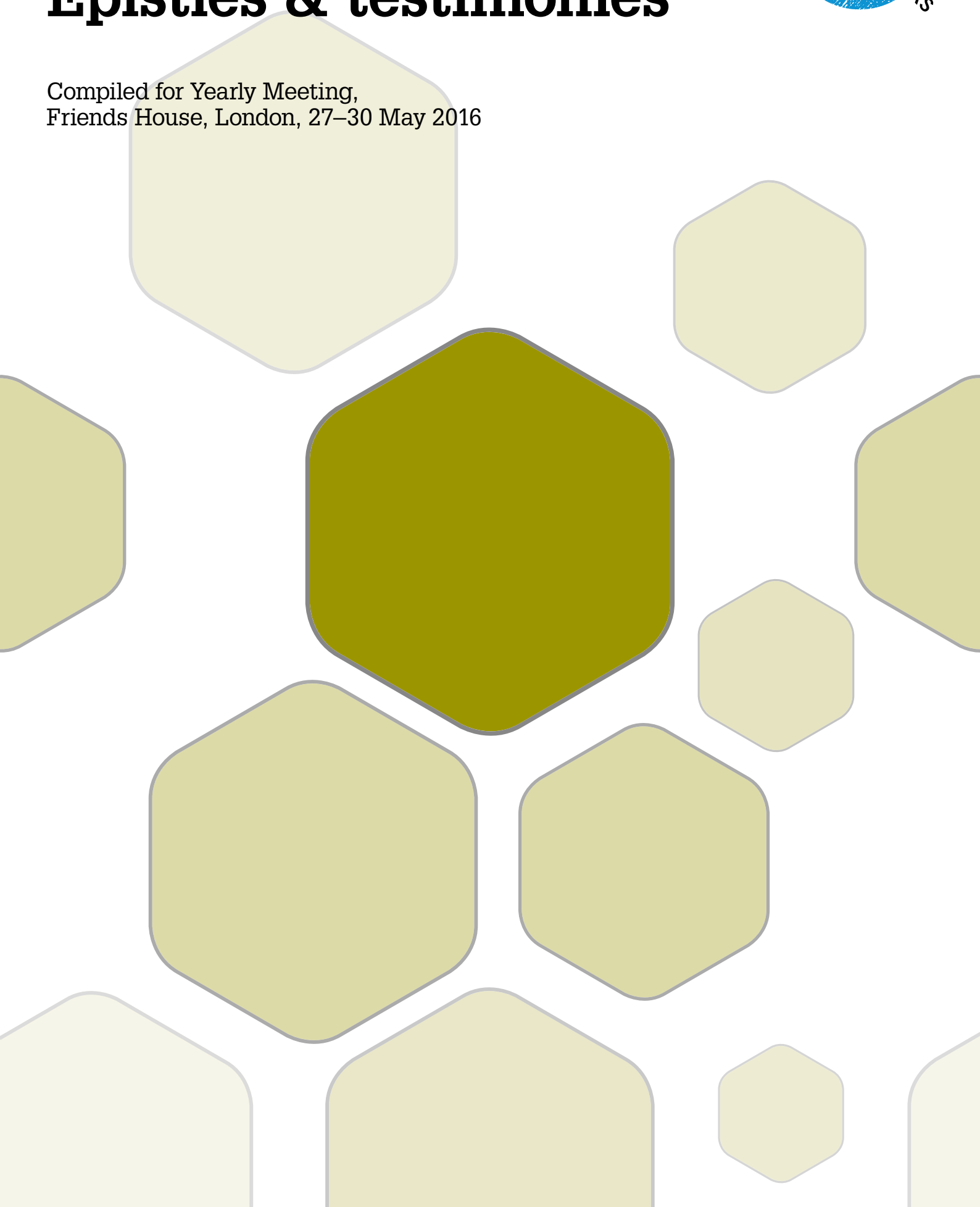


Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society
of Friends (Quakers) in Britain



Epistles & testimonies

Compiled for Yearly Meeting,
Friends House, London, 27–30 May 2016



Epistles & testimonies

Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) In Britain

Documentation in advance of Yearly Meeting
to be held at Friends House, London, 27–30 May 2016

Epistles & testimonies is part of a set of publications entitled *The Proceedings of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain 2016*, published by Britain Yearly Meeting.

The full set comprises the following documents:

1. Documents in advance, including agenda and introductory material for Yearly Meeting 2016 and the annual reports of Meeting for Sufferings and Quaker Stewardship Committee
2. *Epistles & testimonies*
3. *Minutes*, to be distributed after the conclusion of Yearly Meeting
4. The formal *Trustees' annual report* and *Financial statements* for the year ended December 2015
5. *Tabular statement*.

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Yearly Meeting of the
Religious Society of Friends
(Quakers) in Britain

Epistles & testimonies

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Epistles

Introduction to epistles from Quaker World Relations Committee

Quaker World Relations Committee is entrusted by Friends in Britain to build and maintain our relations with other yearly meetings around the world and to offer support at times of crisis. We are challenged by how best to uphold Friends through devastating experiences: violence, earthquakes, floods or hurricanes. We are challenged too by the growing diversity of our religious theology but remind ourselves that we are different branches from the same root. Throughout our history Friends have kept in touch, in part, through epistles from yearly meetings which let everyone know how the Spirit is faring, of the tests and celebrations in the life of the yearly meeting and to send each other greetings.

The following introduction explains the place Britain Yearly Meeting has in the world family of Friends and to set into context the epistles that we have received from other yearly meetings in 2015.

Background

From the earliest days of the Quaker movement, Friends travelled widely to share the message of our view of faith, convincing others to join them. They took their message to distant parts of the world, 'Speaking Truth to Power' where they saw a chance to build the Kingdom of God on earth. In the last 350 years, Quakerism has spread around the world and in the process has evolved and changed. Early Friends in Britain proclaimed a faith which they knew

experimentally, a faith that brought them direct, personal communion with the Divine and the Spirit that gave rise to the Scriptures. They were Christians who knew the Bible very well and who wanted their lives to mirror all the best characteristics of an early Christian community. In the 21st century, not all Quakers in Britain would call themselves Christian. Our approach to the Bible and to theology can be described as liberal. Our worship is based on silent waiting, seeking the divine in stillness. But while our lives are influenced and guided by our beliefs and testimonies, we are also fully involved in the wider society in which we find ourselves.

Diversity

Unprogrammed worship can be found across Europe, in Asia, southern Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and parts of the USA and Mexico. This tradition represents around 11% of the total world membership. It is not however necessarily correct to associate unprogrammed worship with liberal theology, and Christocentric theology with programmed worship (see below). Many combinations exist.

There are Quakers who describe themselves as conservative, whose theology, worship and way of life remain much closer to that of early Friends in the 17th and 18th centuries. These Friends (mostly in the USA) represent 0.03% of the membership, but they feel that they are true to the original guiding principles that George Fox proclaimed in terms of relationship to Jesus Christ and the Bible; there are a number of small groups and individuals around Europe who are akin to them although not formally affiliated.

Some Quaker meetings have evolved patterns of programmed worship, usually for special occasions. Just as we once appointed recorded ministers, and still appoint Friends to serve the meeting, so Friends in programmed meetings appoint pastors to minister to the community. Their form of worship may include hymns or songs, a sermon, Bible readings and prayers, and there is also a time of free or open worship, when other Friends can minister, as in unprogrammed worship. Programmed meetings represent 49% of the total world membership and have different ways of counting members.

Perhaps more than 40% of Friends worldwide belong to evangelical Friends churches, most but not all of them affiliated to the Friends World Committee for Consultation. They emphasise bringing the Christian message to unbelievers and the authority of the Bible.

Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC)

FWCC was formed in 1937 to provide opportunities for Friends to meet, to talk and come to a better understanding of each other, thereby deepening their spiritual life and strengthening their outreach. It includes in its membership yearly meetings from all the traditions described here as well as small groups and individuals. It has four regional groupings. These are Africa Section (with 43% of world membership), Section of the Americas (47%), Asia West Pacific Section (4%) and Europe and Middle East Section (6%). Britain Yearly Meeting belongs to FWCC and to its Europe and Middle East Section, of which it is by far the biggest yearly meeting. In the USA, many yearly meetings of the unprogrammed tradition belong not only to FWCC but also to Friends General Conference (FGC), whilst programmed yearly meetings may belong to Friends United Meeting (FUM) and evangelical yearly meetings to Evangelical Friends Churches International (EFCI).

Unity

Friends from these diverse traditions find common ground in the belief of 'that of God in

everyone', although this phrase is widely known in other branches, in the testimonies and in our Quaker business method – with great variations. On the other hand, there are differences in the way Friends work in the world: Friends of a more liberal persuasion would see it as important to try to make the world a better place, while Friends of the evangelical persuasion will be more concerned with saving souls and bringing them into membership. Understanding one another is not always an easy process – Friends come from very different cultural backgrounds and traditions, which influence the expression of their faith and practice in ways we may find unfamiliar or uncomfortable. We may need to remind ourselves that we have not necessarily found all the answers – “Are you open to new light, from whatever source it may come?” (*Advices & queries* 7).

The epistles printed here are those which were received during 2015 and after the deadline for 2014 epistles. Their content reflects the diversity of our worldwide family of Friends.

From Europe and Middle East

Belgium and Luxembourg Yearly Meeting

10 May 2015

To Friends everywhere: Greetings!

Thirty-eight of us have come together as a Yearly Meeting. It is a rare event for so many of us to be able to be together, scattered as we are across Belgium and Luxembourg. We were pleased to be joined by Friends from France and Britain Yearly Meetings, and to have seven children amongst us.

Under the guidance of Helen Meads and Andrea Freeman we explored our theme 'Leaning into the Silence, Leaning into the Light'. For six hours in stillness and in silence, we took part in meditation, making collages and worship sharing. We have begun to glimpse the power and potential of opening ourselves up, and allowing ourselves truly to see, and then 'Let the Light do the work' that needs to be done.

We were introduced to some ideas from 'Experiment with Light' and have sought to 'Mind the Light', to open our hearts to Truth, to wait in the Light and to accept what it may show us.

Light and dark have been key words, in their different meanings. We had rich and varied experiences; of illumination and insight, as well as struggles. Making collages has allowed young and old to experiment with a new and creative way of crystallising and expressing our deepest reflections. Children led all of us in intuitive play activities and finding our sense of fun and joy.

In meeting for worship outdoors in the spring sunshine we were reminded of early Friends.

During the weekend we learned we could be flexible and pragmatic, whilst maintaining our enthusiasm. We take a new sense of experimentation into our worship.

Holding the stillness, maintaining the silence – even at coffee times and meal times: this has challenged us, but also allowed us to grow in our knowledge of one another, and of the Spirit within. Our challenge, now, is to apply these insights to deepen our worship and action in the world.

On behalf of Belgium and Luxembourg
Yearly Meeting

Kate Macdonald, Clerk

Chloe Tan, Assistant Clerk

Europe & Middle East Section of the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC – EMES) Annual Meeting

Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre,
Birmingham, 4–7 June 2015

To Friends everywhere,

Loving Greetings – Srdečné pozdravy, kærlige hilsener, Hartelijke groeten, Lämpimin terveisin, salutations affectueuses, Liebe Grüße, Szeretettel köseöntzük, Calorosi saluti, Hjertelig

hilsen, Serdecznie pozdrawiamy, **сердечный ПРИВЕТВИЕ**, saludos cariñosos, kära hälsningar, Beannacht Dé oraibh, salut amics, salamu za upendo.

This year's gathering of Europe & Middle East Section (EMES) comprised over 80 participants, and was enriched by the presence of members of FWCC's Central Executive Committee, as we have gone about our business and our theme, looking at ourselves as pilgrims on a journey whose next stage will be the 2016 World Plenary Meeting in Pisac, Peru.

We have explored what this means to us as individuals, meetings, and as the world family of Friends. In plenary, in pairs, and in groups, we have asked: where have we come from, where are we going and how can we support one another as we travel? It has been a joy to consider these queries together at the nourishing watering hole of Woodbrooke, before continuing on our paths, whether to Pisac or elsewhere. Looking forward, it has been valuable to contemplate the signposts pointing us towards action.

Ben Pink Dandelion's keynote address reminded us that Quakerism is inherently collective as well as diverse. He challenged us to be ready to speak out about our personal awareness of the divine but also to be open to listen from our hearts to those whose religious experience, however differently expressed, might emerge from the same deep place. We were struck by his suggestion that the Amish query – does this action build community? – can be an excellent way of testing discernment about things great and small.

We are, as our speaker said, a 'do-it-together' religious community and we long to make that more of a reality, especially for very small groups and those who are lone Quakers within their area or even larger region. So it was wonderful to hear, in our worship for business, of the exciting opportunity which has opened for EMES. The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust has entrusted EMES with the administration of a Small Grants Fund. Its aim is to support European & Middle East Quaker groups in finding ways to grow our Quaker identity. This Spirit-led generosity and

trust greatly encourages us to look forward to the strengthening of our Quaker witness across the Section.

The joy of our meeting included early morning exercise for some and Experiment with Light for others; on our final evening we joined in dancing and singing together. At evening epilogue we have been led in varied and engaging worship by Friends from the Africa, Asia West Pacific and Americas Sections. The opening presentation and later excursions to Quaker places and projects have given us a glimpse of Central England Quakers' vibrant faith in action.

In all these things we have felt blessed that the Spirit of God works to unite us. While across the FWCC Sections our backgrounds may be very different, we share a loving trust. Our religious quest, our testimonies and our commitment to a life of faith in action bring us into unity that is deeper than words or outward uniformity. We give thanks for the deep ministry experienced in our worship. We are glad to share this journey, experiencing God in our loving relationships. As we draw strength from the inspiration of our intense experience here, we know it will sustain us for our pilgrimage. This refreshment is not just for us. We want to give to others what we have discovered through meeting one another and exploring our richly diverse ways of expressing our faith and experience. "To give the message, we must be the message." (Thomas Kelly)

Signed in and on behalf of FWCC-EMES
Rachel M Bewley-Bateman, Clerk

Europe & Middle East Young Friends (EMEYF) Spring Gathering 2015

Ureki, Georgia, 4–11 April 2015

This year's EMEYF Spring Gathering took place in Georgia, after several Georgian Friends could not get visas to join us at past events. This was the start of a long journey that ended with us

arriving in Ureki on Saturday 4 April for a week full of surprises. Our community came into being while huddled under blankets at our very first meeting for worship, as it poured with rain outside.

If anything, Georgia is a land filled with contrasts: blankets and sunburn, mountains and the Black Sea and the old mingled with the new. Our theme 'Living as one faith amongst many' was present throughout the week. All around us we faced the uncertainty of being in a different culture, experiencing language barriers even within our group; yet feeling the certainty of the community we built, as a rock in the storm. We had several opportunities for worship sharing, starting with our personal spiritual journeys and ending with our various theological views. Many other conversations happened while we were waiting for the gas cookers to slowly heat up our inventive concoctions that we prepared together. We heard the cows, which wandered freely around the village, moo-ing during meeting for worship for business, and felt joy as Saskia played football with locals and Peter played football with us, even in the train station.

There are many other moments that strengthened our community: driving up the mountains and walking in the snow, laughing with the Quaker Hulk, going swimming in the Black Sea, singing in epilogue, experiencing Georgian driving, trying the famous Nabeghlavi spring water and eating many khachapuri.

In our sessions we explored our own cultural and religious identities as well as ideas and thoughts about conflict resolution. We learned about Georgian culture from a guest speaker and held our own session on linguistics and the Georgian alphabet. One of our Georgian Friends told us about the conflicts that have shaped the country's recent history. We experienced first-hand the generosity of welcome in Georgia for example as we visited the mosque in Batumi, received traditional beans and bread from the owner of our hostel along with many offers of chacha and wine and friendly greetings. Although there were cultural differences between us, which caused confusion and called for patience and understanding at times, we were

all left with an impression of warmth. This was often particularly obvious when little Peter, our youngest participant aged two, was met with smiles and affection wherever we went.

We are very excited about the All Age Gathering we are planning for the summer of next year as part of the celebration for the 30ish anniversary of EMEYF. We hope that the bonds we have either renewed or formed will only grow stronger at our next gathering. As we go back to our communities, we hold each other in the light, enriched by our week together, taking with us the spirit of embracing uncertainty and living adventurously.

France Yearly Meeting

16–19 July 2015

To Friends throughout the world,

Our Assembly met in the Centre Diocèse des Naudières south of Nantes, a very welcoming and peaceful centre, with its beautiful white buildings and its courtyard shaded by huge plane trees more than a century old. It was 30°C in the shade on the day of our arrival so we were glad to find a good breeze tempering the air of the beautiful park.

We Quakers were not the only ones at the Centre. There were several other groups in the dining room, separated by tables, but that did not prevent us from sharing smiles.

From the first silence until our departure, there was a real feeling of coming into our family. It's been two years since we last met as a large family of Quakers in France and the position of Nantes as the confluence of the tributaries of a great river echoed our meeting: the Assembly was a confluence of friendships, ideas and energies united in a joyful river of hope and activities for our future.

Our theme this year was 'To be a Quaker in France today'.

