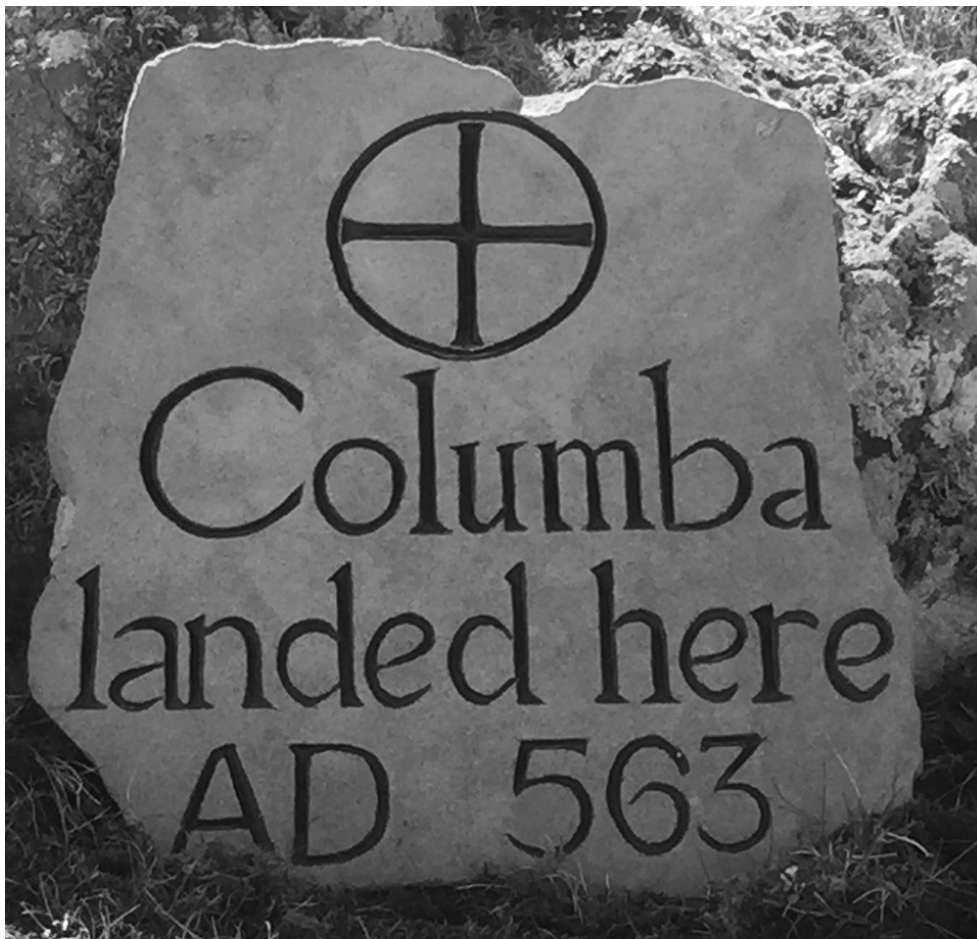


SESAME

Number 235: May 2021

AM on 11 May / Objecting to Nuclear Escalation: *Church Leaders' Statement; GCOMS-UK Statement; Clerk's letter and the response* / Blended Meetings / Meeting for Sufferings / More Quaker Poetry / Stitches for Survival / COP26 Pilgrimage / A Letter to the Editor / BLM Discussions – What Next? / EIFA: 'A Healthier Better You' / Rowntree's questionable past / BDRC update / Refugees / John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust report / AM March Minutes / &c



*A marker stone at St Columba's Bay, Iona –
see overleaf*

Published by South East Scotland Area Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Material for the next issue should be sent to Alan Frith (email: ar.frith@btinternet.com) or by post to 10, East Parkside, Edinburgh EH16 5XJ, to be received at the latest by **Tuesday 8 June**. The Editor reserves the right to condense articles. If possible, please submit articles by email sending as an attachment *and* in the body of the email. An email version of *Sesame* is available in PDF format. Contact the Editor.

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

Area Meeting will be on Tuesday 11 May by Zoom, from 7.00 pm till about 9.00 pm.

DRAFT AGENDA

1. Worship and introductions
2. Minutes of the Meeting of Saturday 20 March
3. Matters arising
 1. *Enquirers' event* (2021/03/03.2 refers)
 2. *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons* (2021/03/03.4 refers)
4. Decision taken by between-meeting procedure
5. Report from group considering Elder appointment
6. Membership matters
7. Deaths
 1. *Pat Lucas: memorial minute received from East Lothian LM*
 2. *Death of Andrew Hadjucki, Central Edinburgh LM*
8. Notice of wedding
9. John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust report, 2020 – *Annie Miller [page 30]*
10. Community sponsorship of refugees – *report from South Edinburgh LM*
11. Meeting for Sufferings report – *Henry Thompson [page 10]*
12. Appointments
13. General Meeting for Scotland (GMS): *appointment to attend, 12 June*
14. Closing minute

[N.B. Further items may yet be added]

Alastair Cameron
AM Clerk

⊕ Columba landed here AD 563

The marker stone has been put in place as a 'guerrilla monument installation' – "If anyone objects it can be thrown into the sea although I hope that will not be its fate!" the attender who made it says. Stone-carving is a new recreation: "The appeal [is] in doing something creative which I hope will give satisfaction to others, recycling local red sandstone from old walls and, in the case of the St. Columba engraving, a stone tablet I found on the beach."

Statement by Church Leaders on UK Nuclear Weapons

THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION in the integrated review of defence, security and foreign policy to increase the number of Trident nuclear warheads the UK can stockpile by more than 40 percent is a retrograde step that will not make any of us safer.

Our Trident submarines already carry warheads that in total have an explosive yield equivalent to hundreds of the bombs that were dropped on Hiroshima. It is immoral that the UK government is committing resources, which could be spent on the common good of our society, to stockpiling even more.

Over the last 50 years, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty has restricted the increase in the number of nuclear weapons worldwide as well as the number of new nuclear-armed states. This announcement puts those gains in jeopardy and weakens collective action on non-proliferation. Progress on reducing the threat from nuclear weapons will come through dialogue, diplomacy and principled action. The Government's announcement today [16/3/21] will complicate rather than aid this process.

The entry into force of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is an encouraging development. As people of faith, we join with millions across the world who are working towards the elimination of nuclear arsenals. Living up to our responsibilities under the Non-Proliferation Treaty would be a step towards realising that vision. We believe that 'Global Britain' should strive for peaceful and cooperative international relationships, and joint endeavour on climate change, global poverty and other challenges. This announcement takes us in a worrying and wholly wrong direction.

Most Revd and Rt Hon. Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York

Most Revd John Davies, Archbishop of Wales

Revd Clare Downing, Moderator of General Assembly, United Reformed Church

Bob Fyffe, General Secretary, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

Bishop William Kenney, Auxiliary Bishop of Birmingham, International Affairs

Department, Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

Bishop Declan Lang, Bishop of Clifton, Chair, International Affairs Department,

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

Carolyn Lawrence, Vice-President of the Methodist Church

Revd David Mayne, Moderator of the Baptist Union Council

Paul Parker, Recording Clerk, Quakers in Britain

Revd Dr Joanna Penberthy, Bishop of St Davids

Revd Richard Teal, President of the Methodist Church

Signatories represent seven denominations: the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales, the Church of England, the Methodist Church in Britain, Quakers in Britain, the United Reformed Church, and the Church in Wales.



JOINT STATEMENT ON THE INTEGRATED REVIEW

Published 10 April: First day of the Global Days of Action on Military Spending 2021

THE GCOMS UK network make the following response to the UK Government's *Global Britain in a Competitive Age: Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy*, published on March 16, 2021, and the related Defence Command Paper, *Defence in a Competitive Age* (22 March). We have grave concerns about both documents.

We reject:

- **the main assumptions of these policies**, notably that the complexities of the geo-political environment require the UK to boost its hostile posture through increased investment, especially in high-tech weaponry. We believe this posture is already exacerbating international tensions, in particular with China and Russia. It will stimulate an arms race to dominate other states through mastery of a whole range of emerging technologies, as well as boosting older systems such as nuclear weapons.
- **the 40 % increase in the cap on nuclear warheads**, taking the UK's potential capacity to 260. We join countless other organisations and experts in arguing that this constitutes an act of vertical proliferation violating both the spirit of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the UK's responsibilities as a Depositary State. It will only encourage others to break their own commitments, thus engendering a dangerous spiral of mutual threat.
- **the increase in military spending** (already announced in November 2020), amounting to £24 billion on top of existing budget levels. This represents an average £6bn increase over the four years 2021-25. This is the largest percentage increase in over 70 years.
- **the cut in the aid budget** (also announced in November) reducing it from 0.7 % to 0.5 % of Britain's gross national income: a reduction of about £3bn this year. This is also likely to mean at least 50 % reduction in UK overseas bilateral aid. The decrease to 0.5 % of GNI will mean the cumulative cut in the aid budget could amount to over £25bn by 2025 – with disastrous impacts on the world's most marginalised communities.

We call for:

- **parliamentary rejection of this review.**
We urge our elected representatives to refuse the above proposals, and to prepare the ground for a wholly different policy framework, looking at the subject from the angle of human security rather than a spurious

notion of 'Global Britain' that appears to be rooted in outdated imperial pretensions.

