 'tipsy Methodist' portrait.)

The Editor adds: *Spalding's* notes suggest that the diarist was James Grahame (1790-1843), an Edinburgh lawyer who knew many of the famous men of the time, including Henry Cockburn, Francis Jeffrey and Sir Walter Scott, and who gave up the law to write, among other things, a well-regarded two-volume history of the United States of America (see <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/learning/hall-of-fame/hall-of-fame-a-z/grahame-james>). They further assert that his father was also named James and is included in the Dictionary of National Biography – but the "Scotch poet" in the D.N.B. died in 1811, so could not be the man spoken of as alive and influential in 1815. The lawyer's father was Robert Grahame (1759-1851), Lord Provost of Glasgow, 1833-4, who was the poet's elder brother; his other son, Thomas, married Hannah, the daughter of Kirkman Finlay. (Perhaps the Duke intended that his comment should get back to the elder Grahame.) William Allen's plan for an 'agricultural colony' was put into effect at Lindfield, in Sussex, and described in his pamphlet 'Colonies at Home; or the Means for Rendering the Industrious Labourer Independent of Parish Relief ... by the Cultivation of the Soil' (1827). The "young Quakeress" who so shocked Grahame was either Kitty Fry (22) or Richenda (15); in 1823, their sister Rachel (20) was married with a baby son, and living in Norfolk. Both Robert Southey and William Wordsworth, radicals in their youth, became respectable and conservative in middle age, and Clarkson was far from alone in disdaining them for it.

YEARLY MEETING 2023

28 April–1 May, online and at Friends House, London

YM will focus on *'Releasing our energy so that we can follow the leadings of the Spirit, fulfil our purpose, and build a better world.'* As in 2022, Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee is planning preparatory events online in the run up to the Yearly Meeting itself and in particular during the preceding weekend. Aspects of the broad theme which may be brought to Yearly Meeting include:

- **Releasing our energy:** *How do we ensure our structures are simple, inclusive, and sustainable?*
- **Revitalising our communities:** *How do we revitalise our Quaker meetings and nurture joy?*
- **Following the leadings of the spirit:** *How can we build a better world with integrity; how can we recognise and support truth in the wider world?*

There are suggestions as to how meetings can help prepare Friends to participate in these discussions at:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/blog/preparing-for-yearly-meeting-2023-through-worship-sharing>

Esther Loukin will deliver the Swarthmore Lecture on Saturday evening, looking at how we can bring about change in broader society, including reflections about what established systems could achieve and what they cannot. The Salter Lecture is also a regular event at the time of YM: for more details, see: <https://quakersocialists.org.uk/salter-lectures/>.

It is essential to book your place, whether you plan to attend YM in person or join online. To register, go to www.quaker.org.uk/ym.

For the Children & Young People's Programmes, bookings close on 17 March. Registration for Yearly Meeting in person closes on 31 March; registration to participate online closes on 17 April.

The Yearly Meeting team can be contacted from 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday.

Email: ym@quaker.org.uk

Tel.: 020 7663 1040

The book based on last year's Swarthmore Lecture, *Perceiving the temperature of the water*, by Helen Minnis, is now available. (£10)

If you will be attending YM, either in person or online, the Editor would be grateful if you could record your thoughts, so that they can be shared with Sesame readers at a later date. (Not in the May issue, since the deadline for contributions, 25/4/23, is three days before YM commences.)

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

Minutes of Area Meeting held on Monday 16 January 2023 at Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House and by remote videoconferencing

2023/01/01 Worship and introductions

During worship, we have heard read from *Quaker Faith & Practice* 2.66: "Ministry is what is on one's soul... It is rooted in...the Inner Light."

We have remembered the lives of our friends Auriol Roberts and David Turner, who have died since we last met.

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

We ask Cathy Holman (*P&M*, online) and Henry Thompson (*CE*, in the room) to serve as Elders for this meeting.

2023/01/02 Minutes of Meeting of Saturday 5 November 2022

The minutes of our meeting held on 5 November 2022 at the Old Kirk, Kirkcaldy, and online, have been signed and entered in the minute book.

[The full minutes are included in both the print edition of Sesame, and in the PDF emailed to Members and Attenders on the circulation list, but are redacted in this publicly available version. – Editor]

[*Redacted*]

2023/01/13 Closing minute

46 Friends (43 members and three attenders) have been at all or part of this meeting, either in person or by Zoom.

Local meeting attendance is indicated below:

Central Edinburgh 16	Central Fife 1	East Lothian 3	Kelso 5	Penicuik 1
Polmont 1	Portobello & Musselburgh 7	South Edinburgh 11	Tweeddale 1	Visitors/Others -

We record our thanks to the Meeting House staff for their support of this meeting.