We heard from other Quakers in Europe through the secretary of EMES. For example, we

learned that there is even a new group in Iceland! She also reminded us of the world meeting of Quakers to be held in January 2016 in Peru – and the importance of going there if we can.

We noted that the experience of other groups in Europe echoed ours – generally faithful and elderly members but there are not enough new members – but some enthusiasm for the future, whatever the number of members and attenders, or the various languages within the same groups.

One of our epilogues celebrated the end of Ramadan with our Muslim friends, and cited William Penn:

“The humble, meek, merciful, just, pious, and devout souls are everywhere of one religion; and when death has taken off the mask, they will know one another, though the diverse liveries they wear here makes them strangers.”

On Friday at our first meeting we were asked “What would you like the French to know about Quakers?”

The answers were diverse and informative. As well as our recognition of “that of God in everyone”, the focus was on the fact that we live our faith in the present, and therefore we must be known first by the witness of our daily lives. As Quakers, despite our own “quaking”, we must not avoid talking to others of our values. We find it difficult to explain our worship in silence to French and modern Catholics, but it must remain a key point of our sharing.

We studied outreach ideas. Many have felt the need for better in-reach within our groups and for our isolated Friends. Our means of communication are very important. A Friend told us about contacts with the Tibhirine association in Nantes, the struggle at Notre Dame des Landes, the Climate Coalition 21 and the organisation ‘Disobey’. Another Friend encouraged our participation in peaceful demonstrations against Eurosatory, the biennial armaments fair in Paris.

We had a session together with children and big kids too (i.e. adults) to create ‘bookmarks’ on a Quaker topic which we could leave in

public places, and the results were remarkable – beautiful, thoughtful and sometimes very funny!

On Friday evening the report of the Communication Group sounded an optimistic note with new books written by our members and letters to newspapers – especially our response to the Pope (a historic step!) and his excellent encyclical letter on the environment that we wish to support. Our website and our newsletter the *Lettre des Amis* will remain the keys at the heart of our communication.

On Saturday morning we heard the news of our regional groups: a great pleasure to receive the testimony of lively energy in our groups, whether big or small! In Paris and in the Languedoc, groups are attached to Quaker meeting houses where they can worship every week. These two centres are available to all Quakers of France and we are encouraged to give them our support. All the groups, in general, have very geographically distant members. The small groups in the Northwest find valuable support in occasional meetings with the whole of western France.

The Quaker Committee for Europeans Affairs (QCEA) report stressed the importance of this organisation in promoting the values of the Quaker society at the heart of the European Community.

After meeting for worship on Saturday morning, the children asked us pointed questions, which were relevant and funny: a good exchange and a living reminder of the importance of children for the future not only of the Quaker society but, of course, of our earth!

On Saturday afternoon our visit to the installation of the abolition of slavery in the city of Nantes on the bank of the Loire was a powerful moment: it was very moving to read the keywords – including the Quaker contribution – in the history of the fight against human trafficking.

On Saturday night we had much fun during a party where we had music, dance, poetry, quotes and jokes.

At the end of our Yearly Meeting of Quakers in France in 2015 we felt that friendship, reflection, determination to continue with love and enthusiasm... and our inner light had been revived in us. Like effervescent sources from all over France: from mountains, forests, valleys, gathering on a large river, in the estuary of the ocean where we met, we felt ready to leave this port for new adventures, scattered but united.

for the Assemblée de France
Sylvette Thompson, Clerk
France Yearly Meeting

German Yearly Meeting

Bonn, 2–5 October 2014

We greet Friends around the world from the 84th German Yearly Meeting, held 2–5 October on the Venusberg in the city of Bonn. The gathering brought together 170 persons, including 35 children and young people, as well as 13 delegates and guests. The theme of the gathering was ‘What canst thou say – what can we say?’

This year commemorates the beginning of two world wars, and now, even as Germany marks the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, earthshaking, bitter conflicts and their ominous consequences once again overshadow our gathering. We see our pacifist position challenged and remind ourselves of our peace church roots. Through the Alternatives to Violence Project, Quakers have been able to work toward a more just and peaceful society for the last 20 years. We are thankful for the work of these Friends and glad that we as a yearly meeting can contribute in some small way.

Neithard Petry, a Friend who has worked in international cooperative development, gave this year’s Richard L. Cary Lecture. The lecture carried the title, ‘What can I say? Thoughts of a religious-philosophical Do-it-Yourselfer’. Neithard invited us to fix our view on the joyous and hopeful signs of humanity’s development toward less violence. He made clear how a

dedication to the common good, grounded in primordial faith and joy in living, can free up energy. We can trust that our actions – even if we are only “baking small buns” – will bear fruit. The “tools” for this work are mindfulness, moral principles, reason and faith in being led by a “Greater Wisdom”.

We perceived that new confidence is growing out of our quest for a new orientation in our common peace work.

We heard excerpts of 21 epistles from Friends in different parts of the world and wished for more personal exchange with all Friends in a world that is growing closer together. In shared responsibility for peace, justice and preservation of Creation.

We send hearty and friendly greetings.

Sabine Alvermann, Clerk
Horst-Dieter Breuer, Clerk

German Yearly Meeting

Quaker House, Bad Pyrmont, 22–25
October 2015

The morning was grey. But the joy of being together with Friends was great. To be connected despite distances in space and time. Is Mysticism Deed? Is Deed Mysticism?

A wonderful scent of freshly cut celery drifted through the Quaker House. Does the mystical spirit smell of celery? The helpers enjoy the Deed. Our children and the helpers enjoy the soup, the rest of us the odour.

The 85th Yearly Meeting of German and Austrian Quakers took place from the 22nd to the 25th of October 2015 in the Quaker House in Bad Pyrmont. Our theme was ‘Spiritual Growth’. 186 Friends between the ages of 9 months and 93 years were present, including delegates and guests from Georgia, Great Britain, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, Hungary, and the USA.

Our community and the bonds between Quakers worldwide as the foundations of

spiritual growth were stressed in many of the epistles which reached us from other Yearly Meetings.

Our Friend Esther Köhring held the Richard L. Cary Lecture with the title 'Roots and Wings: The opportunity to grow in the community of Friends'. She spoke of the joy of being able to grow within the Europe & Middle East Young Friends (EMEYF) and German Yearly Meeting; wings were her earlier experience, roots came later. "Young Friends are not your future; they are part of our joint present." We can only grow into the Future out of the Here and Now of each one of us, younger or older. The sense of community – amongst EMEYF as within our yearly meeting – forms the foundation of mutual trust: both to fly, to attempt new things, and to develop roots, to "become radical" in the original sense of the word. To try new approaches asks for the overcoming of the continual need for a finished product, "not always hearing the song of the birds but always listening for it", and carrying the "Krummelus pill" in our pocket (like Astrid Lindgren's Pippi Longstocking) as a sort of dried pea to keep disturbing us and prevent us becoming too comfortable in our settled Quaker existences. "How can we be Quakers without ceasing the process of becoming Quakers?"

New attempts: open sessions of our committees, a morning Bible study time unit, joint business meetings of young Friends and the Yearly Meeting, autobiographical contributions.

From inner growth to outward deed: the particular field in which Friends feel moved to act is currently – in view of the special situation of the moment in Germany – assisting refugees. Many Friends work with ongoing initiatives and commitment in this area.

Important aspects of our business meeting: several years of work by a literature group have come to a successful conclusion, and 'Our Book' has been published under the title *And what can you say? Views and experiences* (ISBN 978-3-929696-52-3). German Quakers' striving to live in the spirit of love and truth and their

various answers to the questions of their time are reflected in this volume.

Then: a new translation and publication of the Journal of George Fox in German has been decided upon. We look forward to its realization.

Further: the Yearly Meeting has agreed on the text of an open letter to the German Chancellor Angela Merkel and to other German and European politicians to express three concerns of German Quakers in the present refugee crisis. Firstly, we support the policy of open borders for asylum seekers and live in the hope that we shall master the situation. Secondly, export of weapons from Germany contributes to the uprooting of refugees. Thirdly, all possible efforts must be made to aid the restoration of acceptable living conditions in the refugees' countries of origin.

We greet Friends throughout the world in the conviction of our mutual trust and unity.

Sabine Alvermann (Clerk)

Neithard Petry (Clerk)

Letter to German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, re. Refugees/Asylum Seekers

Dear Madam Chancellor,

Large numbers of refugees are coming to Germany. The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) is pleased to see that so many citizens are welcoming the refugees open-heartedly. Many of us have been looking after refugees for a long time. Therefore, we know of the need for help and the necessity of giving them non-bureaucratic access to trauma therapy – especially for children.

The reception and integration of these refugees presents an organizational, financial, cultural and human challenge. We are grateful for the efforts of official bodies and we are relieved at so many attempts to cope with this challenge. We support you, Madam Chancellor, and all the politicians who advocate the policy of open borders and the admission of asylum applicants. We also live in the hope that WE CAN DO IT! We ask you to continue to stand fast in the face of opposing

positions at home and abroad. Of course, it is also important to take into account the fears of the citizens – especially for marginalized groups in our society – so that envy and xenophobia are not nourished.

Stopping arms exports – particularly to areas in crisis – is an important contribution to the prevention of military conflicts, which often result in the displacement of the people living there. We, as a traditional peace church, wish for a world without weapons and increased support for peaceful forms of conflict resolution.

Aware of the historical responsibility of Germany, we call for a just economic order in the world, one to improve political and economic conditions in the native countries of the refugees. The huge economic and social disparities in this world have triggered a mass exodus that will only cease when people can live with dignity in their countries of origin. That is why great efforts must be made to improve the living conditions in those countries.

We are encouraged by the Book of Isaiah (32/17) where it is written:

“The work of righteousness shall be peace.”

Best regards, on behalf of the
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
German Yearly Meeting
Sabine Alvermann (Clerk)
Neithard Petry (Clerk)

Ireland Yearly Meeting

9–12 April 2015

To Friends everywhere,

We send loving greetings from Ireland Yearly Meeting, held from 9–12 April 2015 at Dromantine Retreat and Conference Centre, near Newry, Co. Down, Northern Ireland. We were pleased to welcome Friends from a number of yearly meetings from Europe and the United States. Our theme was ‘Knowing God’s Creation’, accompanied by the verses from

Proverbs 4:11–12, “I have taught you wisdom and the right way to live. Nothing will stand in your way if you walk wisely, and you will not stumble when you run.” We explored this theme in our sessions and activities, including worship sharing, Bible studies, special interest groups and the showing of two films made by Irish Friends.

In our Ministry and Oversight session, three Friends reflected on the nature of Truth and the meaning of Truth in their own lives. The earliest Quakers called themselves ‘Friends of the Truth’, and now we are challenged to faithfully seek the Truth, although finding absolute Truth is beyond us. In moving presentations about Christian Aid, particularly projects in Brazil and Kenya, Sheila Reaper-Reynolds and Caroline Simpson challenged us as stewards of God’s creation to care for all our brothers and sisters, and to dare to believe that it is possible to eradicate poverty with a more just distribution of resources.

Concerns brought by individual Friends and meetings were considered and tested by the Yearly Meeting. In a session focusing on sustainability and respecting the earth, we heard about a concern of a Cork Friend to develop the cross-border biological, ecological and geological Foinse Project, to which we agreed to give our support. Friends from the West and Southwest of Ireland brought their concern about the possible use of the Shannon Airport for military purposes, in contradiction with the official neutrality of the Republic of Ireland, and this concern was upheld by the Yearly Meeting.

A session dedicated to the nature of membership – something that is currently being discussed in many yearly meetings around the world – generated a wide range of thoughtful and creative ideas.

Our Public Lecture was given by the scholar and author Alastair McIntosh of Glasgow Meeting, on the theme ‘To Become the People of the Cross: Climate Change, Violence and some Meanings of Creation in our Times’. Alastair argued that the consumerism that drives climate change exerts violence against God’s creation, in contradiction with our peace testimony. He also

proposed a vision for the meaning of the cross: the love of God was so great that he preferred to allow himself to be killed than to kill, making the image of Christ on the cross a supreme symbol of nonviolence.

We come away from our Yearly Meeting ready to meet the challenge of learning to see God's creation in everyone and everything, and to nurture all of God's creation in whatever ways we feel called – through giving, action and prayer.

Signed on behalf of Ireland Yearly Meeting
Daniel H. Sinton, Clerk
Ireland Yearly Meeting

Netherlands Yearly Meeting

Netherlands, Bennekom, 29–31 May 2015

In a wooded and sunny environment we found a warm welcome, inspired participants and spontaneous children. We quickly felt at home and supported by peace and quiet. We know we are united in our common faith and we experience unity in our striving for peace. The theme was: 'Working for peace, our peace testimony in the 21st century'.

We are grateful that young people from neighbouring yearly meetings also attended our Annual Meeting. Several Friends shared their experience of working for peace: one of them told us about the inward seeking through silence and meditation. The purpose of this inner journey is to transform towards unity with that of God in each of us. In the meeting for worship on Saturday morning we listened to our Friend of the Evangelical Quakers from Hungary. His deep witness and the statement of Isaiah 30:15 was impressive: "In repentance and rest is your salvation, in patience and trust your strength!"

Another Friend shared her contribution to peace in the family and in the immediate environment,

including through mediation, coaching of and teaching languages to an asylum seeker.

Experiences were shared of the work of Friends abroad, such as the project of the 'Wall Museum' at Bethlehem, where stories of Palestinians are made visible on posters on the separation wall. Through Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) we support the action to prevent violence committed in hate crime, which is violence against religious or ethnic groups. With great thanks we said goodbye to Alexandra Bosbeer as the representative of QCEA, whose task within QCEA is coming to an end. Our Quaker representative at the World Council of Churches spoke about the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace of the World Council of Churches. In the context of this pilgrimage a group of young adults from very different member churches came together one weekend. They had very positive reactions and welcome suggestions on how to realise the pilgrimage. It is especially about initiatives by local churches where religion is the source for creating social justice. One activity in the context of the pilgrimage is a peace march to the Peace Palace in The Hague on Sunday 20 September. We are also encouraged to demonstrate at the major arms fair (Eurosatory) in Paris in June 2016.

The contributions on the theme of our 2014 Annual Gathering 'What moves us as Quakers?' have been brought together in a beautiful magazine.

The responses to the questionnaire about our individual peacebuilding activities will be summarised online at (www.quakers.nu).

We ask our monthly meetings to see how else we can support peace activities by Dutch Quakers. Contributing to the Quaker Relief Fund is another way to put our Quaker peace testimony into practice.

In the base groups we shared experiences about our incentives and motivation and on how to connect this with peace-supporting activities. The "50 ways to build peace" indicate how many possibilities there are. Sometimes strong feelings

of powerlessness are expressed at the sight of the large numbers of refugees crossing the Mediterranean, many of whom drown. In some of the base groups participants placed emphasis on hope, peace and service as the key motivation to work actively for peace worldwide. Some Friends testified about their own experiences with the peace work of Quakers in Kenya and Burundi.

As a group we were led in prayer for peace, which gave us hope and a real opportunity to experience the power of prayer. We sang the song *Prayer for Peace* and this gave us the feeling of being connected with each other in our struggle for nonviolence and peace.

Sharing with the young children around a campfire in the woods was a pleasant activity in which we felt at one with them, with each other and with nature.

In the final session of our base groups we formulated firm steps which we can take as individuals and as a group towards inner peace and peace in the world. Sharing these steps supports us, knowing that we are working together towards the same goal.

We send our peace greetings to Friends worldwide.

On behalf of the Friends gathered at the Annual Meeting of Netherlands Yearly Meeting

Marlies Tjallingii, Clerk
Netherlands Yearly Meeting

Sweden Yearly Meeting

To Friends everywhere,

Quakers in Sweden held their 81st Yearly Meeting from 25–28 June 2015 in the picturesque surroundings of Wendelsberg Folk High School in Mölnlycke. Some forty Friends and friends of Friends, adults and children, from the whole of Sweden as well as representatives from five different yearly meetings, gathered

under the theme ‘Equality – Approach and Application’.

The Quaker testimony to equality is very relevant in a social development that draws us towards an even greater inequality.

In his talk on Friday, British Quaker and keynote speaker Martin Wilkinson told us about the connection between economic inequality, inadequate public health and social problems, based on the book *The Spirit Level* (Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, 2010). Cooperation is needed in order to address these challenges. Martin emphasised that cooperation is facilitated by an equal distribution of power.

”We need to cooperate, and the more equal we are the easier this will be.”

In small groups the participants talked about equality and inequality, what kind of influence these aspects have on our lives and how we can change our society so that it becomes more equal.

Through Quaker Service Sweden, the yearly meeting’s development agency, the Yearly Meeting heard how the work for increased equality is developing with its partners in Russia, Georgia, Bangladesh and Burundi. Another example of Swedish Quakers’ engagement is the letter sent to the Swedish Government saying no to joining NATO and continuing to be a non-aligned country.

Friends in Sweden are also trying to reach out and be more accessible. We heard about the importance of the website in spreading information about Quakers and making Quaker work better known. We learned too that new worship groups have been set up during the year, partly in Värmland, but also through Skype for people who are isolated.

Three Friends died during 2014. Although we miss them, we are also pleased to report that new members have joined us.

A positive spirit permeates our Society. We want to be among the positive forces working for peace, equality, simplicity, truth and community.