- **reversal of the new warheads cap.**

We believe now is the time to begin serious discussion of the UK's participation in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. At the very least the UK should commit to attending the 1st Conference of Parties to the Treaty. Following the statement from the UN Secretary-General's office saying that the UK increase in nuclear warheads constitutes a breach of its obligations under Article VI of the NPT, the Government must explain how its plan is consistent with its treaty obligation to make progress towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. It should also undertake to make a much more positive contribution to the NPT Review Conference in August.

- **reversal of the increases in military spending.**

Plans for new high-tech weapons programmes, utilising AI, robotics, offensive cyber capabilities, and the further militarisation of space, should be reconsidered in favour of approaches involving threat reduction, disarmament and cooperative solutions.

- **allocation of the money saved to urgent programmes addressing the most serious global crises:**

- health care, including pandemics;
- climate change and biodiversity loss;
- global inequalities; and immediate **restoration of the full aid budget** (0.7 % of GNI).

Supporting Organisations of the Global Campaign on Military Spending UK:

Action Atomic Weapons Eradication

Article 36

Campaign Against Arms Trade

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

CND Cymru

Columban Missionaries Britain

Conscience: Taxes for Peace Not War

Drone Wars

Faslane Peace Camp

Fellowship of Reconciliation

Global Justice Now

Greater Manchester & District CND

Green Christian

The Green Party [England & Wales]

Huddersfield Quakers

Kingston Peace Council

Medact

Menwith Hill Accountability Campaign

Merseyside CND

Movement for the Abolition of War

National Justice & Peace Network

Network for Peace

Northern Friends Peace Board

Pax Christi

Peace & Justice Scotland

Peace Pledge Union

Quaker Peace & Social Witness

Scientists for Global Responsibility

Stop the War Coalition

Student Christian Movement

Trident Ploughshares

War on Want

Women in Black

[See the GCOMS-UK website: <https://demilitarize.org.uk/>]

A Correspondence Continued

Reducing the UK nuclear threat. Your ref: TO2021/01629

Dear Ben Wallace

On 22 January, the day the UN's Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons came into force, I wrote to you on behalf of South East Scotland Area Quaker Meeting. Thank you for the reply received from the Correspondence and Parliamentary Questions Unit in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, dated 1 February. [See Sesame 234, pages 5-7.]

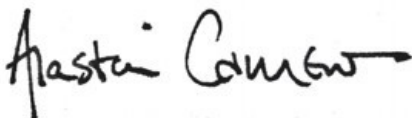
I brought this reply to our meeting on Saturday 20 March and was asked to continue the correspondence, for two main reasons.

Firstly, we are shocked by the announcement in the integrated review of foreign and defence policies of 16 March that the UK Government, far from reducing its nuclear arsenal, intends to increase the cap on the number of Trident warheads. We believe this flies in the face of the bland statement in your reply to my earlier letter that disarmament will be achieved through a 'step by step' approach. Can you please explain how this step in the opposite direction, towards greater destructive power, takes the UK on a route towards the disarmament we crave?

Secondly, we continue to view the climate emergency as the major existential threat to our nation: one even greater than the pandemic of 2020-21. The UK's adherence to nuclear weapons in the name of defence not only is irrelevant to tackling the problems of the climate: it distracts from them in significant ways. Not the least of these is the unnecessary diversion of crucial resources needed to minimise the disruption that must inevitably happen as we switch away from reliance on fossil fuels.

The direction of present UK defence policies, in our view, runs contrary to that of the majority world, and contrary to our concept of building peace and security. I trust you will consider alternative views and re-align your policies accordingly.

Yours



Alastair Cameron

Clerk, South East Scotland Area Meeting

**Ministry of Defence
London SW1A 2HB**

8 April 2021

Dear Mr Cameron

Thank you for your email to the Secretary of State for Defence, dated 29 March 2021, regarding nuclear aspects of the Government's Integrated Re-

view of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, published on 16 March 2021. As the Defence Nuclear Organisation is the part of the Ministry of Defence responsible for matters relating to the United Kingdom's (UK's) nuclear deterrent, we have been asked to respond on his behalf.

The UK's nuclear deterrent exists to deter the most extreme threats from other states to our national security and way of life. It will remain essential for as long as the global security situation demands.

The UK is committed to maintaining the minimum destructive power needed to guarantee that the nuclear deterrent remains credible and effective against the full range of state nuclear threats from any direction. This is fully compliant and compatible with our international legal obligations. [*But see below.*] As announced in the Integrated Review, in recognition of the evolving security environment, including the developing range of technological and doctrinal threats, the UK will move to an overall nuclear weapon stockpile of no more than 260 warheads. We regret that the security environment has necessitated this change from the previous ceiling of no more than 225 and prevented us from meeting our previously stated intention of reducing to no more than 180 by the mid-2020s. Despite this, we possess the smallest stockpile of the five nuclear weapon states recognised under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

We recognise that the cost of maintaining and renewing the deterrent is substantial, but the defence of the UK and its interests is a critical task that must continue to be delivered alongside the Government's other commitments, such as tackling climate change; immediate economic pressures are not sufficient rationale for taking risks with the security of the nation and the British public far into the future. The costs have been, and will continue to be, subjected to crossGovernment scrutiny.

We will keep our nuclear posture, including our stockpile ceiling, under constant review, in light of the international security environment and the actions of potential adversaries. We can assure you that the UK will keep working with international partners towards an environment in which further progress on nuclear disarmament is possible and remains committed to the long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

Yours sincerely,

Defence Nuclear Organisation Secretariat

Despite the bland assertion here of the legality and reasonableness of increasing the UK's nuclear stockpile, Stéphane Dujarric, the spokesperson for António Guterres, UN Secretary-General, said at a briefing on 17 March that the Government's decision is "contrary to its obligations under Article VI of the NPT [Non-Proliferation Treaty]" and "could have a damaging impact on global stability and efforts to pursue a world free of nuclear weapons". – Editor

Blended Meetings in South East Scotland Area Meeting

On 6 February 2021 General Meeting for Scotland held a special meeting to discuss the place of 'blended meetings' for Quakers in Scotland. Blended meetings are those where some Friends are able to join a meeting by Zoom (or its equivalent) while others are together in person in a specific venue. All people at the meeting should be able to participate fully.

At the special meeting, Area Meetings were asked "*to help with a) creating a list of suitable premises for holding blended meetings within each area meeting; and b) speaking to Friends about their personal experience of blended meetings, to help us to get a fuller picture of how they affect Friends' experience of inclusion and exclusion.*" With this in mind, I spoke with people, mostly clerks, from all our local meetings and at our last Area Meeting asked anyone who had anything they would like to say to contact me. No-one has, but the conversations that I had with meeting representatives were very interesting.

In South East Scotland Area Meeting, two Local Meetings (LMs), Central Edinburgh and Kelso, have their own meeting houses. The others worship in a variety of settings, including a garden, someone's home, churches and community centres. At present, East Lothian LM does not have access to a building at all. Kelso LM has held a few blended meetings which have gone very well, with nine people in the meeting house and five or six joining on Zoom. The meeting house has a good (relatively inexpensive) omnidirectional microphone which picks up sound well, and folk do not have to move in order to minister. Friends feel that blended meetings are definitely the way forward for the long-term future. Central Edinburgh, which has a much bigger meeting room, has also had some success, particularly with all-age meetings. However, among other difficulties, there is a problem with echo and poor sound, and anyone who wishes to speak does have to move to a particular spot in the room.

Experience varies for the LMs without their own property. Some (East Lothian, Penicuik, Polmont, Tweeddale) do not have the technical wherewithal to be able to consider blended meetings yet. Others, particularly Central Fife and Portobello & Musselburgh, have experimented. Both meet in old churches which have WiFi available. Central Fife has a central microphone to which people wishing to minister have to move, and folk online have difficulty hearing what is being said. However the experience so far has been reasonably positive. Friends at Portobello & Musselburgh are not enthused by blended meetings, finding the sound poor, and even harder with masks on. They will not be going ahead, but will be having some meetings in person and some on Zoom. South Edinburgh LM meets at The Open Door community centre which has the facilities to enable blended meetings, but a decision on holding them has been put off until June; the size of the meeting room and its acoustics are both thought to be problematic.

The feelings expressed about blended meetings vary considerably, from quite negative to very positive.

Negative

- Some people detest zooming, either because they find it difficult or because they spend so much of their working lives using it that they badly need a 'day of rest'. Some who regularly attended meeting in person have been 'lost' because of this.
- It can be quite disturbing, and possibly intimidating, if folk have to move to a microphone to speak.
- A lot of work is needed to make it possible, particularly preparing rooms for social distancing, cleaning before and after meetings, setting up the technical stuff, collecting trace and protect information (especially in larger meetings).
- People meeting in person may have to leave immediately after meeting so there is not the chance to socialise.
- People with hearing difficulties have particular problems.
- Business meetings are more difficult.
- There is a worry that blended meetings may divide Friends into two groups.
- Eldering is more complex.
- "Other things are higher on our list of priorities."
- Some LMs use premises which do not have the facilities to enable blended meetings

Positive

- Zoom meetings have enabled folk unable to attend meeting because of ill-health, distance, transport difficulties *etc* to begin to do so again. This has been a very positive outcome.
- Meetings can be more inclusive, especially as technology improves.
- Blended meetings are particularly good for all-age worship.
- Some Friends do not feel safe to meet in person yet.
- Meetings may be better for the environment, in that people who had to travel a fair distance in the past need no longer do so every time they wish to attend meeting.