We next meet on Saturday 18 March at 2.00 pm Bellfield, Bellfield Street, Portobello, Edinburgh EH15 2BR, hosted by Portobello & Musselburgh local meeting. Our business will be followed by an evening meal and a ceilidh.

(Signed)

Alastair Cameron, Clerk
Cath Dyer, Assistant Clerk

Recommendation: a book from the AM Library

Patterns and Examples: Experiencing the Spirit of Other Faiths, edited by Peter Jarman and Eva Tucker, with an introduction by Adam Curle (2005)

The name of Peter Jarman, who was in Moscow for several years at about the same time as Marjorie Farquharson [*whose Moscow Diary was reviewed in Sesame 245*], was what drew me to this book, expecting to find faith flourishing in Russia. What I did find was that he had no interest in Russian Orthodoxy but regards himself as a Buddhist Quaker, and it was Andrew Clark [*also formerly of Quaker Peace & Service: QPS General Secretary when Peter Jarman was Europe Secretary*] who had had a series of encounters with various world faith traditions from working in Nigeria, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Ethiopia and India. You will need to read this book to find out how “the emerging pluralistic religious environment affects the climate of spirituality in which modern Quakerism is practised”.

Rachel Frith

AND this is ... a charge to you all in the presence of the living God: be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them: that you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one. – **George Fox 1656**

Quaker Meetings for Worship in South East Scotland

Contact details of named Friends are in the Book of Members. 'QMH' = Quaker Meeting House

MEETING IN PERSON

Central Edinburgh – QMH, 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2JL

Sundays at 9.30 and 11.00 am. Tea & coffee after both; soup and bread & cheese lunch, 12.30.

Wednesday, 12.30–1.00 pm. Tea & coffee; you may bring your own lunch.

Contact the office, centraledinburgh@quaker.org.uk or 0131 225 4825, for updates; see also <https://www.quakerscotland.org/central-edinburgh/covid-guidance>.

Central Fife – The Old Kirk, Kirk Wynd, Kirkcaldy KY1 1EH

On the 2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays at 10.30 am. On 1st Sundays, also at 10.30 am, at Linburn Scout Hall, Abbey View, Dunfermline KY11 4HA.

Contact **Laurie Naumann** for further information.

East Lothian – Dunbar Town House, 79 High Street, Dunbar, EH42 1ER

On the 2nd & last Sundays of the month at 11.00 am. Contact **Phil Lucas** for updates.

Kelso – QMH, Abbey Row, Kelso TD5 7JF

Sundays at 10.30 am. Contact **Anne Macnaughton** for updates.

North Edinburgh worship group – St Mary's Church, 12 Bellevue Cres., EH3 6NE

4th Sunday in the month at 7.00 pm. – contact **Tony Gross** for updates.

Penicuik – Valleyfield House (off 17 High Street), Penicuik EH26 8HS

1st Sundays at 11.00 am – contact **Mark Hutcheson** for updates and further information.

Polmont – Greenpark Community Centre, Greenpark Drive, Polmont FK2 0PZ

Sundays at 10.45: contact **Marriot Dallas** for updates, and if bringing children.

Portobello & Musselburgh – Bellfield, 16B Bellfield Street, Portobello EH15 2BP

On the 2nd and 4th Sundays at 11.00 am, with a children's meeting.

1st Sundays: Evening meeting at 7.30 pm; NO children's meeting. Contact **Robin Liebmann**, **Sarah Martin** or **Marion Willoner** for more details: portymussclerks@gmail.com.

South Edinburgh – The Open Door, 420 Morningside Road, Edinburgh EH10 5HY

Sundays, 10.30 am. Contact **Rici Marshall Cross** for information/updates.

Tweeddale – 2nd Tuesdays, at 6.30 pm. Contact **Anna Lawrence** for more details.

MEETING BY ZOOM

Central Edinburgh – for login details contact centraledinburgh@quaker.org.uk

Every Sunday at 9.30 am and at 11.00 am (blended with the meetings in person).

Central Fife – for login details contact **Laurie Naumann**

On the 2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays at 10.30 am, blended with the meeting in person.

East Lothian – for login details contact **Phil Lucas**

Tuesdays at 7.30 pm; NO meeting on the 1st Tuesday in the month.

Penicuik – for login details contact **Mark Hutcheson**

Polmont – for login details contact **Mariot Dallas**

Also Wednesdays at 8.00 pm (online only).

South Edinburgh – for login details contact **Rici Marshall Cross**

Sundays at 10.30 am, blended with meetings in person.

1st Thursdays at 7.30 pm (online only). Meeting for worship (30 mins) followed by chat.