In everything we do we try to seek God's leadings in a spirit of worship. Like Samuel we ask: "Speak, for your servant is listening", at the same time as we call ourselves Friends (John 15:15).

Signed on behalf of Sweden Yearly Meeting,
28 June 2015

Kerstin Backman
Ann-Kristin Åklint
Co-Clerks

transformation and how they influenced living for a world in peace. Many and varied suggestions were made on how we as individuals and a 'church of peace' could set about this work. However, the urgency to promote changes as individuals and meetings was palpable.

We began and ended our Yearly Meeting with music, enjoying the musical talents of our children and adults.

Greetings to Friends everywhere,
Nancy Krieger, Co-Clerk

Switzerland Yearly Meeting

Epistle from Switzerland Yearly Meeting

Held at Herzberg, Asp ob Aarau,
Aargau, 22–25 May 2015

To Friends everywhere,

We gathered together in the Light to 'Imagine a world without war – Living for a world in peace'. In a world where conflict, war and their consequences are reported daily in the media, the theme of peace was particularly relevant to our personal, national and global experiences. We were 50 Friends and attenders including four children. We met for the fourth time over Pentecost on the Herzberg. We welcomed three delegates and two visitors from other European yearly meetings (France, Germany, Britain) and two visitors from Russia and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Workshops over the three days were organized around the many aspects of peace, e.g. religion, education, economy, as well as one workshop on peaceful martial arts (Aikido).

Inspiration was gleaned from a video on Bertha von Suttner, the first woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize in 1905. We were shaken by Junior Nzita's memoir of his time as a child soldier in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The history and origins of the Quaker peace testimony were presented, followed by sessions to discuss personal testimonies of spiritual

Africa

Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting

January 2015

To Friends everywhere,

We have met among the rocks and lush green bushes, grasses, flowers and birds of the bushveld summer, beneath billowing white thunder clouds in the clear blue sky overlooking the Hartebeespoort Dam and Magaliesberg Mountains, near Johannesburg, very aware of the blessings of the earth. Our Yearly Meeting gathered about 110 Friends of many ages, countries, cultures, languages, personal histories and spiritual vocabulary.

Worship sharing groups form the heart of our gathering and help us to meet each other on a deep level, come to understand our own limitations, and relish the rich blessings of diversity. We learn to be more tender and imaginative in receiving and giving communication. Detailed guidance – notes and questions – deepened and informed worship sharing groups. Summer School included ‘Experiment with Light’ and practice in talking about our faith.

Communication is a challenge. Email and the website are replacing personal contact because of expense, new customs, the breakdown of postal services and thousands of kilometres between meetings. This continually endangers personal relationships. Many of us rely on traditional media and electronic coverage is patchy and faulty. Our common language is English, which

can be unnecessarily highbrow. However, Yearly Meeting provides an experience which builds up mutual trust and enriches the ground from which we operate. Our Handbook, available in hard copy and on the website, describes the Quaker way and the unique and Spirit-filled practice and experience of Friends in Southern Africa; our corporate memory.

We sensed that the time had come to break with outdated habits and for a great ‘spring cleaning’ to fit us for the new world emerging in Africa in the 21st century. Change and renewal centred on a fruitful, revitalised nominations process and fresh procedures which do not waste energy but allow reliable officers to make practical decisions. We broke into local meeting groups to consider which Yearly Meeting offices were unnecessary and to nominate those from our own local meetings whom we knew to be properly suited and qualified for positions. A rich crop of names were given to the current Nominations Committee to consider for the truly necessary offices.

We looked at the outcomes we want. There will be coordinators for each of six clusters to focus on: Strengthening Meetings; Communication; Financial Oversight; Clerks and Administration; Youth and Activism, and Advocacy. Instead of unwieldy committees we appointed trusted coordinators with power to co-opt suitable persons. They are obliged to report to Yearly Meeting and mid-year meetings and must appoint and brief deputies if they cannot attend.

Improved discipline in business meetings, the microphone and the calm competence of the

clerks helped us to sense the guidance of the Spirit, respond to the Light and move into Unity.

The Richard Gush Lecture gave a taste of the future academic and actuarial work required to calculate the way business and other organisations improve or destroy the earth, the economy, "the wellbeing" of stakeholders and the planet. Using 'Ecos' as the environmental currency, the "triple bottom line" in the reports of business and national organisations could become accurate and meaningful, and organisations can be held accountable for the sustainability of their activities in each of those domains.

Singing, the final Celebration provided chiefly by children and young Friends, the sunshine, swimming pool and good ordering of the children's program, lightened our hearts. We enjoyed the few visitors from other continents. 'Nature walks' took the place of costly outings. Young Friends were not separate, but were full participants at all times.

Our theme, 'Reverence for Life – Silence, Transformation and Action', has inspired us to look into the future, to sweep away the autumn leaves and make space for the new growth and vision from the grassroots of our community. We hold each other in the Light.

Clerks, Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting

Uganda Yearly Meeting

We send you Christian greetings of peace and love from Uganda Yearly Meeting. Our annual conference was held from 19–23 August 2015 at our yearly meeting headquarters five miles from Mbale Town along Mbale Tororo highway in Eastern Uganda, a busy great north road,

The weather here is ideal for agriculture, the people are friendly and welcoming. Over 200 delegates coming from Friends' meetings I churches of our yearly meeting attended except delegates from Kigumba meeting, which is far west on the Uganda-Congo border.

The theme was 'God's followers spoke with each other and the Lord listened to them' [MALCHI 3: 16a]. The main speaker Samuel Wefafa appealed to the delegates to cooperate, be united in love, and share their concerns together. God will hear and bless them. We had other topics presented and discussion groups, focusing on development and the challenges facing the Friends/Quakers Church in Uganda.

There was the call to instruct our children in God's way, initiate development programs, take care of our environment as we respond to climate change, and look forward to a peaceful society.

We were blessed with visitors: the FWCC Africa Section clerk, Friends United Meeting Africa ministries administrative secretary, and gospel music singers from other churches, who contributed immensely to our praise and worship sessions. The delegates were joyful, blessed and renewed in the Spirit and made a commitment to support the yearly meeting.

Our next annual conference will be held at the same venue from 17–21 August 2016.

Hold us in prayers as we look forward to our country's general elections in early 2016.

Peace be with you all.

Wopicho Apollo, Presiding Clerk
Waninga Charles, General Secretary

The Americas

In the USA, many yearly meetings of the unprogrammed tradition belong not only to Friends World Committee for Consultation but also to Friends General Conference (FGC), whilst programmed yearly meetings may belong to Friends United Meeting (FUM) and evangelical yearly meetings to Evangelical Friends Churches International (EFCI). Some yearly meetings belong to more than one grouping.

Baltimore Yearly Meeting 2015 (FUM/FGC)

To Friends everywhere,

As we gathered to work with our theme of ‘Living into Right Relationship’, our condition already reflected years of faithful progress in relationship with the creation, each other, and that Spirit that flows in and among us. Attention and labor have been abundantly given to healing relationships distorted by racism, over-consumption and exploitation of the earth and its inhabitants. We gathered in faith that we would discern together how to carry our work forward with new insight.

We were blessed with reminders of the opportunities we have to seek and be open to guidance from the Spirit, which calls us into relationship. Our opening retreat raised up connectedness as the essence of relationship. We each bear responsibility for staying connected. The retreat sent us onward with the musical blessing, “Go Thou in Peace”. One of our plenary speakers described worship as communion, wherein we experience the presence of God and discover afresh our kinship with everything. Another speaker described ours as a “difficult and painful time”, requiring us to act now for the future. We acknowledge that suffering exists in the present. Right relationship lets us see that some have been sacrificed for the benefit of others. Those who suffer need justice rather than charity. Our speaker reminded us that in a troubled present and an uncertain future, “it always seems impossible until it is done”. Our power comes from our relationships.

In meetings for worship with a concern for business, reports and agenda items revealed our yearly meeting’s work towards righting relationships distorted by racism. We acknowledge that we need to live in a way that honors and nourishes the created world. We acknowledge the rights of all species to their part in creation.

During our week together, we seasoned the issues before us. Our new clerk reminded us that the Spirit will find the voice it needs for Truth that needs to be shared.

Visiting Friends connected us to other yearly meetings and their work in the world.

The work before us now is not new. Friends are aware that we live in a society that hurts and exploits others. We see the need to match our actions with our declarations, as John Woolman urged. Our final plenary speaker called us to catalyze social change on a large scale. He urged Friends to see ourselves as members rather than masters of creation, and to work to maintain its complexity, which requires harmony and balance.

In some ways our present work is entirely new. Our actions will affect the future in ways that cannot be undone. Discerning the way forward is the task before us.

In the Light,
Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious
Society of Friends

Canadian Yearly Meeting (FUM/FGC)

22 August 2015

Loving Greetings to Friends everywhere,

The Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends met for the 182nd annual gathering of Quakers in Canada, our 60th as a united meeting, for the first time on the beautiful campus of the University of Prince Edward Island in Charlottetown. We came knowing that we had many challenging discussions to have and decisions to make.

The pre-gathering retreat, 'Nurturing Joy in our Meetings', was led by Lesley Read of New Brunswick Monthly Meeting and grew out of silence. Participants moved into small group work and consideration of joy in all facets of our lives.

On Saturday Friends gathered from all across Canada and celebrated community together in the evening. We were welcomed to the traditional Mi'kmaq territory of Abegweit by Indigenous Elder Judy Clarie. On Sunday afternoon we celebrated the lives of those who died in the last year. That evening we heard the Sunderland P. Gardner Lecture, titled 'Decolonizing Land and Soul: A Quaker Testimony', presented by Alastair McIntosh, Scottish Quaker and activist of Glasgow Area Meeting of Britain Yearly Meeting, whose words were challenging, humorous and thought-provoking. He continued his themes with workshops during the week. The lecture was followed by the traditional 'cake-night' in celebration of our beloved archivist, Jane Zavitz, who is moving toward release from her long service.

Deborah Fisch of Friends General Conference and Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative) led us in Quaker Study titled 'The Joy of Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business', with depth and humour. We began our regular week of activities, with meetings for worship with attention to business, as our Quaker Studies leader has reminded us to call it. An important

session took the form of an extended meeting for worship with attention to the future of Quakerism in Canada, and the future of our Canadian Yearly Meeting's functions. We proposed major changes to our structure. We are anticipating a fallow year in 2017 during which we will not meet as Canadian Yearly Meeting in session. We were tested, being unable to reach unity in this matter about which many felt deeply. We remain committed to seeking the spiritually rich and financially sustainable yearly meeting we desire. We learned with sadness of the laying down of Simcoe-Muskoka Monthly Meeting in Orillia, Ontario, and welcomed with joy the birth of Cowichan Valley Monthly Meeting on Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

Afternoon programs consisted of worship groups, followed by a wide selection of special interest groups. One afternoon we took part in community service projects proposed by our hosts, Prince Edward Island Worship Group: labouring in a nearby community garden and tree planting in a river watershed. Funds saved by a simple supper were donated to the university food bank. The week continued hot and humid, and many Friends enjoyed the glory of God's creation in salt water on nearby beaches.

Our evenings were filled with interesting activities. 'The Experience of the Spirit in my Life', an annual opportunity for Friends to share spiritual journeys, was moving, with Friends sharing sometimes unusual experiences. There was a Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgendered-Queer (LGBTQ) sponsored film presentation, entitled *My Prairie Home*, and discussion. Another evening we were led in considering communication and outreach in times of changing technology, finances and demographics.

Our youth numbers were small but Young Friends particularly loved the sun and activities of Canada's smallest province, situated on an island in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Because the group consisted almost entirely of Young Adult Friends, youth joined in on much of the adult programming, including attending meeting for

worship with attention to business meetings, Quaker study, worship groups, special interest groups, and evening activities. Youth-specific activities involved Canadian Young Friends Yearly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business, excursions to beaches, late-night brownie baking, a dance, to which we joyfully welcomed older Friends as well, and drawing games. Some Young Friends and Young Adult Friends also enjoyed volunteering with the Children's Program.

On our last evening together we enjoyed the various gifts and talents of many Friends young and old during our annual family night. The ministries of music, dance, and laughter nourishes us as we prepare to leave this blessed community.

We are grateful for the setting here but recall the unusually severe wildfires in western Canada and the dangers these pose to Western Friends and to Mother Nature. We urge Friends to work ceaselessly, including with faith-based groups around the world, to mitigate and adapt to the challenges posed by changes to the earth's climate.

Although it was a week spent in serious work and in considering and making decisions, it was also a week during which joy was a recurrent theme. We approach the coming year spiritually refreshed and full of hope and expectation.

Elaine Bishop, Presiding Clerk

Friends Association for Higher Education (FAHE)

Epistle, 18–21 June 2015

Epistle Committee: Trish Eckert (New Association of Friends), Mike Moyer (Iowa Yearly Meeting/Friends United Meeting), and Walter Hjelt Sullivan (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting)

To Friends everywhere,

The Friends Association for Higher Education gathered for its annual conference from

18–21 June 2015, on the campus of George Fox University, in Newburg, Oregon, neatly snuggled amongst the vineyards and fields of the Willamette Valley. The planning committee, led by Paul Anderson, arranged a variety of stimulating field trips to local sites and points of historical interest for those who arrived on Thursday afternoon.

We were grateful to greet the 62 Friends who attended the conference from across the United States, Canada, and England. We were overjoyed to welcome and re-welcome Friends working at Quaker K-12 institutions who had encountered our joint gathering with Friends Council on Education at Haverford College last year.

We felt particularly blessed by our gathering in light of concerns by some of our membership over recent controversial issues regarding gender diversity on the campus of George Fox University. FAHE Executive Committee clerk Jeff Dudiak played an important role in encouraging us to stay in loving relationship and open and loving dialogue.

The conference theme 'Truth and Transformation' spoke to our condition repeatedly throughout the conference.

On the first evening Quaker author Haven Kimmel reminded us of the transformative power of our particular lived experience and the lure of God. George Fox Professor Bill Jolliff spoke to us about practicing our craft with rigor. Like the poet, we may only reach a small audience, but nonetheless they are worth the very best that we have to give.

On the second night we met Lou Hoover, America's first modern First Lady, through the theatrical talents of local actor Jane Fellows and her one-woman show *First Lady Lou*. Wife of Newburg's own Quaker President of the United States Herbert Hoover, Lou told us stories from her life and encouraged us again and again to have the courage to do the right thing despite public sanction and popular criticism.

During the days we gathered in small workshops. We shared our experiences of nurturing young people into adulthood in Quaker settings. We

explored the words of early Quakers, learning from past tradition, adding the truth of our present understanding, and living into a faithful future. Friends shared their current scholarship, advances in pedagogy, and new practices for meaningful evaluations. We discussed the relevance and importance of figs and pigs, breathing in mindfulness, and tasting truth.

One workshop in particular addressed strategies so that each of our institutions could better understand the needs and provide support for transgender students. It was a tender, listening, and learning session, opening up new and unfamiliar issues for many from across the diverse theological spectrum represented at the conference.

On the second morning, Jon Kershner spoke intimately of the life and thought of his friend John Woolman, the reluctant 18th-century Quaker prophet who showed a singular willingness to return faithfully again and again to the motion of love in his work for the abolition of enslavement and his prophetic witness against the British imperial economy in the American colonies.

We proudly announced the publication of the second volume of our book series *Quakers and the Disciplines: Befriending Truth*. We look forward to the third volume next year, which will focus on Quakers and literature.

During the Saturday afternoon President's Panel Discussion we heard from Robin Baker, President of George Fox University/host, Jane Fernandes, President of Guilford College, Royce Frazier, President of Barclay College, and Donald Tucker, Provost of Malone University. They spoke to the challenges facing our Quaker institutions of higher education, including finances, enrolment, innovation, and renewal.

On Saturday evening the plenary session opened with worship in song, led by Bill Jolliff and his banjo:

“But we make God's love too narrow
By false limits of our own:
And we magnify God's strictness
With a zeal God will not own.

There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in God's justice,
Which is more than liberty.”

Released Friend Margery Post Abbott spoke to the question “How do Quakers today articulate foundations of Quaker ministry and develop communities that nurture prophetic ministry among Friends?”

As we leave the conference we ask ourselves, How do we seek a way to be in relationship when our understandings of Truth seem at times to be in contradiction with each other? We know that our shared commitment to teaching is a touchstone for all of us. We are grateful for the work of FAHE and the bridge it provides in stimulating open dialogue, connecting Friends across the spectrum of Quakerism, and supporting our endeavour to educate and nurture our students.

We are challenged to bring our prophetic truths home to our institutions and into our everyday lives and look forward to gathering together again in June 2016 at the Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in Birmingham, England. Join us.

Illinois Yearly Meeting (FGC)

Sixth Month 28, 2015

Dear Friends everywhere,

Glory! A brilliant sunny morning after a lightning-filled night begins our first full day of our 141st Annual Sessions. We join hearts for worship and business on the Midwest plains, corn and soy as far as the eye can see, fields flooded with recent rains.