Although the list of positives is shorter, there is a general feeling that blended meetings are the way forward, though there will still be a place for some meetings to be just in person and some just online. Several Friends felt it would be very useful to have an AM (or GM) meeting at which to share our experiences; in particular so that all meetings can learn from those that have experimented with blended meetings.

I would like to thank everyone who took the time to chat with me. I found all the discussions really interesting and hope that I have done justice to all that was said. My own feeling, partly distilled from what I heard, is that

we are still very much at the beginning of exploring this subject and that as more of us are vaccinated, COVID restrictions lessen, technology improves and we all get used to a very different way of living, blended meetings may eventually lead to a greater inclusiveness for Friends everywhere.

Cath Dyer

Assistant Area Meeting Clerk

Meeting for Sufferings, 10 April

All the papers for the meeting are available online at

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/mfs-2021-04-agenda--updated-papers-package>

The minutes and other follow-up material are available from

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/mfs-2021-04-follow-up-package>

BYM the charity, its trustees and AM charities/trustees

An important initiative was mentioned which aims to address the relationship between Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM), the charity, and Area Meeting (AM) charities. There's a request from BYM Trustees to AM Trustees to feed back to them about this. (See *Clarifying the relationship between BYM trustees and AM trustees: an invitation* under item **MfS 2021 04 10** in the documents in advance, linked above.) Online meetings are planned for May, heading towards a Memorandum of Understanding between BYM Trustees and AM Trustees by the end of 2021. Note that (?some of) Wales is actually going ahead with a merger at the charity level!

At this point I had to leave the meeting for an hour, during which mostly routine business was covered. One unexpected and apparently somewhat unsettling item came up during Trustees' report (see *BYMT-2021-02-14 Responding to racism* under item **MfS 2021 04 09** in the advance papers). The following is from the report to East Scotland AM by Robert Thompson, their Sufferings representative, quoted by permission: "There was lengthy discussion around the decision to remove the name of William Penn from a room at Friends House. (William Penn was a known slave owner). Trustees have commissioned research into the relationship between Friends and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Meeting for Sufferings heard reactions for and against the removal of the name at Friends House. The final Minute stated 'We have heard that it is important to acknowledge the reality of the past including both our good work and our failures to address injustice.'"

Assisted dying

Sufferings returned to this topic in response to minutes from several English Area Meetings. Area Meetings had been invited to consider the matter and feed back. Our own AM decided we had considered this matter in the Scottish context several times in recent years, and decided not to do so again this time.

Brief introductions by representatives of the two Area Meetings asked for Sufferings to support Britain Yearly Meeting's publicly endorsing a narrow legalisation of assisted dying, along the lines of the approach that has been in place in Oregon in the USA since 1997¹.

There was a deep sense of worship and care in the meeting over two sessions, and we had had the opportunity to prepare in advance during an evening worship sharing session the week before.

It became clear that we still don't have a settled view on this matter, having heard moving ministry based on personal experience across a wide spectrum of conclusions.

On a more positive note, there was very broad support for doing more to promote better funding for palliative care and the hospice movement. One statement that has stayed with me in that regard was 'unravelling the tangled web around how we die in this country is not best started by pulling on the end labelled *legalise assisted dying*.'

Overseers and Elders

Sufferings responded to a concern about these names by encouraging AMs to experiment with alternatives both to names and to the structures themselves.

Yearly Meeting and Yearly Meeting Gathering 2021

The business of Yearly Meeting in session 2021 will be conducted over the weekends of 31 July-1 August, and 7-8 August. It will be an online event, as will Yearly Meeting Gathering (YMG), which will run for three weeks from 19 July. (See <https://www.quaker.org.uk/ym/programme-1>)

Booking information will be coming soon; and bookings will open in June. In preparation for Yearly Meeting itself, AMs will be asked to facilitate opportunities for fellowship to engage with a number of matters of business, which should be at least in part face-to-face insofar as possible, and scheduled to coincide with relevant online YMG sessions.

The theme of YMG – *For our comfort and discomfort: living our testimonies of equality and truth* – will be pursued via a focus on three topics:

- 1) Anti-racism: our Quaker journey;
- 2) Acknowledging and welcoming gender diverse people;
- 3) Faith-based action for climate justice.

Looking further ahead, it has been agreed that the dates for YM 2022 will not be changed: still 27-30 May.

Simplification of central governance structures – a paper from Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees

Friends will know that I've been concerned about how our Society is being run these days, and have reported before about the various ways in which this concern is occasionally reflected in sessions at Yearly Meeting and Sufferings. It seems that Trustees have now decided that a root-and-branch re-

structuring under the banner of 'simplification' is called for, and a working party has been actively exploring this. As a result, there will shortly be a series of workshops for Sufferings to explore what this might look like; and by the time I present this report at Area Meeting on 11 May, these will have happened and I'll have a much more informed position from which to share details.

I'm trying to be hopeful that this will be the start of a genuine consultation, rather than an announcement of a *fait accompli*. Two things that were said in the relatively brief, mostly positive, consideration of this item:

"We can't go on as we did before, only meeting online: We need physical community sometimes *as well*."

"There's an important distinction between respecting tradition and getting stuck in traditional-ism..."

Henry S. Thompson

South East Scotland AM representative

1. See <https://www.dignityindying.org.uk/assisted-dying/internationalexamples/assisted-dying-oregon/>

Henry adds the following personal reflection: *My experience as I come to the end of six years on Sufferings has led to a conclusion about BYM governance which I find is widely shared, making the proposed rethinking of it very welcome.*

By a series of well-meaning and individually not unreasonable steps, we have come to a point where Meeting for Sufferings is no longer fit for purpose. Not so much because we're doing a bad job at what we've been asked to do, but because our business has grown and ramified to the point where it is almost never the case (the sessions on assisted dying at Sufferings in April being a notable recent exception) that the full power and value of a gathered meeting for worship for business are being brought to bear.

So I was very pleased to see what I take to be the most important sentence in the paper from Trustees:

"The Working Group considered the core functions from first principles, setting aside our understanding of existing structures."

*I hope almost **nothing** will be off the table as we start consideration of possible new approaches to the governance of the Church and the Charity. By 'almost' I mean that the place of Yearly Meeting in session as the ultimate worldly source of authority for BYM is not, at least for me, at issue. But **anything** else, particularly with regard to the Church, and what is delegated to what bodies by Yearly Meeting when it is **not** in session, needs to be rethought, from the ground up and the top down.*

Sufferings obviously has a key role to play in this, and members' dissatisfaction at our current situation now needs to turn into an energetic contribution to fixing it, even if this means laying ourselves down in our current form, to say nothing of reconsidering the name(s) of whatever comes after.

Barclay of Ury

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER (1807-92) has been described as “the only Quaker poet of anything approaching First Division status”. The eponymous hero of the following work, Colonel **David Barclay** (1610-86), father of Robert Barclay, became a Quaker in 1665 while imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle. Before returning to Scotland in 1636 to join the covenanting army being raised against Charles I, he had been a ‘soldier of fortune’ (i.e. mercenary) for ten years, and fought in the Thirty Years War; he was at the Battle of Lützen, 16 November 1632, a Pyrrhic victory for the Protestant side, since its leader, King Gustav II Adolf of Sweden, was killed. (The defeated Catholic army was in fact led by Wallenstein; Tilly, the commander who is mentioned, had died in April that year, fatally wounded at the Battle of Lech.)

Whittier’s own explanatory note (in *Narrative and Legendary Poems*, 1881) reads:

Among the earliest converts to the doctrines of Friends in Scotland was Barclay of Ury, an old and distinguished soldier, who had fought under Gustavus Adolphus in Germany. As a Quaker, he became the object of persecution and abuse at the hands of the magistrates and the populace. None bore the indignities of the mob with greater patience and nobleness of soul than this once proud gentleman and soldier. One of his friends, on an occasion of uncommon rudeness, lamented that he should be treated so harshly in his old age who had been so honored before. “I find more satisfaction,” said Barclay, “as well as honor, in being thus insulted for my religious principles, than when, a few years ago, it was usual for the magistrates, as I passed the city of Aberdeen, to meet me on the road and conduct me to public entertainment in their hall, and then escort me out again, to gain my favor.”

UP the streets of Aberdeen,
By the kirk and college green,
Rode the Laird of Ury;
Close behind him, close beside,
Foul of mouth and evil-eyed,
Pressed the mob in fury.

Flouted him the drunken churl,
Jeered at him the serving-girl,
Prompt to please her master;
And the begging carlin, late
Fed and clothed at Ury’s gate,
Cursed him as he passed her.

Yet, with calm and stately mien,
Up the streets of Aberdeen
Came he slowly riding;
And, to all he saw and heard,
Answering not with bitter word,
Turning not for chiding.

Came a troop with broad swords
swinging,
Bits and bridles sharply ringing,
Loose and free and forward;
Quoth the foremost, ‘Ride him down!
Push him! prick him! through the
town

Drive the Quaker coward!’
But from out the thickening crowd
Cried a sudden voice and loud:
‘Barclay! Ho! a Barclay!’

And the old man at his side
Saw a comrade, battle tried,
Scarred and sunburned darkly,

Who with ready weapon bare,
Fronting to the troopers there,
Cried aloud: ‘God save us,
Call ye coward him who stood
Ankle deep in Lutzen’s blood,
With the brave Gustavus?’

'Nay, I do not need thy sword,
Comrade mine,' said Ury's lord.

'Put it up, I pray thee:
Passive to His holy will,
Trust I in my Master still,
Even though He slay me.

'Pledges of thy love and faith,
Proved on many a field of death,
Not by me are needed.'
Marvelled much that henchman bold,
That his laird, so stout of old,
Now so meekly pleaded.

'Woe's the day!' he sadly said,
With a slowly shaking head,
And a look of pity;
'Ury's honest lord reviled,
Mock of knave and sport of child,
In his own good city!

'Speak the word, and, master mine,
As we charged on Tilly's line,
And his Walloon lancers,
Smiting through their midst we'll
teach
Civil look and decent speech
To these boyish prancers!'

'Marvel not, mine ancient friend,
Like beginning, like the end,'
Quoth the Laird of Ury;
'Is the sinful servant more
Than his gracious Lord who bore
Bonds and stripes in Jewry?

'Give me joy that in his name
I can bear, with patient frame,
All these vain ones offer;
While for them He suffereth long,
Shall I answer wrong with wrong,
Scoffing with the scoffer?

'Happier I, with loss of all,
Hunted, outlawed, held in thrall,
With few friends to greet me,
Than when reeve and squire were
seen,
Riding our from Aberdeen,
With bared heads to meet me.

'When each goodwife, o'er and o'er,
Blessed me as I passed her door;
And the snooded daughter,
Through her casement glancing
down,
Smiled on him who bore renown
From red fields of slaughter.

'Hard to feel the stranger's scoff,
Hard the old friend's falling off,
Hard to learn forgiving;
But the Lord His own rewards,
And His love with theirs accords,
Warm and fresh and living.

'Through this dark and stormy night
Faith beholds a feeble light
Up the blackness streaking;
Knowing God's own time is best,
In a patient hope I rest
For the full day-breaking!'

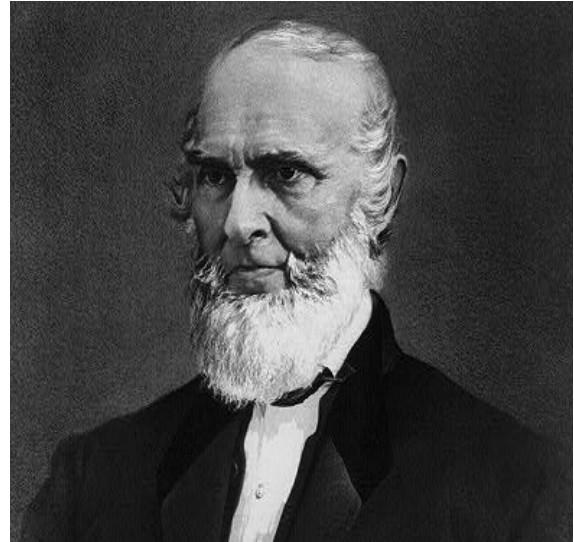
So the Laird of Ury said,
Turning slow his horse's head
Towards the Tolbooth prison,
Where, through iron gates, he heard
Poor disciples of the Word
Preach of Christ arisen!

Not in vain, Confessor old,
Unto us the tale is told
Of thy day of trial;
Every age on him who strays
From its broad and beaten ways
Pours its seven-fold vial.

Happy he whose inward ear
Angel comfortings can hear,
O'er the rabble's laughter;
And while Hatred's fagots burn,
Glimpses through the smoke discern
Of the good hereafter.

Knowing this, that never yet
Share of Truth was vainly set
In the world's wide fallow;
After hands shall sow the seed,
After hands from hill and mead
Reap the harvests yellow.

Thus, with somewhat of the Seer,
Must the moral pioneer
From the Future borrow;
Clothe the waste with dreams of grain,
And, on midnight's sky of rain,
Paint the golden morrow!



John Greenleaf Whittier in 1887

THOMAS ELLWOOD (1639-1714) is remembered for his remark to John Milton in 1665: "Thou hast said much of 'Paradise Lost'; but what hast thou to say of 'Paradise found'?" – thus prompting (perhaps) the writing of *Paradise Regained*. His *History of the Life of Thomas Ellwood*, is one of the most readable of Quaker journals, and several extracts from it are included in *Quaker Faith & Practice*; he also wrote an epic poem in five books on the life of King David. The following comes from a posthumous collection of his unpublished poems; its anonymous editor "thought they were too good to be lost; especially as there is room to hope, the uncaptious and sincerely religious Youth of either Sex, may be benefitted thereby."

INWARD PEACE

My PEACE I give unto you.

John xiv. 27.

WHO can conceive, much less
express,
The inward Peace which they
possess,
Who, by the Indwelling of the LIGHT,
Have put satanic Pow'rs to flight;
In whom, renew'd and born again,
The LORD of Life doth live and
reign:
Renew'd, restor'd, purg'd, purify'd,
And nat'ral Rovings laid aside;
Cleans'd by the BLOOD, kept by the
GRACE,
That Sin in them scarce finds a Place;
The Temple swept, prepar'd, then
blest
With Presence of an heav'nly Guest,

A Guest, not for a Night or twain,
But one that always will remain;
Yea, such a Guest as doth impart,
That Joy which overcomes the Heart,
A Joy so great, no Tongue of Man,
Express the Fullness of it can;
And this unutterable Bliss,
Flows from the Love of GOD to His.
O! Love immense, and without
Bound,
To all that in the TRUTH are found,
Words are too short to set it forth
In its Extent, and real Worth.
The *Wife*, that in the Bosom lies,
Is precious in the Husband's Eyes;
The *sucking Babe* is very near,
The *only Son*, exceeding dear;
Tender the *Apple of the Eye*,
Friends and Relations very nigh;

But yet this Love doth far transcend
That to *Wife, Child, Eye, Parent,*
Friend.
These *Metaphors* are all too low,
The Nature of this Love to show;

No Tongue is able to declare,
How dear to GOD His Children are;
Only the Sense of it is felt,
Which breaks the Heart and makes it
melt.



Stitches For Survival

Mass-craftivism to put the Earth centre-stage at COP26: Act now together

The climate and ecological crisis has left Earth in dire need of care – soft blankets to comfort and nurture, beautiful stitches to celebrate nature.

Stitches For Survival is a group of knitters, crocheters, stitchers and crafters, from across the UK and beyond, with a heartfelt plea to the COP26 climate talks to be held in Glasgow 1-12 November 2021:

It is time to put the Earth – the basis for our very survival – and not money, centre stage at the talks. This is the time to take bold and binding action to stop the devastating climate havoc and ecological breakdown that is evident across the world.

This last year has shown how radically our lives can change overnight when the political will is there and people take responsibility. It is time to act with the same urgency on the climate and ecological crisis!

What are we doing?

We are knitting, crocheting, stitching and crafting 1.5 miles of climate messages for the negotiators, to remind them of the urgent need to take bold action together on climate change, and the support they have in doing so.

The length of the scarf represents the 1.5°C target in the Paris Agreement.

During the conference we will display the 'scarf' near the SECC conference centre where the talks are taking place.

How can you take part?

Knit, crochet, stitch or craft a 60x100cm green or blue section of scarf for the earth to:

- Support bold and binding actions on climate change
- Tell world leaders they must act now together
- Create a colourful protest that can be recycled into warm blankets for refugees

We are inviting everyone to stitch for the survival of the Earth – the *#knitters4critters* stitching for the smallest in the ecosystem, the *#togetherknits* crafting links of solidarity with those hit hardest by climate devastation, or creative craftivism for the climate issue that you are passionate about. Sections can be plain or intricate – the Earth needs us all!

You can also take part in ‘knit-ins’, share your story on social media using our hashtags, or bring people together to raise awareness of a climate and/or environmental issue where you live. In the lead up to COP26 you could do this by – for example – displaying your completed sections at the offices of fossil fuel companies, oil refineries and other places local to you that are contributing to the destruction of the planet.

Be part of it!

For the latest on knit-ins, how to make your bit of the scarf, where to send it and pictures of how we are getting on:

<https://stitchesforsurvival.earth/>

Look for *#Stitches4Survival* on social media

Join the *Stitches4Survival* Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/272262957684289>

and follow / like our page

<https://www.facebook.com/Stitches-For-Survival-102929728565275>

Contact details for Jane Lewis and Cathy Holman are in the Book of Members.

**Cathy Holman
Jane Lewis**

Pilgrimage for COP26

A walk and learning journey from Dunbar to Glasgow working with cultural, community and interfaith organisations to reimagine what it means to be ecological.