One morning several children discovered a nest and three blue eggs blown from a leafy maple during the night. They puzzled, “Why are the eggs so far from the nest?” Then the children wondered, “If the nest is mudded back in the tree will it again become a home for the birds?” Many Friends in our yearly meeting look deeply

to discern how to ‘mud’ their and their monthly meetings’ internal spiritual desires into the world in which we inhabit – an appropriate symbol for the theme of our sessions, “From Mystic Voice to Active Voice”.

We are a community of rural folks, city-dwellers, and urbanites, 22 meetings and worship groups spread through four states. About three-quarters of our meetings and worship groups are small. Small or large, we all struggle with how to manage our collective resources of time and energy to provide pastoral care, nurture our children and youths, reach out to seekers, and witness to our testimonies in the wider world. Although we are blessed with many souls willing to wear multiple hats and young adult Friends willing to assume more responsibility, many of our lives are not centered exclusively on meeting activities.

Both within and among our local meetings, there is a longing to strengthen and deepen our relationships with one another. We are challenged to confront our differences in truth and love. While exploring the use of electronic technologies to draw us closer across the miles, we are learning the hazards as well as the opportunities of electronic communications.

We realize how many of our elders have passed on, and we share heartfelt concern and caring for those who are homebound or infirm.

With the passing of another generation, the Spirit is leading us to minister more attentively to parents and young children. We fervently desire an intergenerational community where many of our interactions include children, young Friends, and adults of all ages. A few of our meetings have seen the numbers of parents and children grow as even childless adults overcome their inhibitions and taste the joy of connecting with our youngest Friends through First Day School. Our yearly meeting has begun to season the exciting possibility of a staff position focusing on children’s ministry.

Over the past year, our hearts have been broken over escalating violence in our communities: more shootings, police brutality, misuse of

power and privilege, continued destruction of our natural environment, and all of the manifestations of insensitivity towards anyone who is not a white heterosexual American. Those of us who identify with the dominant culture confess that we have been silent or complicit on too many occasions. We acknowledge the evil in our world as we seek a more intimate connection with the Divine. The challenge is vast and our ship is so small.

One of our representatives to Friends World Committee on Consultation noted that the benefits of bridging cultures are the acceleration of spiritual growth, softening of the soul, and increased humour. We are encouraged to seek involvement with those whose experience has been different from ours. We are not different in the Light, but in what we experience from day to day.

Looking abroad, it is all too easy for us here in the United States to think that we understand people of other cultures when, in fact, our frame of reference creates an awkward lack of understanding. Our good intentions may not always be well met. At least we know that acknowledging our problem is a beginning in seeking a solution. We still believe that God’s love will triumph.

During our Annual Session, three goals long supported by our Quaker community were confirmed by the United States Supreme Court and are now embodied in the law of the land: fair housing, same-sex marriages, and affordable health care. These were cause for celebration and are additional evidence of the connection between mystic and active.

Perhaps more than anything else, we have begun to consider how we might be lit by the fire of our Quaker forebears who, enflamed with the righteous knowing of God’s love, rolled up sleeves and marched forward under the banners of our testimonies. We long for the experience Francis Howgill described, “The Kingdom of Heaven did gather us and catch us all, as in a net...” We long to get back to our mystic roots so they might lead us to action. We long to achieve something one of our members has

succinctly described: our Quaker forebears moved easily from mystic to active because mystic was active and active was mystic.

Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative)

To Friends everywhere,

“The unlocking of cosmic power and love can be accomplished if you will become utterly, completely obedient to the Light within you.”

Cecil Hinshaw

Greetings from Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative), which gathered at Scattergood Friends School on Seventh Month, 22–26, for the 138th annual session of our yearly meeting. During our week together we explored our theme, ‘Growing in the Light’, through worship, Bible study, evening programs, fellowship, service, and play.

We seek to be transformed in the Light, to be changed in our relationships, and to be startled by the miracles that surround us. Hannah Evans, a Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) program assistant, spoke about the importance of moving out of our comfort zones and seeking our challenge zones where growth occurs. Brant Rosen, head of the Chicago American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) office, spoke to the imperative of a radical inclusivity, in Israel/Palestine and elsewhere, building upon the common ground among religious traditions. Young Friends discussed gender issues and another Friend asked us to consider language that is more inclusive than the male/female gender binary to which we are accustomed.

Kevin Rutledge, Grassroots Education Coordinator of the Des Moines AFSC office, spoke to us about their ‘Governing Under the Influence’ program, which includes ‘bird-dogging’ the presidential candidates that descend on Iowa and asking questions in order to increase the scope and inclusivity of campaign dialogs. Trish and Richard Bruxvoort-Colligan

shared music with us one evening and, in a workshop, asked us to deeply consider some key moments in our lives, using those insights to deepen our relationship to God and to those around us.

Scattergood School is our experiment to manifest Love in the world. We are excited to see the increased integration of the farm and academics with a new program in which freshmen and sophomores will spend an academic quarter in project-based learning entirely on the farm in preparation for future engagement in agricultural research projects. Having enjoyed delicious meals, produced by Scattergood Farm and prepared by Scattergood students, we can attest to the tastiness of this labor. This week we discussed our relationship to the school, an extension of a year-long dialog that took place in our monthly meetings. As a yearly meeting, we are decreasing in size and have fewer families with generational ties to the school. Thus we are challenged to transform our support from an assumed to a chosen relationship with this beloved and amazing institution.

Seeking Divine guidance on how to live sustainably is an ongoing challenge. Our Junior Yearly Meeting made and sold beautiful bouquets from the Scattergood Prairie to benefit FCNL’s climate change initiatives as they discussed stewardship of the earth. Jim Kessler, of Grinnell Friends Church, gave us instructions on building native plant and pollinator gardens. We hold our annual session on this idyllic and green campus, and yet we are continually aware of the noise of I-80 just beyond the campus. This juxtaposition seems to exemplify our challenge in right living.

During our Bible study we explored the stories of how God led the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt through the wilderness to redemption and reconciliation. We were invited to share our own Exodus journeys. As God sent a pillar of Light to guide the Israelites, there is the Inward Light of Christ within each of us and the Presence in the midst that can guide us on our journey toward a Beloved Community.

We might consider, however, whether that Presence could come in a form that leads us outside our comfort zone. Is the highway noise a pillar of light that guides us to God? Might it be our relationship with the stranger, the refugee, a child, a person who desires gender-fluid pronouns, the prairie with its wild and “untidy” growth patterns, or re-evaluation of an internal life-script that fosters our growth in the Light? We must listen deeply.

In love,
Deborah Dakin, Clerk

New England Yearly Meeting (FUM/FGC)

“Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand.”

Isaac Pennington, 1667

To Friends everywhere,

New England Yearly Meeting Friends gathered for our 355th annual sessions 1–6 August 2015, at Castleton University in Castleton, Vermont, seeking ways to deepen our spiritual lives and strengthen our witness by ‘Living into Covenant Community’.

During the week, through many programs and events, we were made aware that living into covenant community means faithfully supporting one another towards a larger purpose. Covenant means confronting climate disruption, gender inequality, racial violence, and other daunting issues as full and equal partners with all people and other life communities. As indigenous peoples have been saying all along, “what we do to the web of life we do to ourselves”.

Several speakers and panellists framed many of today’s urgent peace, social, and ecological problems as violations of covenant community. “Racism drains spiritual energy” from the

community and therefore harms everyone, not only the oppressed. “We need to stand for Truth, although it may hurt at times.” Financial sustainability is part of our covenant within our yearly meeting. “We need to find a way to live within our means; we can’t keep depleting our seed corn.”

Some Friends, excited by Pope Francis’s recent encyclical calling on the world to confront human-induced climate change as a moral crisis, urged us to find ways for our own religious society’s traditionally slow decision-making process to respond to the urgency of this and other global concerns.

Our call to covenant also extends to the work of our monthly and quarterly meetings, our support for the work of the yearly meeting, and our engagement with the larger community. Our yearly meeting staff and our youth programs have been good patterns and examples: modeling inclusive and loving relationships among themselves, nurturing one another’s gifts, and caring for one another have led to the flourishing of their outward work.

Our Bible Half-Hour speaker emphasized that welcoming and healing the oppressed and the excluded of society is at the heart of our beloved community. In our covenant of unconditional love we become the integrated and balanced individuals and meetings we need to be in our work and ministry.

Our yearly meeting secretary challenged us to discern ways in which Friends must be both rooted in our traditions and adaptive to emerging needs as we strive to “make love visible and all things new”. As a great people to be gathered we need a dynamic organization that helps our work to be experienced as a joy rather than a burden. He likened our religious society’s long journey into truth to a team of mountain climbers, who require coordination, often find the going slow, and must take risks to keep moving forward. At different points on our spiritual journey, like climbers who hammer in spikes as anchors to hang onto when they slip, or return to from stuck places, we need to pause regularly to affirm the truths that find life in us.

One Friend reminded us that faithfulness is a process rather than an accomplishment—yet the faithfulness of yearly meeting committees and staff has this year brought to resolution several longstanding concerns in our yearly meeting structure and budget that had been diverting considerable time and resources from our central mission.

How can we move beyond the self-imposed boundaries that divide us? How can we eliminate artificial divisions and labels, so that we can work together to do what we know is right? This calls for a courageous humility, a quality that helps us to remain open with others without asserting that we have the final truth. Safe spaces for dialogue allow parties with competing goals and agendas to find common ground and seek the truth together.

Our hope for the work of the yearly meeting is a great hope. In humility and with divine guidance we partner with God in transforming the world.

On behalf of New England Friends,
Jacqueline Stillwell, Presiding Clerk

North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative)

Epistle to Friends everywhere,
Seventh Month 18, 2015

Dear Friends,

We gathered during Seventh Month 15–19, 2015 in sunny, humid weather on the campus of the University of North Carolina – Wilmington for our 318th annual session of North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative).

Our theme this year was ‘Living Into Our Gifts’. Our first business session opened with the reading of I Peter 3:8–11: “...have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind.” We are aware of how these and other gifts of the Spirit have nourished and fed our Yearly Meeting throughout the years. It is for us now and in the future to strive to “live into our gifts”. In our daily Bible study

we were reminded that prayer is the cornerstone for a deeper relationship with God, which is needed if we are to recognize, accept, and employ our gifts.

As always we found that our monthly meetings’ sharing of their query responses and State of the Society reports gave us a richer sense of connection with one another. Friends spoke of a deepening of their worship creating fertile ground for the exercise of the gifts of the Spirit present in each meeting community. Through the reports we heard that the Spirit has been moving in our meetings and has particularly tended to what was needed in each community.

Our Yearly Meeting has spent two years in the process of revising our Book of Discipline. This process is helping us both to articulate our current practice and to discern what we hold dear and wish to preserve about our Conservative Friends’ traditions. Prayerful discussions of draft sections among and between the Revision Committee, the monthly meetings and the Yearly Meeting have involved us in a fruitful reflection on our faith and practice. We continue this slow process in a careful and respectful way.

Visiting Friend Kathryn Damiano was invited to lead us in exploring the theme of ‘Living Into Our Gifts’. On Fifth and Sixth Day evenings she shared personal experiences of how she and others have been faithful in exercising God-given spiritual gifts. Kathryn’s deeply grounded and grounding presence led us into sharing our own experiences and into exploration of what speaks to our condition as a Yearly Meeting. She encouraged us to consider how to nurture our unique Conservative Friends’ culture of listening and to be faithful to God in everyday life. Friends named spiritual gifts that have been experienced in our monthly meetings and in our Yearly Meeting. Trust and risk were recognized as integral parts of being in community. We also recognized that trust and risk become possible only in the power of the Lord which allows us to be open and vulnerable with one another. Kathryn Damiano shared the term “to bear another’s burdens” as a way to care for each

other, all others, and for groups and institutions in suffering and turmoil. We are grateful for Kathryn's leadership this week as we identified some of those gifts into which our Yearly Meeting is being called to live.

Lyn and Steve Newsom shared information about the work of Quaker House of Fayetteville, North Carolina, in dealing with the "moral injury" experiences of military people. We continued our letter writing to prisoners near and far. We seek to hold in prayer the burdens of all at home and abroad who struggle with fear, violence, and the abuse of power.

Our children and youth group enjoyed making new Friends and renewing acquaintances with one another. Our dedicated adult workers accompanied them in enriching activities which opened the opportunity for new experiences. They had excursions to the beach, a turtle hospital, and the 1859 Bellamy Mansion, which is unique in having urban slave quarters. They joined the adults for a morning Bible study of I Samuel 3 and made audio recordings of adult Friends who answered questions about their experiences of living into their gifts. Saturday evening was an intergenerational celebration of our testimonies of integrity, community, equality, simplicity, and peace. In our shared activities we affirmed that the Spirit is in each of us and spiritual gifts flow from the Spirit as we wait, as we listen, and as we follow the Spirit leading us.

We leave our Yearly Meeting with gratitude for the love and unity we share, and with prayers for the faith and courage which will enable us to "live into our gifts".

On behalf of the yearly meeting,
Nancy Craft, Clerk

Northern Yearly Meeting (FGC)

Greetings to Friends everywhere from the 2015 annual sessions of Northern Yearly Meeting at Lions Camp, Rosholt, Wisconsin, USA, where 312 Friends gathered in late May.

This is the 40th year for Northern Yearly Meeting (NYM). Thirty monthly meetings and worship groups were represented. We enjoyed the sun, as well as the rain, in our land which had been too dry to permit campfires. Shared laughter, dancing, music, games and prayer fed our spirits and helped us to face the theme of our sessions: 'Climate Change: Turning Awareness Into Action'.

For many years we have worried about the impact of global warming on our Earth. This year we organized our annual session to focus on this grave reality. In our meetings for business, and in our plenary session, workshops, interest groups, children's programs and informal conversations we learned more, met in our shared pain, and continued to plan and to act.

Our plenary speaker, Howard Vogel, held up two different ways of understanding our relationship with the Earth. One, inherited from the European tradition, assumes that land is owned by humans, and is "other". In contrast, the Native American Dakota tradition assumes that the Earth is part of our family, and in fact the word for Earth and mother are the same. As we considered the implications of each way of connecting with Earth, we were encouraged to wait on Spirit and then let our lives speak, as patterns and examples.

The urgency of climate disruption made it a struggle to balance the importance of waiting for spirit with our eagerness to respond to pressing needs. We know that climate change is not just "coming"; it is here. And we know it will worsen, even if we are able to make profound change now. Quakers prefer slow deliberative processes, but with this present crisis we chose to at times "take steps, even if they are not perfect". Some of the small and larger actions we took included:

- seeking ways to carpool, recycle, compost and save energy where possible
- attending workshops, six of seven of which specifically addressed climate disruption
- deciding to move NYM savings into investments that don't support fossil-fuel extraction

- endorsing the shared statement by Quaker groups, 'Facing the Challenge of Climate Change'.

In the midst of these actions we honored community members who have died during the last year.

We celebrated the 89 children and teens as they exuberantly reported on their climate change-related activities this weekend. We were inspired by the work of our national Quaker organizations in the wider world. We are gearing up to host the annual gathering of Friends General Conference in 2016 in Minnesota.

Last year we were nearing completion of our first book of Faith and Practice. This year we are preparing to publish. An accomplishment that happened at our beloved 'Quaker speed' was the approval of the final chapter on the testimony of equality. More than one hundred people participated in writing this chapter over seven years. The chapter calls upon each of us to recognize that of the Divine in all people, and in all creation. It affirms our knowledge of continuing revelation and the appropriate urgency we feel to do what we can to preserve the divine Earth we are part of. We must bring our whole hearts and minds and spirits to this work, feeling the grief and agony that facing this calls up in us. Experientially, we find that sharing our grief brings us into communion and gives us strength to continue. In worship we found ourselves called as a community to "Stand up, shine out, invite in" as our world continues its relationship with us.

Asia – West Pacific

Australia Yearly Meeting

Epistle from Yearly Meeting 2015,
Queen's College, University of
Melbourne, Melbourne, 3–10 January
2015

To dear Friends everywhere,

'Life in the Light', our Summer School theme, means listening and acting in the breadth of our concerns. Building a gracious and resilient Quaker community that is inclusive and respectful of all its diversities holds us true to processes both new and historic. Life in the Light means looking imaginatively beyond our comfort zone.

To the Boonwurrung people of 1827 white people were visitors who didn't go away. In 2015 Quakers were welcomed to the country with the hope of a peaceful future. The First Nations People tell us to listen respectfully, to build long-term relationships, to talk softly and listen well. We continue to look for new ways to internalise this advice, to look for God in everything.

The brighter the light, the deeper the shadows.

Australian Quakers try to resist labels, divisions around belief and cultural practices. We are confronted by issues such as individualism, extreme political philosophies, environmental desecration, and unscrupulous investment. Living in the Light means taking on the darkneses of capitalism, war, climate change, isolation and racism. It means engaging with champions who have paved paths; we cut our

own new tracks and prepare for new light from those who may have been 'the Other'.

In 1697 William Penn underscored our interconnectedness with all living beings around the world. We consider deeply ways to live sustainably, to share this information across our wide brown land and care for our environment with small wins and great efforts to still be made. We add Earthcare to our testimonies. Are we unstoppably moved towards caring for our planet?