The pilgrimage commences in Dunbar on the 19 October to arrive in Glasgow on 29 October – with events taking place in Glasgow on 30 & 31 October. Pilgrims are invited to join the pilgrimage at any point on the journey.

Overview

All sites of pilgrimage have this in common: they are believed to be places where miracles once happened, still happen, and may happen again.

(Victor & Edith Turner, 1978)

What we understand by these terms is open to interpretation. Here, *miracle* is understood to be a collective form of hope and hope in action; *pilgrimage* refers to a journey freely chosen that offers potential for transformation. In 2015, thousands of civil society activists journeyed to Paris for COP21, where a UN agreement was made to limit levels of global warming to less

than 2° Centigrade above pre-industrial levels. Since that time global temperature has continued to rise, negative impacts have been felt across the globe and public consciousness has been shaken.

With the aim of implementing guidelines for Article 6 of the Paris Agreement – guidelines that focus on the ‘cooperative approaches’ to tackling climate change – will COP26 meet the major challenge of our time? Will it adequately address the social, environmental and economic *roots* of climate change? Or will it merely seek to decarbonise an economy without addressing the social, ecological and economic *injustices* that climate change brings to light?

The Pilgrimage for COP26 is being organised to reflect on these questions and discern a way forward. As streams flow together to form a river, so the Pilgrimage for COP26 will increase its flow as the journey develops. Individuals, communities and cultural organisations are collaborating to bring their concerns, imagination and resources to bear to shape the pilgrimage and articulate its vision.

In addition to other voices, artists, art organisations and faith communities have a key role to play in engaging the public in a value-based conversation around the climate and ecological crisis. To that end the Pilgrimage for COP26 offers a forum for a collective vision and to sustain engagement *beyond* COP26. [Names italicised and underlined (*thus*) link to websites.]

The route

For ease of access and to utilise existing infrastructure the route follows two well-trodden pathways: *The John Muir Way* from Dunbar to Kirkintilloch and *St Ninian’s Way* from Kirkintilloch to Glasgow. (*The route map & cultural programme will be available for download and distribution in August.*)

Daily distances and overnight destinations are still being researched but a significant ‘way station’ will be established in Edinburgh (from 22-24 October) where the Pilgrimage for COP26 will have its capital launch. This will be bookended by a welcoming ceremony in Glasgow, after which pilgrims will be encouraged to engage with the *COP26 Coalition* events programme.

Cultural programme and partners

En route interpretation and peer-learning will be provided by an emerging community of peer-educators. These include arts and cultural organisations, interfaith communities, educational institutions, and grassroots community activists.

The programme is still being developed and remains open to other partners, but we can currently confirm the following partners and engagement activities.

Ceilidh Collective: Online global ceilidh to launch the COP26 Coalition programme and contribute material to accompany the Pilgrimage for COP26.

COP26 Coalition: Various activities organised in the run-up to and throughout COP26.

Deep Time Walk Project: Developing ecological content related to deep time to assist interpretative engagement en route.

Eco Art Scotland: Promoting the pilgrimage within the eco art network and developing follow-up activities to support an emerging community of cultural adaptation.

Eco-Congregations Scotland: Encouraging churches to offer hospitality, sharing stories of social and ecological change from organisations *en route*.

Extinction Rebellion Edinburgh (Art Group and Choir): Sharing creative inspiration and offering support en route. (No additional XR action is planned as part of the pilgrimage.)

Interfaith Edinburgh, Glasgow and Scotland: Offering insights from different faith traditions and organising key aspects of the Edinburgh launch and Glasgow welcoming ceremony.

John Muir's Birthplace: Liaising with the wider John Muir network and developing learning content for the journey.

Protest in Harmony: Collaborating with other radical singers and singing groups to learn songs by environmental activists around the world and to share these songs as part of the pilgrimage.

North Light Arts: Lighting the first beacon and curating the first leg of the walk (Dunbar to Edinburgh).

Scottish Dance Theatre: Joining pilgrims at key stages on the walk and contributing content for the journey (live and online).

St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Edinburgh (representing the Scottish Episcopal Church): Offering hospitality in Edinburgh and developing material – including choral music – for the launch.

Sharing Not Hoarding: Billboard exhibitions in Dundee and Glasgow depicting pilgrims walking with enlightened teachers – including humans, other animals and plants.

Society of Friends (Quakers in Scotland): Offering hospitality in Edinburgh and Glasgow and developing learning content for the journey.

(Currently under discussion. Other suggestions welcome.)

Stitches for Survival: Offering craftivist engagement before, during and after the pilgrimage.

In addition to the above, there are many unaffiliated individuals who will be walking with and supporting the Pilgrimage for COP26.

Contact

If you would like to learn more about the Pilgrimage for COP26 or offer specific forms of support – organisational, financial or inspirational! – please contact me: email jb4change@gmail.com or telephone 07954123543.

Jonathan Baxter

We hope to have updates in Sesame on the Pilgrimage between now and its taking place. – Editor.

A Letter to the Editor

Dear Alan,

It was with some surprise that I read your review of Patricia Bateman's *Spiritual Insights* in the March edition of *Sesame*. While recognising that all reviews are subjective to some extent, it left me wondering whether something deeper led to our divergent opinions on this book. Quaker faith is experiential, not credal, and the only thing that we all believe is that 'There is that of God in everyone'. Our individual beliefs are based on our different experiences. The fact that we believe different things is not a problem for us, because we are not trying to convert each other. We respect our differences.

In 1976, after a difficult phase in my life, I found a haven in Quaker Meeting and embraced our method of worship with relief. Quakers have become my community, my family and the focus of my spiritual life. However, I was also looking for something more to assuage my spiritual hunger. I wanted answers to important questions, such as 'Is there survival after death?', 'Is reincarnation possible, not just once, but many times?' and 'Why do we become incarnate?' Unfortunately, I did not find answers to these in the Religious Society of Friends. Maybe there were relevant books in the library at Edinburgh Meeting House, but I didn't know where to start, and my dyslexia formed a barrier to my exploring. So, I also joined other groups where spiritual awareness played a major part in their *raison d'être*, and began to find both answers to questions and practices for developing my own spiritual awareness.

For those wishing to explore it, plenty of evidence of survival after death has been documented. I was fortunate enough to attend a stimulating talk by Edinburgh-based author, Graham Dunstan Martin, who, on his retirement from academic life, was determined to prove that all life is material. However, in the course of writing three books, he convinced himself that it is not. and Graham's third book, *Living on Purpose*, (2008, Floris Books) provides a lively and thoughtful discussion.

Adherents of eastern religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism accept the possibility of reincarnation much more easily than the Abrahamic faiths. Those who have explored them would be familiar with the concept. Many westerners reject this idea because they cannot remember any past lives. This is not only unsurprising, but essential so that one is not encumbered with memories from them all.

And so why are we here on this beautiful planet? It is not unreasonable to assume that spiritual beings can only make changes in the material world if they are part of it, and that spirits who have become incarnate may have more things to experience (including suffering) and to learn while on this earth, than can be done in one lifetime. Another significant book for me is *Life Before Life* (1979, Bantam Books) by psychologist Helen Wambach, in

which she reported hypnotising groups of people back through their lives until they were foetuses in the womb. Then she asked them questions, including 'Are you choosing to be born?' and 'What is your purpose for coming into this, your current lifetime?'. The answers ranged from 'to gain additional experience' or 'to be with one or several other people they had known in past lives in order to work out their relationships' or 'to learn to give love' or 'to grow spiritually and to teach others'.

My message to readers is that Patricia Bateman's new book (notwithstanding our long friendship) will hold much of interest and inspiration to both those who are seeking to learn more about spirituality than our excellent Meetings for Worship can currently provide, and those who have already explored esoterica and mysticism. As you yourself said, Alan, it will give much to think about.

Annie Miller

Further information on books mentioned

Patricia Bateman's Spiritual Insights (2020) is now available in three formats: as a Kindle e-book from Amazon at £3.99, or in book form, in paperback or hardback, both at £7.99.

Paperback: (12.7 x 1.6 x 20.3 cm) 274 pp. ISBN 978-1-8382837-5-9

Hardback (*limited edition*): (11.2 x 3.7 x 16.7 cm) 416 pp.

ISBN 978-1-8382837-1-1

The hardback edition is currently available only through the Moldavite Press website – <https://www.moldavitepress.com/>

Graham Dunstan Martin's Living On Purpose; Meaning, Intention and Value (2008) is out of print according to the website of the publisher, Floris Books, as is his earlier work, Does It Matter? The Unsustainable World of the Materialists (2005). Amazon, however, advertises copies for sale of both, although the former is expensive (more than £50, whether new or secondhand, plus postage.) His Shadows in the Cave: Mapping the Conscious Universe (1990), from the Arkana imprint of Penguin Books, is also out of print but available secondhand. The publishers' description is: "A discussion of fundamental philosophical issues that under-pin 'new age' and religious thinking. The philosophers' theory of tacit knowledge is explained, and the universe is discussed especially in the context of mystical experience and near-death experiences."

Helen Wambach's Life Before Life: Is There Life Before Birth? 750 Cases of Hypnosis (1979) was reissued in paperback in 2020 by White Crow Books at £12.99. (182 pp. ISBN 978-1-78677-141-4)

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK IN SCOTLAND

This Christian Aid Week, 10-16 May, every envelope, every gift matters. There are lots of ways to get involved, either in person or virtually. Have a look at all the resources on the website: <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/>

Black Lives Matter Discussions: **What Next?**

At Area Meeting in June 2020 it was agreed to set up discussion groups for Friends to consider together the issues raised by the 'Black Lives Matter' protests, taking Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race (2017) by Reni Eddo Lodge as a starting point. Ian Robertson participated in one of these, and offers these thoughts on taking matters forward.

It was good to join in this series and to hear Friends' stories. I was impressed by the desire to take the issue forward. There was not much time left to discuss how it would be done. I have not found Zoom the most creative way to think, so I would like to share my thoughts in writing.

The last few years have seen a crop of publications by black British writers, of which the Reni Eddo-Lodge book is a good example. These books have shown – and our discussions revealed – that despite the progressive legislation of the 1970s the experience of black British people is still marred by discrimination, disadvantage and exclusion. The Black Lives Matter movement is an assertion that black people have had enough. So, what is the most useful and appropriate action that Friends, and the Society of Friends as a predominantly white institution, can and should take?

If we accept the premise that the condition of black people is the result of white racism, and that racism as an ideology developed to justify the exploitation and colonialism that was an integral part of Empire, then we need to discuss this key issue head on. Other countries which in their recent past have seen unspeakable atrocities – South Africa and Germany come to mind – have struggled to face their demons, *but they have faced them.*

Great Britain has been able to forget the atrocities of Empire in part because, despite operating as a political, economic, military and cultural unit, the British Empire was geographically spread over the world. The atrocities were not on the whole committed on mainland Britain, but overseas, as part of the policy of Empire, by colonial soldiers and administrators. (See, for example, Tom Devine's *Scotland's Empire 1600-1815* (2004), and Caroline Elkins *Britain's Gulag, the Brutal End of Empire in Kenya* (2005).) Those who were recruited in Britain generally returned with their ideology intact, and this has contributed to shaping current racist culture.

Almost every week in our newspapers we see further examples of the consequences of Empire. What is particularly worrying is the push back from right wing elements. The current bill before Parliament which proposes to increase the penalties for defacing statues; the reaction to the Harry and Meghan situation; the calls to condemn action which, it is claimed, 're-writes history'; the reaction to the review by the National Trust in England of how proceeds from slavery financed some of the properties it now

maintains: all these demonstrate the power of memories of Empire which are currently enabling white racism in 2021.

Education is often suggested as a key way to change attitudes. I am sure this is crucial, but it only targets younger people currently in education. Another model which may have merit is to develop a programme of ‘ethical remembering’ as currently promoted by the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins. Ireland – England’s first overseas colony – is in the middle of the centenaries of the Civil War, partition, and the declaration of the Irish Free State. They know a thing or two about British colonialism and how it infected the body politic.

‘Ethical remembering’ is a brave attempt to deal with the legacy of the past and how to address it. *“What to remember and how to remember it, carries the inescapable implication of ethics. It is important that any approach to dealing with the past recognises the complex relationship that exists between memory, ethics and forgiveness.”* (President Higgins, 27 June 2015)

In 2020 President Higgins launched the next phase, *Machnamh 100*, named for ‘an ancient Irish concept encompassing reflection, contemplation, meditation and thought’. (<https://president.ie/news/article/ethical-remembrance>). This model of ethical remembering developing in Ireland could well offer a way to address Britain’s memory of Empire.

My thanks go to all participants in the discussions for the opportunity to learn and reflect together.

Lynne Barty has responded to this:

I wonder how many of us would be interested to form our own community sponsorship group (a long-held hope of mine)? There would be support both at national and local level.

See: <https://www.facebook.com/RefugeeSponsorshipEdinburgh/>

Other Friends have expressed interest in participating in such a group, or in finding ways to support it from beyond the city boundaries; we will hope to report on progress in the next Sesame. (Ed.)

For more on working with refugees see page 32; for more on reflections prompted by Black Lives Matter see page 26, and in the report of Sufferings, page 10.

THE BOOK OF MEMBERS

The Book of Members and Attenders 2021 lists the names and contact details of Friends who are members of one of the four Area Meetings within General Meeting for Scotland, and of known Attenders. We assume *Sesame* readers have access to it, so that we need not give addresses and telephone numbers in the newsletter, which is available very much more widely.

Reimagining a Healthier Better You

An Edinburgh Interfaith Association Presentation

The last in EIFA's recent series of talks took place on 14 April. It was of particular interest to F/friends because the first speaker was Bridget Holtom, a Member of Portobello & Musselburgh Meeting. Previously a well-being advisor for Forestry and Land Scotland where she organised mental health workshops out-of-doors, she now hosts a podcast, Sustenance Radio

<https://podcasts.google.com/feed/aHR0cHM6Ly9hbmNob3luZm0vcy9kY2JlNzMwL3BvZGNhc3QvcnNz?sa=X&ved=0CA0QlvsGahcKEwjI9o4243wAhUAAAAAHQAAAAAQCA>

in which she explores different ways to care for ourselves and others.

“What sustains your activism and fuels your fire for hope and change in the world today? What is burnout? How do we look after ourselves and each other while caring for others and the other-than-humans on earth? How can we move from capitalist ideas of self-care to radical circles of collective care and love?”

Episodes range widely, e.g. Japanese forest immersion (*shinrin-yoku*) or Altar Space – a short practice to help us create a sacred space that is somehow meaningful to us. During her talk Bridget also introduced us to a calming water ritual we can practise at home.

Mike Delaitre, a Mauritian singer-songwriter, musician and filmmaker, [See: <https://www.mikedelaitre.co.uk/>] was the second speaker and performer. Deeply influenced by his multi-faith background and the Rastafari faith, he uses his ancestral gift of music to bring healing for body, mind and soul: his project ReKonnnect is funded by the National Lottery through Creative Scotland.

ReKonnnect is “a series of atmospheric music compositions presented with image and video, which can be used as a tool for self-motivation and self-healing in this period of COVID-19 and beyond. It is an online space to help others who are looking to achieve a more balanced and deeper connection in their lives, for everyone of any age and background. Connecting to nature and to the heart the project makes use of the ancient African *Nyabinghi* rhythm as the heartbeat of the music and includes sound inspirations from other cultures of the world.”

Both speakers described their work as having evolved from previous mental health challenges they had faced, challenges which had caused them to re-evaluate their lives and seek spiritual and healing solutions within the natural world and through the creative arts.

Their turning to nature for healing and re-centring is mirrored in the 2021 Bafta- and Oscar-winning documentary *My Octopus Teacher*, available on Netflix, which I can also highly recommend.

Lynne Barty

“For a Greener, Fairer and Safer World”

In 2019, Angie Zelter was the first activist to be prosecuted following the Extinction Rebellion occupations in London that April; she had been arrested on Waterloo Bridge and in Parliament Square, but was given a conditional discharge after arguing in court that humans faced mass extinction unless governments implemented wide-ranging changes. In October, she was arrested again, and that time fined a total of £501 (including costs and a surcharge) for her part in the Extinction Rebellion ‘Autumn Uprising’.

Being arrested is an experience which Angie Zelter has undergone more than a hundred times, in Belgium, Canada, England, Malaysia, Norway, Poland and Scotland, and she has been imprisoned sixteen times. On the other hand, for her fight against nuclear weapons she was the recipient in 2014 of the sixth International Hrant Dink Award (named for a murdered Armenian journalist); and in 2001, she and the other members of the ‘Trident Three’ – who had boarded a floating sonar testing station in Loch Goil and thrown overboard computer hardware and paperwork, actions for which Sheriff Gimblett at Greenock controversially refused to convict them – were awarded the Swedish ‘Right Livelihood’ Award, “*for providing a practical model of principled, transparent and non-violent direct action dedicated to ridding the world of nuclear weapons*”. The ‘Three’ were members of Trident Ploughshares, the group responsible, in 1996, for vandalising a BAe Hawk jet trainer to prevent its export to Indonesia, where it would have been used as a ground attack aircraft in East Timor. Angie Zelter had not been one of those who broke into the factory (and caused, allegedly, £1.7m worth of damage to the aeroplane), but was charged as a co-conspirator. Facing a ten-year prison sentence if convicted, the defendants were acquitted by the jury who accepted that they “*were acting to prevent British Aerospace and the British Government from aiding and abetting genocide*”.

As well as being a founder of Trident Ploughshares, Angie Zelter had previously, in the 1980s, started the Snowball Campaign, encouraging mass civil disobedience against the arms race and the presence in the UK of American nuclear bases. She has now written her own account of her busy life, entitled *Activism for Life* (Luath Press; ISBN 978-1-910022-39-9; 224 pp.; £12.99). The publishers say of it:

For over four decades Angie has campaigned for a greener, fairer and safer world.

This remarkable account of her campaigning life shares some of the lessons she has learnt from her actions in many different countries. Heartfelt but clear, it includes personal insights into mobilising for effective, sustainable actions, dealing with security, police and courts and how seemingly different issues are actually closely intertwined.

This unique book covers nuclear weapons, militarism, climate change, corporate abuses of power, environmental destruction and much more.