We contemplate ways to make sustainable our peace testimony work, recognising this is one of our core beliefs, requiring new funding models to put our faith into action. Are we content to mainly support smaller individual projects or will new decision-making processes allow us to develop a stronger corporate witness? The Backhouse Lecture 'This We Can Do: Quaker faith in action through the Alternatives to Violence Project' reminds us of our leadings towards peacemaking amongst Friends, First Nations People, refugees, prisoners and students.

We are juggling and struggling with the challenges of faith in action and the processes we use, encompassing dispersed and isolated Friends as well as being tender to our youth and their needs. How can we extend our corporate witness to these Friends, those in Asia West Pacific and the wider world of Friends?

Introducing an elders role formally into Yearly Meeting sessions is grounding us in worshipful discernment. Will the trial of the new Yearly Meeting timing and exploring more equitable

processes of distributed decision-making allow us to reaffirm our commitment to Quaker faith and practice? How do we live in community, building our relationships and growing the Truth in our meetings?

Will use of technology allow us to be more inclusive?

Are we developing creative ways to nurture ourselves?

In what ways do we offer the testimonies beyond our Society?

What is the religious health of our meetings?

The answers to these questions must flow from our gratitude for the Light as we grow in Grace.

Julian Robertson, Presiding Clerk

2013 Japan Yearly Meeting Epistle

Dear Friends around the world,

The 2013 Annual Gathering of Japan Yearly Meeting was held 16–17 November at Tokyo Monthly Meetinghouse. Our theme this year was ‘Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you’ (John 14:27).

The topic of our first discussion was ‘Quaker Mysticism’. Our first speaker was Yukari Yamada. She spoke about the understanding of Quaker mysticism, which she gained from translating *Friend of Life* by Elizabeth Gray Vining. She also talked about her path as a Quaker for the past two and a half years since she became a member. She said her curiosity about why Quakerism has survived for four centuries despite its lack of doctrine or formality led her to an understanding of the meaning of its existence. Each participant exhibited an empathetic response, and the room was filled with a reflective spirit.

The topic of our second discussion was ‘To Connect the World as a Friend of the World’. Three speakers shared their experiences interacting with Friends overseas. The

importance of deepening connections through repeated contact was emphasized, together with the significance of spending time together on activities such as sharing meals.

Despite the concern about decreasing membership, joy was also expressed at the strengthening of connections between Monthly Meetings thanks to the activities of Middle Friends, and at the continuation of retreats for Young Friends. At the Yearly Meeting retreat, time was devoted to discussion of the use of Friends Center for Quaker activities.

In the Meeting for Business, a new budget brought forth by the special committee to monitor financial issues was approved. We also welcomed six new executive members. We were also moved by a sense of urgency to release a statement of opposition to the proposed state secrets protection bill, resulting in the attached declaration.

The annual Nitobe Memorial Lecture was delivered by Ken Nunokawa, whose theme was ‘My Life as a Friend’. Reflecting on his life in the difficult times of wartime and post-war Japan, he spoke of the love he received in direct encounters with friends all over the world. We were especially moved and warmed to hear him say, “I am grateful that I have begun to feel proud of being a Quaker”. He concluded by quoting, “For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving” (1 Timothy 4:4) and “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12).

Takeshi Isaka, Clerk
Japan Yearly Meeting

2014 Japan Yearly Meeting Epistle

To Friends everywhere,

Japan Yearly Meeting was held at Tokyo Friends Meeting House on 15–16, 11th Month, 2014, where 53 members attended. The theme of

this year's Yearly Meeting was 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God' (Matthew 5:9). We welcomed Asia West Pacific Section (AWPS) Executive Secretary Ronis Chapman and her partner, former AWPS Executive Secretary, Valerie Joy from Australia. We were joyful in worship and feeling "we are part of the family of Friends".

In the first discussion, three Friends shared their experiences on "Faith and Practice". A Friend shared his 35 years of volunteering as a correctional officer, another Friend shared her experience in volunteering for a suicide prevention hotline, and another Friend spoke of raising a cerebrally challenged child. All their work was supported by Bible passages, which we were all inspired as how we live as Friends.

In the second discussion, the theme was 'to achieve peace', where a Friend shared her encounters with people overseas, which has led to mutual understanding, and the connection forged became a major step towards achieving peace. Another Friend shared the details of setting up a peace museum, Yokaren Peace Memorial Museum, for young soldier trainees, "Yokaren", who faced rigorous training only to be sent out to die during the Second World War. The purpose of establishing the peace museum was to accurately record and pass on the historical facts to those who don't have first-hand experience of the war, and we hope the exhibits and events will help in learning about peace

We as Friends are facing the critical issues of repeating history by the current administration in the interpretation of Article 9 and the Secrecy Law coming into effect. We hope each one of us will act responsibly based on love and tolerance.

Reports on activities and financial reports of 2013 as well as the budget and activity plans were presented and approved.

In the committee reports, we heard Young Friends' activities and Middle Friends' retreats act as networking among Friends while nurturing future generations of Friends.

Establishing a special committee for the Friends Center was suggested. After discussion, we

agreed to continue further discussion.

The theme of the Nitobe Memorial Lecture was 'Justly Fear' and was given by Kazuma Momoi, a photographer. While showing us the beautiful scenes from around the globe he talked about the importance of controlling desires which cause conflicts in the world.

16th of 11th Month, 2014

Takeshi Isaka, Clerk
Japan Yearly Meeting

Testimonies

Introduction

Testimonies to the Grace of God in lives – an enduring presence

The advice in the current *Quaker faith & practice* at paragraph 4.27 that “a testimony should not be a formal obituary or eulogy, but should record in thankfulness the power of divine grace in human life” is not always easy to carry through.

The following paragraph, 4.28, a minute from the then Hertford Monthly Meeting* of 1780, records “the purpose of a testimony concerning our deceased worthy Friends [is] intended as a memorial, that they have walked as children of the Light, and of the Day, and to excite those who remain to take diligent heed, and to yield to the teachings of the still small voice, that they may follow them as they followed Christ, the great captain of their salvation”. Much of this expresses Friends’ interest in the writing of testimonies today, but how is it carried out?

Historically in Britain the issue of records concerning deceased Friends in the ministry began in the 17th century. “An early record maintained by London YM is now lost but a series of volumes begun in 1740 were maintained until 1872 with retrospective entries copied up from 1719. These volumes are known as ‘Testimonies concerning ministers deceased’. From the 19th century [they] contain minutes from quarterly meetings recording the lives of Friends rather than ministers. From 1861 quarterly meetings were at liberty to prepare a testimony concerning any Friend “whose life was

marked by conspicuous service to God and the church” (text typed up in Friends House library subject files c.1970).

An early American testimony written around 1690 advises “it is a justice due to the righteous, and a duty upon us, to contribute something to perpetuate the names of such who have left a fragranciness behind them, and through faith have obtained a good report” (Samuel Jennings’s testimony concerning John Eckley of Philadelphia).

Coming forward to the 20th century, London Yearly Meeting *Church government* of 1931, in use for more than three decades, stated “A Monthly Meeting may issue a testimony concerning the life and service of a deceased member whose life has been marked by devotion to the cause of his Lord and to the service of the Church. The object of such a Testimony is not eulogy, but to preserve a record of Divine Grace in the lives of (wo)men.” This last sentence bears a close similarity to para 4.27 in the current *Quaker faith & practice*. The text goes on to refer to progression of a testimony to Yearly Meeting “only if it is likely to be of service to the Society”. This is in line with our current practice.

In today’s fast-moving world Friends face a double challenge: to concentrate on the Divine and to write a short but rounded record. The first is not easy as it necessarily relates to our temporal experience; the second is increasingly important if posterity is to hold learning from an inspiring text in an age of complexities, speed and an increasing multiplicity of knowledge and communication. Friends can be long-winded.

This puts some off from joining in our business meetings for worship.

A testimony should radiate the Grace of God as shown in the life of the Friend who has passed from this world. It differs from an obituary account of achievements, yet a few milestones in the life of the deceased will serve to illuminate the spiritual gifts bestowed.

Date of birth, date(s) of marriage(s), and date of death describe the setting of time. This is a necessary aid to living Friends. It is also a recognition of the times in which the life is set for posterity, where future Friends can relate the spiritual gifts received to the cultural context of the era. Reference to immediate antecedents can anchor the recall of a name for more distant Friends. Reference to children can demonstrate the enrichment of life.

Recognition of a spiritually lived life and its application characterises the preparation of a testimony. Worship through quiet waiting upon God prayerfully alone or where two or three are gathered together in meeting is the hallmark of a Quaker. This does not deny the devotional or biblical emphases in other traditions. As seekers after Truth, Friends should be open to new learning as God's revelation continues in the world.

It is against this background that the application of talents, whether within the life of the Society or in witness in the wider world, are described. There is a temptation to link these to a career pattern or an extended voluntary body commitment, and hence border on an obituary. Rather, it is the spiritually inspired application of the talent for good that matters. Examples of the flowering of each talent in the life pattern of the departed Friend can then be quoted. If carefully knit together these convey an image of the whole.

Writing a testimony to the life of a departed Friend may not be easy. How far do we understand the familial and cultural background, the stresses and successes in that life? Did the light shine forth in life? Where we see glimpses of the inner spiritual life, how do these reflect in outward activity?

Were outward concerns truly a reflection of inward Grace? How does economic comfort sit easily with God's Will? Then we come back to what to include, what to leave out and how to outwardly reflect a spiritually inspired life to future generations.

Not far distant may be the expectations of relatives of the deceased. When a close relative died I had anticipated a prepared obituary in *The Friend* but instead I read a note from one who had only known her in her last years. I know a Friend now who feels hurt that no testimony was written around her partner who died some years ago. On another occasion a Friend who was to die shortly afterwards made plain that he did not want a testimony written to his life. It is difficult to know the aspirations of family members, and particularly so when anxiety and grief intrude. With a little passage of time, such aspirations, if known, should not cloud the consideration within monthly meeting of how appropriately to remember a Friend. Such an interlude of perhaps a few months may help the meeting also in its discernment as to whether to prepare a testimony to the Grace of God in a life. It is the Light shining in life that matters.

That meetings might hold a short record of the lives of members is commendable. That these should be developed into testimonies is not necessarily the right use of time for the living. It is difficult to distinguish between the Martha and the Mary, and neither should we judge. Meetings need prayerful thought before committing the strengths of a life to a Quaker testimony.

John Melling, Assistant Clerk to General Meeting for Scotland

As endorsed by General Meeting for Scotland by its minute 15 of 11 September 2004.

Approved by Meeting for Sufferings by minute 6 of 2 December 2006.

*Monthly meetings are now known as area meetings.

Bernard Sidney Alloway

7 x 1928 – 8 ii 2014

Bernard was a universally loved friend who will be remembered for many things – kindness, graciousness, wisdom, thoughtful ministry in meeting for worship, sense of humour, a restless, enquiring mind, passion for Quaker history (particularly local), love of gardening and his allotment friends, support of small Quaker meetings, listening and discussing, companionship on walks, over the years holding many Quaker offices including Clerk of Preparative Meeting and Monthly Meeting (as they used to be), preparing and emceeding the Saturday evening entertainment on the Glenthorne weekends, participating in Huddersfield Meeting's Spring Festival – the list is endless.

He was born on 7 October 1928 in Brentford, West London, a small and sickly baby. His grandmother looked at him, shook her head and said to his mother, "you will never raise him". But Bernard was made of tougher stuff and he grew into a lively boy.

In 1939 Bernard and his sister were evacuated to Reading, but after a few months the family found it so difficult to be apart the children returned to the family home in Greenford, even though this meant that they would all be in London during the Blitz. One terrible day the family was caught in the bombing and was unable to reach a shelter. Sidney Alloway shielded his wife and children with his arms and body and prayed aloud that they be saved. And they were.

In 1944 Sidney died of cancer, leaving Bernard to become 'head of the household' at the age of just 15. The family were already very involved with the local Anglican Church and the vicar helped them through this difficult time, even funding Bernard's apprenticeship as a joiner. This became the foundation of Bernard's love of practical jobs and working with his hands that he kept throughout his life. His time in the church choir also furnished him with happy

nostalgic memories in later life, remembering many of the hymns he used to sing.

During Bernard's twenties there were many jobs, many vehicles and many girlfriends. He joined the Young Communist Party and visited Soviet Russia. In 1960 he was working at Slough Technical College when a new teacher, the Reverend George Hemming, joined the faculty. The pair decided to take a group of students to Switzerland for a summer trip and planned that everyone would meet on Victoria station. On 14 July Bernard strode along the platform to catch the continental train, swinging a bag, and wearing a truly dreadful blue suit. And then he first set eyes on the girl who was to become the love of his life, the Reverend Hemming's daughter, Janice. They courted for four years while Janice trained to be a teacher in Bangor, Wales, and Bernard was appointed to be a staff member at the Teacher Training College within Huddersfield Polytechnic. He bought the house in Haigh House Hill, complete with 14 sheds, and in 1964 he brought his bride home.

Then followed the births of daughters Cornelia and Katrina. Bernard loved being a father, described by Katrina as being "caring and fun". During this time he became interested in the burgeoning field of Educational Technology, eventually becoming a Fellow of the Council of Educational Technology. He travelled the country and even made two visits to Iraq demonstrating these new ideas which are benefiting those involved in education today.

In 1970 Bernard and Janice made their first trip to Paddock Quaker meeting in Huddersfield, where they found their spiritual home. Although Bernard always questioned any doctrine, leaving few stones unturned, and perhaps was never able to fully discard the ideas of the Anglican Church of his boyhood, he was, nevertheless, a true Quaker to his very core. He was for some years a member of Sea of Faith and a great admirer of Don Cupitt and his approach to theology. He never stopped exploring – he was always a seeker.

In 1982 Bernard was fortunate to be offered early retirement at the age of just 53. This gave him the freedom to devote his life to the

things he truly believed in. He became even more deeply involved with Quakers, taking up a number of posts and travelling to many meetings in Yorkshire and Lancashire, enjoying particularly supporting the smaller and perhaps struggling meetings, taking part in and leading study groups, and joining in walks.

He also took an allotment in Elland and grew a wide array of vegetables, fruit and flowers. Over the 24 years he tended his plot he greatly valued the companionship and friendships that he made with the other plotters.

He became a grandfather to Findlay and Ruairidh and rediscovered the boyish games and jokes of his own childhood. And new games like skateboarding, with predictable results.

In 2004 Bernard and Janice celebrated their ruby wedding anniversary in Swaledale with their extended family. They had spent many family holidays there over the years and Bernard really appreciated the beauty of the area.

For six months Bernard suffered from depression, which also undermined his physical health. He was admitted to Dewsbury Hospital, where he spent ten difficult weeks. Over this time he came to terms with his mental condition, though it had left him physically weakened, but happily he was able to come home. The last three weeks of his life were spent in his home at Haigh House Hill with Janice. He made phone calls and received visits from friends and family and enjoyed their company. His last day was spent with wife Janice, daughter Cornelia and her partner John. He was at peace with the world and he died a peaceful death, which befits a man of peace.

Huddersfield Friends miss enormously his warm, welcoming smile, his friendly approach, and his quiet, wise ministry from his seat on the back bench.

Signed in and on behalf of Brighouse West
Yorkshire Area Meeting
held at Bradford on 8 March 2015
Hazel Bone, Co-Clerk

Catherine King Ambler

8 iii 1949 – 17 ix 2014

One of Catherine's earliest memories was of sitting in silence in meeting for worship. It was in Glasgow, 1953, and she was four years old. She remembered it as a time of peace and joy. The following year her family moved to Wigton in Cumberland, when her father, Jo Joachim, became a teacher at the Friends' School there. She continued to attend meeting until her late teens. Indeed, she attended international Quaker work camps, which she greatly enjoyed. Something of her vitality was already evident then. One Friend who knew her at that time has written, "She burst into our lives – full of verve and zest for life. My memories are of huge amounts of laughter and mirth." She carried those values of friendship, fun and social concern into her life at university, but with new experiences there she began to perceive the Quakers more negatively, as well-meaning but socially ineffective. Her concern to make a real difference, especially in the lives of poor and vulnerable people, led her into social work.

Her first job, in the early 1970s, was with the Family Service Unit, which gave her much inspiration for her later career. The Unit placed great confidence in people to improve their own lives, however disabled they may be, but it required those who worked with them to understand their situation, to work with the family and the community in which they lived and to stay with them until their problems were resolved. Catherine held to this vision, even when Social Services moved away from it towards more short-term goals and a more 'mechanistic' understanding of society. This eventually led to a crisis for Catherine when, as a senior social worker in Bolton, she found herself compromised by the organization in which she worked.

At the same time, in the 1990s, her marriage came to an end, and she was left with two teenage girls, Rachel and Eleanor, to care for and support. She could no longer rely on her ideals, she said, nor the practical strategies she

had learnt to realise them, needing rather to be nourished, emotionally and spiritually. She then recalled her experience as a child and began cautiously to attend meeting again – this time in Eccles, Manchester. Would she rediscover the peace and joy she had known as a child? Not immediately, though she found there good companionship in her spiritual quest. In 2003, however, she was asked by her meeting to organise an ‘Experiment with Light’ weekend with Rex Ambler. This is a deep meditative practice in a supportive group context, drawn from the experience of the very first Friends. Catherine wrote about that weekend later in an article entitled, ‘What is Experiment with Light?’ [Universalist, no. 91, Feb 2011, p. 7]:

“I confess I hadn’t a clue what was going on, I didn’t understand it, and much of what Rex talked about early Friends was new to me. But I emerged from that first meditation with the most wonderful sense of release and joy. I just wanted to stand on my head – which is what I did – very quietly when no one was looking, at the bottom of the garden, for the first time in several decades. I had no idea why, but I felt I understood something somewhere deep inside me, which I had once known, but which somewhere along the way I had lost, and now had found again.”