It is hoped to have a review of the book in a future issue of *Sesame*. – Editor

Reflecting on the Colonial Past: Responding to Black Lives Matter

The central work of the Society of Friends, like many other progressive causes in the UK, has benefitted greatly from the legacies of Quaker philanthropists such as Joseph Rowntree. Rowntree & Co. established in his name, in 1904, a Foundation, a Charitable Trust, and a Reform Trust, endowed with share income from the company, all three of which still exist and continue to be active and influential. In February 2020, their associated charity, the Rowntree Society, began an investigation in the history of the company's growth and the supply chains on which it had been built, "from the origins of the Rowntree company as a family-run grocery business in 1822 to the £2.5bn takeover by the Swiss corporation Nestlé in 1988" to explore the origins of these endowments; the summary report of their findings is now available here:

<https://www.rowntreesociety.org.uk/news/statement-on-rowntree-colonial-histories/>

Although, as might be expected, no evidence came to light of direct involvement in the ownership or trading of slaves, the report does highlight five areas of possible concern:

- the grocery business, from 1822 onwards, was dealing in imported goods, some of which were, inevitably, produced by slave labour;
- 'indenture', a system of bonded labour which existed from the effective ending of slavery until 1920, benefitted British companies including Rowntree's; it may have been in use in the company's own plantations in Dominica, Jamaica and Trinidad from the 1890s;
- even after the exposure in 1905 of working conditions akin to slavery in the Portuguese colony of São Tomé and Príncipe, Rowntree's continued to buy cocoa from there until 1909;
- the involvement of Rowntree's between 1919 and 1972 in a cocoa buyers cartel operating in Nigeria and the Gold Coast (later Ghana) is felt to need more research; and
- Wilson Rowntree, a wholly owned South African subsidiary, used the then current laws in the 1980s to suppress unrest among its black workforce – several aspects of this are felt to "merit further investigation" as to what went on and how much was known to the parent company.

The trustees of Joseph Rowntree Foundation, together with the Board of the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust, have issued a statement in response to these preliminary findings, and the trustees of the Charitable Trust and the Reform Trust have also made statements. All three are linked to the report, as are supplementary notes and a list of historical resources.

The research is continuing. It is to be hoped that other companies may follow in subjecting their histories to similarly unflinching scrutiny.– *Editor*

Book of Discipline Revision Committee: April update

As the year unfolds, and we begin to hope we may see signs of easing restrictions emerging with the spring flowers, your committee is preparing for another weekend of hard work and prayer.

During lockdown, we've been meeting more often and for shorter periods. Following our full committee meeting at the end of January, we had a 'convenors' check-in' (open to all) in February, and in March a short full meeting and a social get-together. Meanwhile, we have worked in individual topic groups and in others, such as my 'Communicating with Friends' one. Much of our business this year has concerned the work of the 'task groups' – six writing material on a variety of topics, and the seventh deciding how to 'tag' submissions coming in so that we can find ones we need when we reach the appropriate point. We heard from the groups in January; in February, the convenors reported on their progress and on questions arising.

Some questions are common to most task groups – for example, where to put extracts from Quaker writings that are relevant to the section we are working on – inserted in the text, or at the end? What kind of language do we use? Who are we writing for? Need we have all the 'quotes' assembled now, or can they be added later? At the moment we are writing 'core text' (the how and why we do the things we do); 'supplementary' text will give more detail on each topic (*e.g.* the correct procedure for a marriage). Must we assemble this supplementary material now, or can it be done later? The blurred boundaries between topics is an issue for almost everyone – our Discernment group has wondered how much Quaker history to include, to explain how and why the process emerged, and how much to write on all the other areas needing discernment: clerking, nominations, membership, *etc.* Another common theme is the problems many of us have in using, or trying to use, the dreaded Microsoft Teams.

In small groups we talked about two common issues: language and boundaries. So much needs to be said on some topics (again, Discernment is a good example) that it can result in extremely dense text, BUT we need simple text, easily understood by all – richness can be in the Quaker 'quotes'.

Someone suggested having a 'beginners start here' chapter, which might assist in the navigation of the book and be more welcoming than simply plunging straight into the main body of text.

An electronic text will both need and enable a completely different and more complex navigation system than that required by one on paper: how do we make it easy to find what you want in the printed version?

How much do we spoon-feed readers? Can we expect them to take responsibility for inserting a Babel fish in their ear to find meaning in texts whose words they find challenging? Can we make sure to use 21st century language in the text we ourselves produce? Can we ensure inclusivity (*e.g.* not just using *he/she*, but also *they*)? One of our newest members pointed out

that writing things *simply* can be very difficult; but we must strive, and take as much time as is needed.

Our clerks undertook to read and digest the notes taken in all the breakout groups, and feed them back to us so we can apply them in our work.

I found it very helpful and enriching to be in a small group, both from the discussion of the topics and in getting to know people better. Someone else I spoke to afterwards had found theirs tedious and a waste of time...

Our March group began with another 'getting to know you' go-round: the limited time made it simply "say your name and a favourite word" – the variety was fascinating! (I chose *swithering*). We spent time considering whether the guiding principles we drew up at the beginning of our work are still right for us, or if anything needs changing or adding. Again, our clerks undertook to absorb what was fed back: and a revised 'principles' document is to come to our April meeting.

We also looked at a paper about how we produce and deal with the 'supplementary material' mentioned earlier. I'd found it hard to take in, and, knowing I was not alone in feeling overwhelmed by the volume of reading sent out shortly before the meeting, was moved to say that I was just about managing with the work I was *already* doing and found it really hard to cope with new material at such a late date. (I am sure that, had we been meeting in person, I would have found a chance to grab someone in a quiet corner and ask for an explanation – not possible in a Zoom meeting!)

I was greatly heartened by one of our number reassuring us – we are not expected to produce finished pieces of work! We could expect to receive suggestions for suitable material from the whole committee, and didn't need to think that we had to find and/or read everything anyone had ever written on any topic. Our primary task, it was emphasised, was to produce core material, and to note anything we came across that might be useful in the supplementary sections. We were also reminded that other central committees might be doing work that was directly relevant to ours (*e.g.* the current consideration of the use of the terms 'elder' and 'overseer').

We heard about plans for sessions at the online Yearly Meeting Gathering in August (though the 'special interest groups' will be holding theirs in July, with the business meetings' weekends book-ending the week when the Gathering *was* to have been held). We are offering four sessions: one introductory, one 'follow-on', one creative, and one in Welsh, to which Welsh speakers are invited to bring passages they would like to offer for the new Book. I'm very glad I am not one of the people masterminding our presence at YMG – our co-clerk Rosie Carnall is doing it, with Rhiannon Grant.

My own hands have been quite full enough, managing our 'gigs diary' – responding to invitations for the BDRC to visit AMs, LMs and interested groups, liaising with the Friend inviting us to find out what sort of session is envisaged – when, how long, what for, how many for, *etc* – and finding

volunteers to take part in planning and delivering the event. We've visited many parts of Britain – and are now beginning to consider how we can deliver 'in person' sessions, with all the logistical questions that arise such as time and cost of travel (and possibly accommodation), who pays for that, and how many committee members can reasonably attend a session: none of which matters when you're visiting on Zoom!

At one point I was finding this work more than enough to keep me busy, without taking into account that I was also meant to be contributing to the Discernment text: I also realised that I had a considerable amount of information about all this locked in my various devices, and that if I fell under a bus it would be very difficult for anyone else to retrieve it! So I asked for help with the overload, and decided it would be appropriate to add contact details for each group's 'inviter' to the spreadsheet (on Teams!) recording the details of the gigs – the inviting group, the date, time, nature of the session and which committee members are leading/taking part.

I realised, too, that it was time for me to stop doing every gig myself! I'm very happy that others are gaining the confidence to organise and lead sessions by themselves. But I'm not giving up the Scotland gigs! We did one for West Scotland AM earlier this year, and are going to do one for North Scotland AM in July, while a great time was had by all at the Westerly Friends gathering in March (alas, not in Crianlarich but by Zoom). Many of the gigs start off with the committee members present speaking about their own Quaker experience, and their experience of being on the committee – it's fascinating learning about them, and seeing their different approaches to using *Quaker Faith & Practice* and to being on the committee. Finola, one of our newer members, has taken part in a number of gigs now, and I'm really looking forward to getting to know Marcie and Pearl, our newest members, when they feel ready to join the 'concert party'.

Many gigs follow a similar pattern – information about the committee and its work told from an individual's point of view, followed by small-group discussions, whole-group sharing, and maybe a question & answer session. However long the event is, it's never long enough! We were blessed at the Westerly Friends gathering in having *two* sessions: one informative, inviting discussion, the other offering opportunities for creativity in a variety of ways. As more Friends invite us to hold a 'beginners' session, we are thinking about what a 'follow-up' session might look like – the first one is to be at YM Gathering, which others on the committee will be organising.

Our Discernment group papers are to be discussed at the April meeting, along with the revised 'principles' document and a piece from the Nominations task group. We have written two papers – one a simplified version of the other – and a list of questions arising. I'm keen to know how these are received; also, fascinated to find out how the whole committee works on a paper – it's been hard enough at times with only four of us!

But I won't be there – I've been appointed BYM representative to Finland

Yearly Meeting, happening the same weekend. Even Zoom and a two-hour time difference won't make it possible to be at both, so I'll mostly be relying on my committee buddy, Judith, to fill me in and explain the process and what happens next.

So for myself personally I'm asking for your prayers as I juggle the Book and the Finns (and trying to learn Finnish). Others members are embroiled in similar complexity: please keep upholding us in our work FOR YOU.

Mary Woodward

John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust: Annual Report 2020

This is inevitably going to be a short Annual Report because not much has happened on account of the Coronavirus pandemic, or, more specifically, due to the lockdown that has covered three-quarters of the year 2020. This is not surprising considering that the majority of JW(E)T applications are for courses, conferences, meetings, trips and holidays, involving travel, which has necessarily been restricted on account of the contagious nature of COVID-19.

There were only two applications in 2020, both of which were granted. One was to enable a Friend to attend a course at Woodbrooke, which is ongoing. The second was to enable an applicant with severe sight restrictions to buy some computer equipment, included a large screen. He reported *'I have not been connected to the internet for over four years, I find the concept somewhat disconcerting but I am looking forward to it being available on several counts. I will be very pleased to have access to certain aspects of the net. The ability to be able to check such mundanities as weather forecasts and in particular, bus timetables and the like will bring a measure of security to my life that has been missing for some time. ... The opportunity to access the BBC radio archives online will be most pleasurable.'* The anticipated spring trip to Iona by a group of some very deprived (mainly) men from the GalGael workshop in Glasgow has been postponed yet again. So there are no other new reports.

The Trust started in 2003 with John Wigham's bequest of £42,000. Initially bank interest accumulated each year, but more recently Friends' earmarking and one or two very generous donations have kept the Trust going. While it is run under the care of our Area Meeting, it serves applicants from all over Scotland. However, if applications continue to be submitted at their present rate, it is clear that it will run out of funds in a year or two.

At the start of 2020, funds of about four and a half thousand pounds were available. The trustees therefore asked for the Area Meeting's discernment about whether its activity should then be discontinued, or whether a substantial donation could be made in order to sustain this very uplifting and unique programme for a further period. Unfortunately, Area Meeting's financial position was, and remains, uncertain, due to the loss of lettings

and other income for most of 2020, together with ongoing outlays on staff and the buildings. But, JW(E)T was invited to approach Area Meeting again when the position becomes clearer. The generous earmarked donations from Friends roughly covered the two grants awarded in 2020, and so, at the end of 2020, the Trust again had about four and a half thousand pounds to keep it going for another year or two.

Annie Miller

Convener, John Wigham (Enjoyment) Trust



One of Ian Goodall's spectacular photographs of gannets, shared at Area Meeting in March.

Thinking about refugees and asylum seekers

On 12 April, about 45 Friends attended a meeting arranged by South East Scotland AM on behalf of General Meeting for Scotland, to look at issues surrounding refugees, in Scotland and worldwide. The speaker was Sabine Chalmers, co-ordinator of Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees (SFAR) an interfaith group set up in 2015, in response to the Syrian refugee crisis. Scottish Friends have been represented on it almost from the outset.

As well as giving an overview of the scale of the displacement of peoples internationally, Sabine brought us back to thinking about SFAR's role and what we in faith communities can do. SFAR wants Scotland to be a place where refugees and asylum seekers can feel welcomed and included; it believes that faith groups have played, and can play, an integral part in this.

SFAR can offer advice and support to groups setting up new initiatives, big or small. You can contact Sabine at Schalmers@churchofscotland.org.uk. She has vast experience and I encourage people to get in touch with her; she may be able to put you in touch with someone who has done something similar or know of someone else who is starting something up.

As well as their work on awareness-raising among faith groups, SFAR also tries to offer a spiritual response: very necessary in the face of such massive issues. (Again, contact Sabine if you are interested.) They also advocate on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers, organising interfaith responses to particular injustices and advising us when there is something they think we should be doing. This is a very helpful way of keeping us in touch with issues we might not otherwise know about. Even if, like many Quakers, we are too busy to do what we would like, we may at the very least be able to write to our MP or MSP. These things do have an effect.

I was particularly pleased to hear more of SFAR's approach to the integration of refugees. SFAR argues that this should be a two-way process, leading to positive change in both the individuals and the host communities. It is not simply a question of us doing things for these New Scots. We can learn and receive from them too. This is what leads to cohesive and diverse communities. Central Edinburgh Friends experienced some of that when we had a meal cooked for us by Syrian men attending our Weekend Club.

We heard a little of what is being done within GM. I am sure there is far more, and have asked LM clerks to advise me what their meetings are doing, so that we can have an overview of the Quaker response in Scotland.

Meetings can consider signing up to be Sanctuary Meetings, on which information is at <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/socialjustice/migration>.

There was also a brief discussion about community sponsorship, whereby a group welcomes a specific family to their area and commits to support them. The experts on this are Citizens UK https://citizens-uk.teachable.com/pl/community_sponsorship, but Sabine would be able to give useful advice.

Hilary Patrick

SOUTH EAST SCOTLAND AREA MEETING

**Minutes of Area Meeting held on Saturday 20 March 2021
by remote videoconferencing**

2021/03/01 Worship and introductions

During worship, we have heard read *Quaker Faith & Practice* 25.04, which reminds us that humans are one species among the many, part of the web of creation.

[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]

2021/03/13 Notices

We have been reminded of four upcoming events:

- The equinox ceilidh, organised jointly by Portobello & Musselburgh LM and the Ceilidh Collective, 7.00 pm on Saturday 27 March, online. Tickets and information from www.ceilidhcollective.org
- A presentation by Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees, organised by South East Scotland AM on behalf of General Meeting for Scotland. Led by Sabine Chalmers, SFAR Co-ordinator. 5.00 pm, Monday 12 April [*Zoom link details with the minutes*]
- *Exploring the Quaker Life* (enquirer event: see 2021/03/03.2 above). Saturday 24 April, 10.30 am by Zoom. Log-in details from Mariot Dallas (*Polmont*).
- *Journey to COP26* online inter-faith event organised by Quaker Peace & Social Witness, 10 & 11 April

2021/03/14 Closing minute

53 Friends (43 members and ten attenders) have been at all or part of this meeting. Local meeting attendance is indicated below:

Central Edinburgh 17	Central Fife 2	East Lothian 10	Kelso 2	Penicuik 1
Polmont 4	Portobello & Musselburgh 7	South Edinburgh 9	Tweeddale 1	

We next meet on Tuesday 11 May 2021 at 7.00 pm by Zoom

(Signed)
Alastair Cameron
Clerk
Cath Dyer
Assistant Clerk

The test for membership [of the Religious Society of Friends] should not be doctrinal agreement, nor adherence to certain testimonies, but evidence of sincere seeking and striving for the Truth, together with an understanding of the lines along which Friends are seeking that Truth.

Friends World Conference, 1952

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

On the 1st and 3rd Sundays in the month at 11.00; places are limited and must be booked by 5 pm on the preceding Wednesday on Eventbrite. 1st Sundays are All-Age worship. Contact the office, centraledinburgh@quaker.org.uk or 0131 225 4825, for information.

Central Fife – The Old Kirk, Old Kirk Wynd, Kirkcaldy K1 1EH

On the 1st, 2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays at 10.30 am; no limit on attendance; no pre-booking required. Meetings in Dunfermline may resume on 1st Sundays if the venue is available.

Kelso – QMH, Abbey Row, Kelso TD5 7JF

Contact **Marianne Butler** for dates, times and details; it is not yet known when meetings will resume, but it is hoped once building work at the Meeting House is finished (i.e. soon).

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

1st Sundays at 11.00 am – when it happens, but no date set for resuming meetings yet.

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

On the 2nd and 4th Sundays at 11.00 am; outdoors in fine weather; children's meeting. 1st Sundays: Evening meeting at 7.30; indoors; no arrangements for children.

Please contact **Mary Jane Elton** if you plan to attend either morning or evening meeting.

East Lothian, Polmont and South Edinburgh will NOT be meeting in person until later.

For information on **Tweeddale Local Meeting**, contact **Anna Lawrence**.

MEETING BY ZOOM

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

Sundays at 11.00 am – blended with the meetings in person on the Sundays they occur.

2nd and 4th Sundays at 9.30 am – Meeting for Worship (45 mins)

2nd and 4th Thursdays – 'Epilogue' at 9.00 pm

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

On the 1st 2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays at 10.30 am, blended with the meeting in person.

East Lothian – for login details contact **Di Simcock** or **Phil Lucas**

Wednesdays at 7.30 pm. (No Sunday meetings until meetings in person resume.)

Kelso – for login details contact **Marianne Butler**

1st and 3rd Sundays at 10.30 am. To be blended with meetings in person when they resume.

North Edinburgh worship group – for login details contact **Tony Gross**

4th Sunday in the month at 7.00 pm.

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

1st Sundays – probably to be discontinued once meetings in person have resumed.

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

Sundays at 10.45 am; also Children's Meeting, of which Mariot Dallas can provide details.

Wednesdays at 8.00 pm.

Portobello & Musselburgh – NO Zoom meetings in May; to be reviewed on 30/5/21.

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

Sundays at 10.30 am.