In ‘Experiment with Light’ she had found a practice which would enable her to discover, and to keep in touch with, that deep self and inner strength. She saw the practice as enabling people to see their lives more clearly, helping them “to live more fully and more truly who they really are, giving a sense of wholeness” [p. 4].

That journey to ‘wholeness’ was how Catherine often liked to describe her life. “I suppose this is what I am trying to do,” she wrote in later years about a forthcoming retreat, “to learn to listen better within, in order to feel renewed, more whole, more integrated, and carry that with me better as I re-emerge into The World, and begin the next stage of my journey.”

It was not to be a smooth journey, however. She felt sometimes ‘unwhole’, when there was little sense of harmony, and when her needs and

desires pulled in opposite directions. A desire to prove herself, for example, might smother a feeling for others whilst a desire to help others might push her beyond her own limits and she would become exhausted. She called these her ‘demons,’ and much of her spiritual practice in the next few years was aimed at overcoming them. She wrote about one meditation with her ‘Experiment with Light’ group in Manchester:

“At the time I was very busy, stressed, trying to cram in too much, pulled every which way, and couldn’t sort out my priorities at all. I found my mind was running in all directions during the meditation. I was worrying about ‘getting this done,’ when I needed to ‘do that,’ and so forth. Suddenly I had the image of an automaton in the form of a huge Armed Woman. She appeared to be sixty or seventy times the size of the world, and was walking towards me relentlessly, walking all over everything, squashing life, destroying people.... I realised that she was me – I was that Armed Woman – she was in me, driving me into destruction, with or without my consent.”

“I was horrified, terrified and appalled, and as I shared the image with my group, wept uncontrollably. But as I acknowledged the image, and its power, I also became aware of it shrinking, like Mrs Pepperpot, or the woman who lived in a vinegar bottle. Suddenly this Armed Woman was cut down to size.”

As she developed her inward spiritual practice, it also became clear to Catherine that a necessary part of it was silence, the letting go of words and ideas especially. She wanted to know why. Whilst the Experiment was one way into this, she also explored others, determined to find for herself what was valid and not valid. She undertook the two-year ‘Equipping for Ministry’ course at Woodbrooke from 2007 and made ‘silence’ the theme of her special project. Catherine was usually reticent about using the language of ‘God’, feeling that to do so might take away something of the mystery. During her ‘Equipping for Ministry’ experience, however, she became more comfortable with doing so, provided she was confident that others would understand her.

She wrote that she hoped her special project would “help to create the space to explore further my experience of silence and to access and deepen my relationship with God”, believing that, “If I listen and maintain awareness, I will be led to follow God’s will, not mine”. The project bore much fruit, leading Catherine to conclude that “to be effective in the world, I need the regular practice of silent waiting, supplemented with periods of silent retreat, to keep me grounded and prompt all my actions to come from the spirit, i.e. the practice of the presence of God”. She carried away from the project “a deep sense of the re-assuring presence of God, both as the still centre of my being and in connection with all around, visible and invisible”.

At her tutor’s suggestion she joined the local Julians, an ecumenical group that was exploring the Christian tradition of contemplative prayer. She also had an interest in spiritual healing, which can be traced back to her mother Bernice, and from this Catherine took an active role in the Yealand Prayer Group for Healing and Wholeness, which is affiliated to the Friends Fellowship of Healing. She meditated every morning for 40 minutes or so, drawing on these various disciplines. One thing she learned from these explorations is that sharing with others the experience that she had gained in the silence was as important as the experience itself.

Catherine was naturally gregarious, with an abundance of friends at home and across the world. During a visit to the Australian outback, for example, she astonished her host by asking the village shopkeeper for 90 international postage stamps. So, for a woman as active and sociable as Catherine, sitting in silence was not an easy discipline. But it obviously made a difference at significant stages of her life. She became clear and confident enough in herself, for example, to resign from her high-pressure job in 2006, and to do so without resentment or fear. Also, against all expectation and despite her sense of having ‘failed’ as a wife before, she got married again – this time to Rex – in 2005, moving with him to Silverdale near the Lake District to start a new life. There were inevitable

stresses with all this change, but she lived through them with a confidence and grace that impressed her friends. “I am... absolutely where I should be,” she could write, in an ‘Equipping for Ministry’ report in 2007, “and doing what I should be for now.”

The life she had found within her now came to expression in numerous ways, especially in her relationships. She had always been compassionate and interested in people, with an ability to understand the complex situations that people get into, but there was now something new. She was able to give more of herself to others and to bring more insight into what moved or troubled them. Many have spoken of how she made them feel that they were the only person in the world who mattered, that she was fully focused on them and obviously able to understand and advise them. One friend wrote of her “quality of absolute attention every time one talked”, another of her “ability to help us see ourselves as we really are”, and another described her as “an inspiration – she always had the words to convey her understanding of situations”. Catherine would often follow those words of understanding with some practical support, which again made people feel cared for and special. “One of life’s enhancers,” said one Friend, “radiating generosity, curiosity, kindness and a wonderful sense of humour.”

These qualities were apparent also in the more public roles she now assumed. Her gifts and talents were recognised at Yealand Meeting, to where she and Rex had moved their membership. She was appointed clerk, steering the meeting through some difficult decisions and potential conflicts. She did so with a firm hand sometimes, but always tactfully, in such a way as to draw everyone in and even, for some, to make the experience enjoyable. She worked as Yealand representative on Area Meeting Trustees. As a member of Yealand’s Children and Young People’s Committee she helped to re-establish and sustain a Children and Young People’s meeting. Catherine, indeed, had a natural affinity with children, no more so than with her grandchildren who brought her great joy. Every month, for example, she travelled to Edinburgh

and Manchester to be with her daughters and to look after the grandchildren.

She gave increasing attention in her last ten years to developing 'Experiment with Light'. She corresponded with individuals and groups that were experiencing difficulty, for example. She helped organise training weekends for new Experiment facilitators. She clerked the group that organised the first International Light Gathering at Woodbrooke in 2013, a substantial piece of work that brought together 72 Friends from 12 different countries to share their experience of the practice. She felt particularly drawn to Friends living abroad in situations of oppression, conflict or scarcity. With the support of their meeting, she and Rex travelled in the ministry to a number of countries. They visited Southern Africa in 2007 and 2009, Palestine in 2008, Ireland and the Czech Republic – a gathering of Central European Friends – in 2013.

On one of her trips to Africa she became interested in a political situation that was causing some distress and anxiety. A group of Friends at the yearly meeting was troubled by the recent mass migration from Zimbabwe and the impact it was having on neighbouring countries. This was an international crisis, with conflicting national interests, and Friends were at a loss for what to do with it. They were even disagreeing, painfully, among themselves. They asked Catherine if the Experiment might help. She thought about it. The Experiment was designed initially to enable people to understand themselves, and here was a situation where large global forces were at work. Yet she could see from their disagreements that some deeper insight was needed. She said, "Yes, I think it could work." She guided them through a meditation that invited them to discern, in the silence, what was really going on in their respective countries, from their own experience and especially to become aware of their own real interest and role in the situation. When Friends reported later what they had experienced in the meditation, the conflicting ideas and diverging stories had gone. What emerged in their place was an understanding that Friends on all sides of

the crisis needed one another. And they realised they could best help by communicating with one another what was happening and what precisely was needed. A scheme was created there and then to team Friends up across the border to keep in touch by email. A meeting that had begun in frowns and tears ended in joy and laughter.

In the last three years of her life Catherine had tears and sorrows of her own. Her brother died in 2011. Four good friends of hers died subsequently, all in their mid-sixties. These events affected her deeply. They shook her confidence in life and raised questions about death, including her own, for which she had no answers. She needed a deeper understanding of life that would enable her to accept this dark and difficult side which now troubled her. She often talked about it with Rex and addressed it in their morning meditations together. In one memorable ministry in meeting for worship she referred to *Advices & queries* 10, which encourages us to "find a spiritual wholeness which encompasses suffering as well as thankfulness and joy". Catherine spoke of this and of how, as *Advices & queries* 21 suggests, "in close relationships we may risk pain as well as finding joy" and thus "we may be more open to the working of the Spirit". Catherine had certainly been 'opened' by the suffering of loss. When she visited Heather, who was dying of cancer, she marvelled at her friend's calm acceptance of what was happening, and the joy she expressed in the life she still had. This experience helped Catherine to see her own death, whenever that might be, in the same light. She told Rex one morning that she had come to feel differently about death, that it no longer felt strange or threatening to her and that she now saw it as part of life. She had come to feel, she said, that life and death are two aspects of the same thing and that to accept one fully, we have to accept the other.

Those who knew Catherine recognised in her a new kind of serenity and peace. She could not have known that she herself was about to die, of a sudden and unpredictable brain haemorrhage, but she had found a way of living life that

included that possibility. She had surely found the wholeness she had been looking for.

Signed in and on behalf of Lancashire Central
& North Area Meeting
held at Yealand on 12 September 2015
Marie McCusker, Clerk

Gerard Benson

9 iv 1931 – 28 iv 2014

Remembering and reflecting on all that Gerard meant to us, and meant to the many who knew him, we have been struck by the affection and respect in which he was and is held. His gentle humour has been mentioned, and his presence, calm yet capable of lighting up a room. But time and again people's comments have told of how Gerard helped them. He was able to listen with empathy while offering a simple but helpful thought in return, and he worked at encouraging others to find their strengths; he wanted others to express and fulfil themselves and he would go the extra mile in pursuit of that aim. Through Gerard we saw many virtues.

Gerard was born in London in 1931. After the first, unhappy, eight years of his childhood, living with parents who were not his own, and then a period as a wartime evacuee in Norfolk, he went, at 13, to a progressive boarding school as a scholarship boy. The school was Rendcomb College in Gloucestershire, where he stayed until he was 18. Gerard enjoyed himself there, and it was at the college that many of the abilities and understandings he worked with throughout his life were drawn out and developed, especially his feeling for language and its expression. In later life he spoke in the warmest terms about the staff at Rendcomb. Happily for Gerard, a childhood, which for the first eight years had included regular beatings, became one where he experienced fulfilment, and where he also learned – through the school's voluntary work in the local community, through the school's involvement of pupils in its running, and from the example of teachers there – the importance of contribution.

After school days, during his late teens and twenties, Gerard moved through a range of experiences: national service, where he worked in cryptography, Exeter University, where he read English, an assortment of jobs from market research to lift operator, and some years of professional acting. The backdrop to all this was the social life of the young intellectual in bohemian fifties London; coffee bars, book shops, chess clubs in cafés. The peace witness which would be a theme of Gerard's life could be seen here too; he walked on Aldermaston anti-nuclear marches.

After a teacher training course, and after some years teaching in schools, Gerard began, at the age of 34, teaching at the Central School of Speech and Drama. He stayed there until he was 54. Woven through these middle years of his life are some of his other great involvements and contributions. With his then wife, Judith, he had his two children, Lucy and Oliver, although the marriage was to end in the seventies. It was during this time that the group of performing poets he had joined in 1960 became well known as performers and recording artists. The Barrow Poets, six poets and musicians, began by reciting poetry, their own and others', in crowded London pubs. They progressed to performances in places like London's Queen Elizabeth Hall, and performed in America. The Barrow Poets were at the forefront of a still ongoing movement, important to Gerard, that seeks to broaden poetry's appeal and make it available and accessible to all.

Throughout this time Gerard's life had many threads: his work at the Central School of Speech and Drama, his care of his two children, his poetry which he published in a number of volumes from 1971 onwards, and, from 1982 onwards, a relationship with Cathy, who he married in 1984. Another thread began in 1986 when he and two others launched 'Poems on the Underground', an enterprise which continues still and which has been emulated around the world. Agreement was reached with London Transport to place poems in carriages so that passengers could read them as they sat. Many travellers have been, and still are, entertained

and brought to reflection by their unexpected reading of poetry old and modern.

There is another strand of his life which demonstrates both Gerard's determination and the nature of some of his contribution. During his forties it became clear to Gerard that he was drinking too much. He read an article in *The Guardian* on alcoholism and he realised the article was describing him. He joined Alcoholics Anonymous in 1979 and he never drank alcohol again for the rest of his life. Importantly, during the next 35 years of sobriety until his death, he was able to assist others who came to Alcoholics Anonymous for help. There are many who speak warmly of the support Gerard offered them as they found themselves in similar circumstances.

In 1989, when Gerard was 58, he and Cathy decided to begin a new life in Bradford, Yorkshire. They found that the cottage next to Cathy's elderly father was to become vacant, and it became their new home. It was from here that Gerard and Cathy travelled, in 1994, to Grasmere, where Gerard had been invited to live during a 12-month period as poet in residence at Dove Cottage. And it was in Grasmere where, having walked past Glenthorne Quaker Guest House many times during their stay, and eventually deciding to attend a Sunday morning meeting, they had their first experience of a Quaker meeting for worship, and the beginning of another chapter in Gerard's life.

Cathy recalls how, after that first meeting, they didn't immediately share much of their experiences. This was unusual, and it became clear, when they did talk, that this had been because they were both embarrassed at the intensity of the emotions and sensations they had experienced. They both expressed feeling a deep sense of peace, of 'coming home', of a profound 'anchoring'. When they returned to Bradford they became attenders at Bradford Meeting. Three years later, in November 1997, when Gerard was 66, they became members of the Religious Society of Friends.

As well as what he gained, Gerard had much to offer the Society of Friends, both locally and nationally. In Bradford Meeting he served as

an elder, and he worked with Quaker Quest workshops both locally and in London. He was a member of Meeting for Sufferings from 2003 to 2009 and worked on many other committees such as Central Nominations Committee and Quaker Life Publications. For two years Gerard served on the Epistle Drafting Committee for Britain Yearly Meeting.

In addition to his local meeting, national committee, and workshop contribution, Gerard's witness within Quakerism took other forms. He had a gift for healing with his hands. He himself never understood the process through which he healed and he was always tentative and self-effacing on those occasions he offered himself. He continued his peace witness into his later years, joining younger Quakers protesting at the Faslane nuclear submarine base in Scotland and supporting them during the court hearings that followed. He ran writing workshops at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, at Charney Manor, at Glenthorne, and Claridge House; helping others give expression to that which moved them.

Alongside his contributions within the Quaker community Gerard continued contributing within the broader community in many other ways throughout his later years. He continued writing and publishing his work. He gave regular poetry readings and talks on poetry and writers at Bradford Central Library. He started a regular poetry group at the Bradford Mechanics Institute. He became the poet-in-residence at Ashwell Medical Centre in Bradford, the first such role in the country, and he did valuable work with patients in the practice. In 2008 Gerard became the Poet Laureate for the City of Bradford. In this position Gerard wrote poems specifically for occasions which were of importance to the city and its people. He wrote for and read at gatherings, remembering, for example, the Bradford football stadium fire and the victims of the Nazi holocaust.

It is clear to see why it was that when he found Quakerism in his sixties, it seemed to Gerard that he was 'coming home'. He found his involvement in Quakerism and the Quaker

community during the last quarter of his life immensely satisfying, but in some ways it was as if he had been 'at home' all the time. His involvement in peace activism was the same thread of witness before and after his first attendance at meeting. His support for justice, equality, and community ran throughout his life. We see his seeking after truth and integrity in a life spent exploring ways of expressing what he knew, felt, and sensed, and we see it again in the way he nurtured those abilities in many, many others, in so many ways.

Signed in and on behalf of Brighthouse West
Yorkshire Area Meeting
held at Bradford on 8 March 2015
Hazel Bone, Co-Clerk

Peris Miles Coventry

11 x 1930 – 18 ii 2010

In his life, Peris made an extraordinary impression on many people. His energy and his enthusiasms were quite infectious and they inspired others to join him in taking action in many positive ways. He was undoubtedly a mover and shaker, but in a very quiet way.

Some Friends remember him from 1956 when he joined the Friends Ambulance Unit. In 1962 he became a solicitor for Newport County Council in South Wales. Later, he moved to other local authorities and lived first in Surbiton and then in Bromley. He visited his parents regularly at their home, Bramble Bank in High Hurstwood, and moved there permanently when he retired. His father suffered from dementia and Peris cared for him devotedly and with great patience for many years. In his small village he knew almost everyone.

He was single but surrounded by loving friendships, created by his own warmth, kindness and modesty. He was also a first-class host. He expressed his love for others in his cooking and sharing of food; many Friends enjoyed suppers, teas and meetings at his home. He was a great cook; individual Friends recall

especially his delicious ginger cakes, small round nut cookies and carefully prepared vegetarian suppers. His efforts fuelled many philosophical, theological and practical discussions. His conversations were questioning, wide-ranging, sometimes critical yet at the same time, always respectful.

Peris was a very energetic and strong walker. He knew many good walks but he was not blessed with foresight as to the likely distance and time involved. A number of his friends found themselves pushed to the limit, struggling to complete them. Through his father he had links with Norway and went there for walking holidays, admiring Scandinavian culture and reading widely about it.

A passionate gardener, Peris loved plants and had an intimate knowledge of them. He inherited the garden from his parents but used his abiding love of plant life to develop it. In the natural woodland area which descended to the stream he placed a number of unusual species in a perfectly harmonious way. He was a considerable botanist, despite not being a professional. He knew the detailed classifications and could identify the genus and the individual species.

Whenever possible, Peris would take visitors round his garden, describing each individual plant. He knew the history of each one, its foibles and which insects posed a problem for it. A walk in the garden could last two hours, ending with presents of plants and cuttings. In a very real way, his enthusiasm for sharing his garden was a part of his ministry. He made every effort to keep it organic and sustainable.

Many Quakers were quite surprised by his enthusiasm for motorbikes. One said: "I remember walking towards the meeting gate and seeing a figure in black motorcycle leathers and crash-helmet dismounting from a BMW flat-twin motorcycle. Taking off his jacket and helmet he too walked toward the gate and we went into meeting together." Peris was one of the founders of the Wealden Line Campaign, which still aims to reopen the Uckfield to Lewes railway, and also of the Uckfield Music Club.

Peris, the Quaker

Quite early in his life Peris made the decision to live out a Quaker life as fully as possible. Then he spent decades as an attender, trying to make up his mind whether to become a member. He told one Friend that he did not feel good enough, which might have surprised most people who knew him. He was very well informed about Quaker procedure, and often helped to ensure that minutes were precise, but always commenting that as an attender he perhaps had no right to speak. After nearly 40 years he applied and was accepted into membership, which opened up new opportunities, including service as the monthly meeting clerk and as a member of Meeting for Sufferings.

Peris had a large collection of Quaker books, and from the 1970s onwards he organised and supported local discussion groups, which often met at his home. In particular, his reading helped the discussion group to study the Swarthmore Lectures. He was open-minded and uncritical of others, never expressing a negative opinion, although when he knew he was right, he would stick to his opinions. He had a kind of probing, exploratory, questioning style that helped bring thoughts into the light. He attended Uckfield Meeting from the 1960s when it met monthly, and later fortnightly. There were some attenders there who did not attend other meetings, showing the need for a meeting in Uckfield. Peris also attended Lewes Meeting from the 1970s and later Herstmonceux Meeting as well, so he was very well known to many local Friends.

Peris was a member of the Friends' Historical Association. He supported the local United Nations Association (UNA) group, but would not join it because the United Nations accepted the use of violence to solve problems. He was deeply interested in the Society's international work and was hoping to get more involved in this, but his health prevented this. He was a true Quaker: quiet, peaceful, full of insight, living simply and seeking the light wherever it might be found.

The end

Several people spoke of the closing days of his life. He faced death as if he were ready, with an aura about him: at the hospice he felt he was in a wonderful place where he could pass his final days with calm acceptance. He had long hoped that Uckfield would become a preparative [local] meeting, and the news that it had been accepted came through two days before he died. It was good to be able to tell him that his vision for the meeting had at last come to fruition.

Signed in and on behalf of Sussex East Area Meeting

held at Eastbourne on 8 November 2015

John Ashcroft, Clerk

John Charles Crawford

1 ii 1928 – 17 x 2013

The old age of William Penn (1644–1718):

“His memory was almost quite lost, and the use of his understanding suspended; so that he was not so conversible as formerly; and yet as near the Truth, in the love of it, as before... His mind was in an innocent state, as appeared by his very loving deportment to all that came near him: and that he still had a good sense of Truth was plain, by some very clear sentences he spoke in the Life and Power of Truth, in an evening meeting we had together there; wherein we were greatly comforted; so that I was ready to think this was a sort of sequestration of him from all the concerns of this life which so much oppressed him; not in judgement, but in mercy, that he might have rest, and not be oppressed thereby to the end.”

Thomas Story, 1714, *Quaker faith & practice* 21.62

John Crawford was a linguist, teacher, musician, father, husband, and an inspiration to those who knew him. He was a man of spiritual depth, modesty, intelligence, and had a genuine loving interest in others, described as “a Friend who

befriended all of us individually”. In some ways his spirit shone more strongly in his later years, when he was greatly incapacitated. His carers would ask “How does he put up with it? How can he be so uncomplaining and even cheerful?” Yet, he was.

Born in West Ham, London, within the sound of Bow Bells, John’s parents recognised his musical ability when he was very young, and he began violin lessons when he was seven. His love of music was a theme for his entire life. He played in the Essex Youth Orchestra while in sixth form. At Southampton University, whilst reading for his degree in French, he led the University Orchestra, was President of the Music Society, and joined the Madrigal Society. Later, when married, he always made sure there was a room big enough to host chamber music, even if, at first, there was not much else. Wherever he lived, including in France, he became part of the local amateur music scene, also taking up the viola and French horn. A Poole Friend remembered, “John was a source of encouragement to my family, especially in our musical interests. He was a great help when we were buying new instruments and also with the music itself.” John’s children remember his joy, even in the humour of the family playing tunes on glasses at the table.

A second lifetime theme was John’s interest in the French language. John was the first from his family to have a secondary education and he chose to read French at university. Of course, since he was 11 in 1939, his route through education was affected by World War II. His grammar school was bombed, and although fortunately no one was hurt, the science block was destroyed. During school, John joined the Air Training Corps, where he loved gliding and became an expert at aircraft recognition. After grammar school and the war’s end, he completed his National Service in the army, where he served in the Education Corps and taught basic literacy skills. Finally free to move on, John worked on his French degree at Southampton University, where he met Barbara Ward, whom he married in 1955. In 1985 John completed his MPhil in French, also at the University of Southampton.

The title of his paper was ‘The Memoires of Hector Berlioz – Qualities and Significance’. It combined his loves of French and music.

In 1971 John and Barbara moved with their four children from Liverpool to Poole when John was appointed French Lecturer at the Dorset Institute of Higher Education (now Bournemouth University). John had taught in a multi-lateral school, a forerunner of comprehensives, then in a grammar school, and finally at a teacher training college in Liverpool. John and Barbara also began their journey with Friends during their Liverpool period. They started at Liverpool Quaker Meeting after a long period of spiritual discernment, which started for John when he attended the Quaker wedding of Barbara’s cousin. Whilst at Liverpool Quaker Meeting, John was active with Northern Friends Peace Board, following a peace witness that had begun during his National Service. On moving to Poole in 1971, the family joined Poole Quaker Meeting; John remained a committed Friend. A Friend remembered, “John and I served together on Premises Committee and also on Elders. John would uphold those Meetings, keeping a still centre and speaking occasionally. When he did speak, it was exactly what was needed at that particular moment.”

A third life theme was John’s keen interest in education. One particular element that stands out in his career is that John played a leading role in designing and negotiating a French degree course acceptable to the National Council for Academic Awards. This enabled the Dorset Institute to begin awarding its own degrees, rather than offering external degrees.

John’s gifts and promise were marred by his diagnosis with a brain tumour in 1971. The operation to remove the tumour was successful, although it did accidentally eliminate his sense of smell. John returned to the Dorset Institute and continued teaching and contributing to the faculty until 1986, when he took early retirement.

John was never the same after his surgery. His health continued to decline, and he had ever-increasing difficulties, mostly stemming from

the brain tumour and the treatment for it. His health problems brought him near death on many occasions, but did not dampen his spirit. A fellow member of Poole's Healing Group said, "John projected his strong, clear healing energy to the group." Another said, "the weakness of his physical body did not come into it; John was an inspiration even without saying anything. His presence, his simply being there was powerful. His strong faith and conviction shone through."

Many people can testify to having been touched by the Grace of God as shown in the life of John Crawford.

Signed in and on behalf of Bournemouth
Coastal Area Meeting
held at New Milton on 21 November 2015
Tom Sanders, Clerk

Winifred Joyce Douglas

2 ii 1922 – 9 i 2015

Our friend Winifred Douglas was a member of Carlton Hill Quaker Meeting all her life, a well-loved Friend who enriched all our lives with her stories, her music and her sense of humour.

She was born on 2 February 1922 and she revelled in the symmetry of her date of birth – 2.2.'22. Her parents were Quakers by conviction, Colina and Frank Keegan. She was one of five children and very protective of her siblings. On one occasion her sister was upset when taunted about her Guide's hat and Winifred tracked down the bully and took her to task – it never happened again!

She grew up in Woodhouse and attended Quarry Mount School. At this time she also took piano lessons from a local teacher in Woodhouse, becoming a talented pianist playing both from music and by ear. When she left Quarry Mount at 14 she went to work at the CWS Boot and Shoe factory on Meanwood Road. Winifred didn't enjoy factory work and at the beginning of World War II she trained as a nurse, a job she enjoyed much more.

She worked at Meanwood Park Hospital, where she nursed casualties from the war. Although the work was hard Winifred played hard too, enjoying attending organised dances in the area and sometimes returning too late to the nursing home and having to climb in through the window because the doors were locked.

She attended Carlton Hill Meeting throughout this time, first as a member and later as a teacher at the 'Sunday School' or children's meeting. She also went as a helper to the Quaker Holiday School at Ackworth, relating with pride how everyone at the end of the week was given a beautiful box of chocolates – Rowntree's of course!

In 1950 she met and married Arthur Douglas and she had two children; Bob in 1952 and Jean in 1959. They remember her as a loving and self-sacrificing mother, always putting her children and their welfare first. As well as attending Carlton Hill she also enjoyed Tuesday afternoons at the Methodist church in Woodhouse, where she played the piano for the hymns.

Arthur died on New Year's Day 1996 and Winifred was left a widow. Then in 2005 she suffered a heart attack. Thanks to Bob's quick action and Winifred's fighting spirit she recovered despite contracting a super bug in hospital during her rehabilitation. Thereafter she split her time between Bob in Woodhouse, and Jean and her family.

Winnie had a simple and direct spirituality, occasionally ministering in the words of a well-loved poem or her favourite hymn by John Greenleaf Whittier, *Dear Lord and Father of Mankind*. Yet she also had a real zest for life and enjoyed all of Carlton Hill's social activities, from Christmas parties to weekends at Glenthorne. Throughout her life Winifred had a way of engaging with all those she met, young and old. Always beautifully turned-out, she will be remembered for her cheery and positive approach to life.

Signed in and on behalf of Leeds Area
Meeting
held at Ilkley on 10 May 2015
Veronica O'Mara, Clerk

George Farebrother

8 xii 1937 – 5 ii 2015

George was born in Streatham, London, and lived in Mitcham. He reached the sixth form at the age of fifteen, but did not feel ready for further academic study, so he started work. After taking a correspondence course he spent a year in a London polytechnic gaining a State Scholarship for a Bachelor of Arts (BA) general degree course at Leeds University in 1957, and he graduated in 1960 with a degree in History and Philosophy. While studying he met Jean Rudd, and they married in 1961. At the time they were both confirmed Anglicans.

He began work as a teacher and later completed a Post Graduate course in Education, eventually becoming Head of History at Hailsham in 1971. He joined the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and found himself working hard campaigning with the local group, nuclear weapons disarmament becoming a cause dear to his heart. He took early retirement in 1990 in order to devote more time to this. In 1987 George and Jean became Quakers as they had deeply-held religious beliefs about peace and the absence of war being the only way forward to a better world.

He joined in the World Court Project, which was aiming to take the case for the illegality of nuclear weapons to the World Court in The Hague. This took over his life completely as he worked with zeal and enthusiasm. Applying his Quaker beliefs and teaching experience, he came up with the idea of collecting individual “declarations of public conscience” against nuclear weapons, which were accepted by the International Court of Justice as “citizens’ evidence”. This characteristically inventive concept was taken up all over the world, especially in Japan, and George helped present nearly four million declarations to the Court before its historic judgment in 1996, which declared nuclear weapons to be generally illegal.

This gave him further work as World Court Project UK adjusted its focus to campaigning to help persuade the United Kingdom Government

to comply with the Court’s Advisory Opinion, and raise awareness about the issue among British legislators, military, media and the public. He never gave up trying to engage with decision-makers and their advisers, and became a familiar figure in the corridors of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Ministry of Defence, parliament and London embassies.

His cogent writing, networking flair and grassroots appeal brought in enough funds to allow him to travel to key United Nations events in New York and Geneva, constantly devising fresh ways of using the law to mobilise against nuclear weapons. He became adept at producing computerised publicity material, set up stalls, got further signatures to petitions and wrote many letters speaking truth to power. He realised that a change in mentality was as necessary as the legal regulation, and used his skills as a speaker and a wry sense of humour to get his message across.

When he was invited to speak at a monthly meeting study day, Friends who had been expecting to hear about the current situation were surprised when he showed slides from the Bayeux Tapestry and the Domesday Book. His careful analysis revealed that the impact of war has not changed; the heaviest burden always falls on the civilian population, and it is least prominent in the published histories.

He was always aware of the suffering involved in all wars and worked with people from around the world to raise public awareness by holding colourful and innovative demonstrations. These ranged from Hiroshima and Nagasaki Day vigils held locally in Hailsham and Eastbourne to the Flame of Hope March, which culminated in lobbying in the corridors of power of the United Nations in New York.

George was the Secretary of the World Court Project and the Sussex Peace Alliance and Director of Peace Rights. He served Quakers as a member of the Finance and Property Committee and spent much time helping to sort out maintenance problems of the Herstmonceux properties. He was Treasurer of Herstmonceux Meeting and the eccentricities of his accounting spread sheets were legendary.

George supported his wife Jean in her role as Clerk to Herstmonceux Meeting, and they shared the role of Custodian of Records from 2000 to 2005. He served his preparative and monthly meetings in many other ways, often with Jean's help. His ministry will be missed by Sussex East Friends.

Signed in and on behalf of Sussex East Area Meeting
held at Eastbourne on 8 November 2015
John Ashcroft, Clerk

Margaret (Maggie) Glover

1935–2015

Maggie Glover was born Margaret McKechnie, in London, in 1935. She was evacuated to grandparents in High Wycombe in 1939, so in her early memories, war and bombing were “normal”. She remembered praying “silently, fervently and often” during the war years, and came to believe that she had a guardian angel. Her parents were not churchgoers but when she was 14 she was taken by a favourite art teacher to a Methodist youth club, which she loved! She became a Methodist and worshipped regularly there until her mid-twenties.

Maggie had a gift for getting a likeness of people, and went to study Fine Art at Reading University, where she met Richard Glover, whom she married three weeks after graduation. She continued with her art, painting “honest portraits” (rather than flattering ones), taught at the Workers Educational Association (WEA) and other art courses and was active in the Labour Party as much as looking after her three sons and house moves allowed.

Political from an early age, partly through the influence of her radical, “red Clydesider” father, Maggie joined the Lancaster Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) at its first meeting. A CND friend invited her to her first Quaker meeting, and she joined protests and worship at Greenham Common and Molesworth. She offered to paint Fenner

Brockway to raise funds for CND and went on to portray Philip Noel Baker too; the two peers had recently founded the World Disarmament Campaign (WDC).

Maggie moved to Marlow in 1981, where her peace work continued. She travelled widely abroad during this period, initially as aide to Fenner Brockway, then in her own right. She also became Brockway's part-time parliamentary researcher, and helped with his autobiography. Wherever she travelled she tried to sketch as well as take notes, and in this way she portrayed many remarkable people and events in the peace movement. Fenner Brockway said that she had done more than anyone to further the WDC's international objectives. Her willingness to look at the truth of a situation, her gift of connecting with people from any background, and intuitive empathy with others, her kindness and strong sense of trust, and her deep commitment to peacemaking all contributed to this.

Maggie had a sense of guidance from what she called “The Spirit” and began worshipping with Friends, first in Wycombe, and then at Wandsworth Meeting in London, where she came into membership in 1986. Spiritually, she felt this was a “coming of age”. Quakerism made sense of what had seemed disparate parts of her life up until then – the mystical, the practical activism and the witness for peace, equality and the ecosystem.

The hour of silent worship each week was immensely helpful in grounding Maggie's faith and lively witness. Meeting for worship provided her with many insights and openings, and she sometimes gave powerful spoken ministry. Even though she was sometimes frustrated by other Friends, she treasured them dearly, respecting their discernment and valuing their prayer and friendship. She also rejoiced in the diversity of faith and social backgrounds that she found among Quakers, and the attitudes to equality, including sexual equality. Maggie was generous in her support for others' ministry and in the development of their ‘spiritual intelligence’ – Quaker or otherwise – and this concern to nurture and empower that of God in others continued through her life.

Maggie tested her openings through deep conversations with individual Friends, at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre and elsewhere, and the upholding and support she found from many individuals and Quaker bodies were important support. She continued to use her art as a tool for peace, understanding and outreach, giving many illustrated talks around the United Kingdom about “Brushes with Peace”. These used her portraits and sketches to illustrate inspiring stories of peacemaking and the quest for sustainability around the world.

Maggie was convinced early on of the importance of the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, having been increasingly concerned about global warming and other ecological issues. Concerned that British Friends should be represented there, she obtained a press pass via *The Friend* and worked tirelessly to publicise and explain the summit, the new United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the wide range of issues it started to address.

Through her peace work, research and travels, Maggie also became aware that many aspects of the peace movement were not well documented, and that this was to be a piece of ministry she herself was called to. A Doctor of Philosophy degree (PhD) at Reading University seemed to be the best way to do this, and the result was a major piece of work documenting and collecting images of peace in Britain, from the late 19th century to the Second World War. It included a huge range of images and artefacts, from ‘high art’ to lapel buttons, and demonstrated the key role of Quaker peace posters in the developing culture of peace campaigning. Her PhD has since been of great value to other researchers in preparing exhibitions and publications.

This magnum opus completed, Margaret decided to follow two of her sons to New Zealand/Aotearoa in 2003. This was a courageous move, and after a while she settled happily in Christchurch, greatly valuing the Quaker community there; she paid particular attention to newcomers to the meeting, helping them gain a grounded understanding of Quakerism. She would often say that while people would

sometimes be disappointed in Quakers, they would not be disappointed in Quakerism. Maggie made a significant contribution to Christchurch Meeting and the wider New Zealand Quaker community through the Elders’ Committee, and helping to institute Local Peace Grants through the Quaker Peace and Service Committee. She also helped create a “Spirit Greens” caucus within the New Zealand Green Party.

The Christchurch earthquakes of 2010 and 2011 hit Maggie hard and forced her to move once more. She was distraught, but faced the future with typical courage and determination. She eventually settled in Wanaka near one of her sons. Her life and garden began to blossom amidst the beautiful scenery, and she began to draw and paint again. She deeply missed a Quaker community (the nearest meeting being five hours’ drive away) but made new friends and kept in touch with others through the internet. She kept many long-distance friendships alive, and continued her ministry of nurture and loving challenge, drawing strength from the support of distant friends and relations. She was deeply grateful to those who visited her in her remote last home, and she continued to inspire and strengthen people through her deep listening and inspiring practical example in small things.

Maggie had a lifelong sense of having a part to play in something much greater, and she continued to seek what that part should be to the end of her days. When she was diagnosed with cancer, Maggie accepted it gracefully – cheerfully, indeed – saying that she was ready to leave and knowing she had completed her work. She had long before lost her fear of death, and she continued to be generous in her spiritual support for others, as well as in her direct and intelligent requests for help when she needed it, to the peaceful end of her life.

In Maggie’s well-thumbed copy of *Quaker faith & practice*, George Fox’s 1656 letter from Launceston prison was one of the passages most underlined. She did indeed try to live in the power of Spirit, and to follow Fox’s exhortation

to be an example through how she lived following her leadings. Her aim was always to “walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one.”

Signed in and on behalf of Kingston & Wandsworth Area Meeting
held at Esher on 20 September 2015
Gillian Ashmore, Clerk

David Burt Gray

10 x 1931 – 9 i 2015

The middle of Donald and Kathleen Gray's three sons, David was born in York, where his father was headmaster of Bootham School until his sudden death in 1943. All three boys completed their education at Bootham, a place for which David retained a lifelong affection.

On leaving school, he registered as a conscientious objector and went before a tribunal in London in 1950, taking alternative service with the Friends Ambulance Unit [International Service] (FAU), including a year in France. Fellow members admired his combination of great organising ability, enthusiasm and kindness; he could work with and bring out the best in others, whether painting an orphanage, harvesting an orchard or teaching his newly acquired skills of bricklaying and engineering. His zest created a positive atmosphere, enabling trainees to see that such service was good, even when it was not what they had hoped for. The Imperial War Museum's (IWM) three-hour interview with David gives an impressive insight into his reflections on and objective analysis of these two years: living conditions, relations with local communities, post-war attitudes to Germans, assessment of FAU training and much more.

Moving on to study English at Oxford, he was at the heart of the University Young Friends. Contemporaries remember his verve, whether in tennis parties or serious discussions; his Quaker knowledge meant they saw him as a kind of unofficial elder. During vacations he worked at

The Retreat, saying later that “dealing with the most basic needs of the geriatric insane” had taught him that “having to perform the acts that love would bring you to do, in the end generated genuine love for his patients”.

David was born to teach, thanks to his dynamism and joy in communicating to others his knowledge and love of a multitude of subjects. His professional career began at Bradford Grammar School and it was while there that he and Margaret Ward married. She was a huge support to him throughout their 55 years of marriage. With their four children and eight grandchildren they formed a close and loving family. His effect as a Sunday School teacher in Bradford Meeting illuminates a key characteristic: “he was always ready to discuss, never treating us as children”. One of his later Bournville teenage group recalls the liberation of talking over taboo subjects there; there, for the first time, this young man heard homosexuality discussed sensitively, thus freeing him to begin accepting himself.

From Bradford David moved to Friends School Saffron Walden. His imaginative drama productions, both there and elsewhere, ranged from *Antigone* – still remembered as outstanding – to *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Such short-term projects enabled him to throw all his energy and wealth of ideas into creating something memorable and moving. It was here that Peter, Alison, Katherine and John were born. The family's next move took them back to Yorkshire, where David taught first in Richmond, then Darlington.

Becoming extra-Mural Services Tutor at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in 1977 gave David a role where his broad interests and gifts could flourish, while having the family living onsite enriched the whole community. David's own inbuilt sense of community made him a great first point of contact; his lovely baritone voice was “like a smile coming through the telephone wire”. One applicant found his pre-interview evening transformed by Margaret and David spontaneously welcoming him into their home for supper. This same generosity led him to complete the history of Woodbrooke, which

had been left unfinished at the time of Ralph Barlow's sudden death.

Woodbrooke's teaching structure suited David's strengths. He could illuminate a topic with one group before undertaking something quite different with another, his enthusiasm constantly refreshed. His Parables study pack indicates how he 'opened up the scriptures'. When teaching John 9, he made a vivid impression as he interpreted the story of Jesus and the man born blind to show how our inner eyes can be opened to insights that transform our own blindness. A sensitive, creative planner, David balanced teaching, discussion and relaxation. His literature courses ranged widely over poetry but he had a special love for the Shakespeare weeks. Here he brought out that knowledge of humanity and life's deepest questions that made Shakespeare as fitting a subject for Quaker study as anything more overtly 'religious'. His infectious love of his subject ensured that he pointed to that, not to himself. Quick to recognise individual needs, he carried his own portable hearing loop when teaching offsite. While he was forbearing and encouraging to the diffident, he could be firm when gently persuading the long-winded to reach a timely end! His sunny nature did not preclude considerable impatience with lax planning or inadequate action; being by nature quick to act, he was very frustrated if he could not alter a situation, and his confident enthusiasm could sometimes make him appear imperious. Doing nothing was never an option.

Travel and travelling in the ministry were virtually synonymous for David. By leading study tours of American Quaker meetings he facilitated many contacts with American Friends, but so-called sabbaticals with Margaret in the Antipodes and Africa included 'on the roads' too. He took 'Woodbrooke on the Road' to local meetings in Britain so often (over 200 times) that everyone knew to bypass the corridor outside his office on departure days, as piles of maps, gear, half the bookshop and his beloved low table would render it virtually impassable. The low table was essential; he hated the thought of any barrier between him and a teaching group.

Middle East Study Tours were another aspect of his teaching and peace vocation. Before agreeing to a request to lead his first Holy Land Tour, he set clear conditions: the biblical element would be balanced with work to understand other Middle East world faiths; they would study the ongoing Palestine/Israel conflict and would meet indigenous Quakers. Once there, participants met Palestinian Christians and used guest houses employing Christian, Jewish and Muslim staff. Many found it a life-changing experience and all appreciated not being spiritual tourists cut off from present realities. One photo shows David – fearless, open – absorbed in checking the map with an armed soldier to see whether he has, as accused, illegally crossed a border; a second soldier is at his shoulder, gun at the ready. It could well have been captioned with his words in the IWM interview: "It's interesting to take people where bullets are flying and to try to understand the now."

For family members too, David's adventurous spirit made him a source of new and challenging experiences. There was the excitement of travelling overnight sitting beside a beehive full of bees being taken to the heather, followed by dam building, rock climbing, jumping from a high point to swim in the River Swale and behind the waterfall. Such exhilarating (not to mention terrifying) moments sprang from David's relish for the natural world. He loved ornithology and was very knowledgeable (he supported Duncan Wood when he was writing *Horace Alexander: Birds and Binoculars*). He was a passionate beekeeper. York's beekeepers came in force to his memorial meeting to express their appreciation of his presidency and the delightful way that he passed on his expertise and love of bees.

Surgery for cancer had precipitated his retirement from Woodbrooke back to Richmond in 1994. Following a good recovery, he soon found new outlets. His tours continued and were instrumental in widening Quaker concern for the Middle East, something he also followed up through service as clerk, on QPS(W)'s Middle East Committee. He was one of those who chaired London Diplomats Group talks at

William Penn House. The most senior diplomats did not attend but slightly junior colleagues did, making contacts with representatives from every conceivable regime in a relaxed, neutral space devoid of official protocol and intrusive journalists. "Is peace work political?", IWM asked. "Yes", he replied. Seeking to deal with root causes, rather than holding banners or manning barricades, entails quiet work over sustained periods. "We try to get near the centre, but it's easy to exaggerate one's effect – we're a very small group."

Knotty Quaker theology was not for David but he was firmly rooted in lifelong experience of living the Quaker way. His one-page handout, 'Basic Quakerism', started with 'that of God in everyone' and showed how all our testimonies and way of worship flow from this single tenet. That clarity was his grounding. While he came from a long Quaker lineage, he was a natural innovator with the drive to appreciate fresh developments. He unreservedly welcomed those who found Quakerism in middle or later life, bringing to it the breadth of service in other traditions. His own Quaker service was not all plain sailing. He was deeply concerned for the Society as an inclusive community and accepted a request that he should explore Quaker attitudes towards same-sex relationships at the time when this topic still divided British Friends. He wrote to *The Friend* explaining his commission and asking for information and experience. Years later he recalled how shocked he had been by the vitriolic responses of numerous correspondents. He continued the work undeterred.

At the centre of all this activity was a warm family life, with David as enabler, encourager and listener as well as keenly active lover of the outdoor life. When David and Margaret moved to York some eight years before his death, Hartrigg Oaks provided another adventure in community living and an opportunity to spend more time with their youngest grandchildren. David was loved and valued in Friargate and York Area Meeting and an active elder to the end. Quakerism is the better for his life and the Grace of God we have witnessed through it.

Signed in and on behalf of York Area Meeting held at Thirsk on 12 September 2015

John Guest, Clerk

David Hall

23 iii 1931 – 23 xii 2014

David was born in 1931 and was brought up as a Presbyterian, attending church very regularly as a child. However, his mother had been involved with the 'No More War' campaign, and her awareness of the evils of war were with him throughout his life. She also instilled in him a strong work ethic and sense of duty. Her pacifism led the family towards Quakerism, and they started attending Golders Green Meeting during World War II, where David quickly became involved in the lively Young Friends group. When he was called up to do his National Service in 1949, he went in front of a tribunal, asking to do his service in the Friends Ambulance Unit. He helped on a farm in France, then at the first Leonard Cheshire Home for disabled servicemen, then at the Brook Hospital, Woolwich, as a theatre orderly. It was this experience that led him to want to train as a doctor, rather than taking up his place at Oxford to study history.

He did his medical training at University College Hospital, and, after various junior doctor posts, decided that his future would be in general practice. He moved to Sidcup in 1959 and became a partner in the practice there after three years. People in Sidcup still speak with great appreciation of the quality of his work, especially his ability to listen carefully. He loved the work and stayed in the one practice until his retirement at the age of 68.

After his marriage to Gillian in 1956 the couple attended the small 'allowed' meeting in Highgate, before the move to Sidcup. They then joined Petts Wood Meeting and worshipped there for over 50 years. In spite of the demands of his job and a growing family (he had four children and eight grandchildren), he soon became involved with the life of the meeting.

David always came to meeting for worship with a small edition of the New Testament in his pocket, which he read before meeting and often referred to in his spoken ministry. He was thoroughly Bible-based in his worship.

David took part in two of the original Aldermaston marches, and many years later joined the big marches against the Iraq War, one with three generations of his family.

He became an overseer in 1990 and was one of the Friends to arrange funerals. In 1996 he became an elder, taking his responsibilities characteristically seriously. He served for several years on Meeting for Sufferings, as assistant monthly meeting clerk, and for one year as clerk, his service being cut short by bowel cancer, which he survived successfully. He attended several Lenten courses arranged by Petts Wood Churches Together, also some *Lectio Divina* sessions, which he found helpful. Amongst other Quaker jobs, he set up a 'Woodbrooke on the Road' day for monthly meeting, and served on the monthly meeting conference committee. He and Gillian were key Friends in the organisation of the recent painful process of laying down Petts Wood Meeting.

A retirement interest of David's was the Sidcup Literary and Scientific Society, and he was also a member (and sometime President) of Rotary, for whom he organised regular 'Stroke Awareness Days' in central Sidcup, and was an active fundraiser. Apart from being a keen and knowledgeable gardener, his other interest was music. He took up the oboe at school and was an early member of the National Youth Orchestra. He played for over 20 years with the Sidcup Symphony Orchestra and latterly with a smaller group. He and Gillian attended many concerts at the Barbican and enjoyed annual visits to Glyndebourne. The last time he played was in January 2014 at a family party celebrating the 50th birthday of one of his daughters, with all three generations taking part.

As his son James said at his funeral, David was in many ways a conventional man but also a radical at the same time. He stood by tradition, good manners, impeccable truthfulness, and obeying

the law. At the same time he had a radical's sense of injustice in the world and a motivation to change the world for the better.

David was latterly much valued as assistant clerk of area meeting. He and Gillian started attending Bromley Meeting, but he soon became ill. He died in Fallowfield Nursing Home on 23 December 2014 and is mourned by all whose lives he touched.

Signed in and on behalf of South East
London Area Meeting
held at Forest Hill on 15 March 2015
Judith Niechcial, Clerk

Rupert Hedger

9 i 1922 – 3 iii 2015

Our dear friend Rupert Hedger died at home in Mulbarton, Norfolk, on 3 March 2015. He was aged 93. Anne was at his side, as were Mary, Paul and Angus, his grandson.

Rupert was born on a tea plantation in India to a Quaker mother and an Anglican father. Originally destined to attend school in Sidcot, Rupert's father changed his mind when he saw the maths teacher wearing shorts. His son was sent to Abingdon School instead.

We do not know what Rupert's war experience was like but he served in Southern Italy, including Monte Cassino, where he witnessed terrible loss of lives. Anne says that "his energy was taken by it". Rupert claimed, in his modest way, that it was only because so many of his men had been killed that he was promoted to major. But it was due to bravery that he was awarded the Military Cross. Rupert did not speak about his part in battle but he loved to tell family and friends about the time he was living in occupied Italy and as the area commander was given the key to what would have been the royal box in the local opera house.

After the war Rupert went up to Oxford, where he read history and rowed for Pembroke College. He became a teacher and was very active in the

Forest School Camps organisation. It was in a field near Reepham, on such a camp, that he met Anne Shepherd, his lifelong sweetheart and companion. Rupert and Anne (it is difficult to speak about Rupert without speaking also of Anne) settled in Harlow new town, and after Rupert prompted Anne to go to a Quaker meeting they and their four children fell into a way of life embedded in the local Quaker community. Rupert was a solid Quaker in the “good old tradition”. He was a well-loved headmaster of a primary school and supported Anne in her activities as a local magistrate. Both Anne and Rupert pursued outdoor activities and enjoyed regular camping pilgrimages to France.

Rupert was an intrepid driver and he and Anne enjoyed looking up their journeys on old maps. In later life they were very keen to share the details of these journeys with visitors. They were natural supporters of Quaker Camp. On retirement, Rupert and Anne headed back to Norfolk, firstly to West Raynham and eventually to Mulbarton.

They attended Wells Meeting then Dereham Meeting where they played a fully committed part, not only on first days but also in the small weekday programme every month. A Dereham Friend observes “The first and continuing experience of being with Rupert was his courtesy, a very deep and self-effacing courtesy, made all the more memorable by his dapper appearance and his precise and aristocratic mode of speech. He always asked after our family (and everyone else’s) and remembered what you had said. His opinions were wise and carefully considered, but promulgated quietly. He and Anne frequently brought their grandson, Angus, with them to meeting, and Rupert was a patient, supportive and positive grandfather.”

Having moved to Mulbarton, Rupert and Anne joined a small group of eight Friends who became founder members of Wymondham Quaker Meeting. Rupert and Anne were at the first meeting of the proposed group of South Norfolk Quakers and they attended every formative meeting thereafter.

Especially in meetings for worship for business,

Rupert was a quiet voice of strength and of “upholding in the Light”. We all felt supported by him. Rupert was a regular attender at our study evenings and often brought a sense of reality and humanity and humour to our sometimes abstract philosophising. In one such meeting on the life of Jesus, he observed that the disciples could not have functioned without communal meals and that they probably enjoyed them. This awareness was demonstrated by his attention to the details of providing tea and coffee at the end of each meeting. Anne says that he now serves tea to the angels!

Rupert was a very practical man. He enabled Wymondham Meeting to move purposefully and gracefully into its new accommodation because, with level access and hearing loop, it is a more inclusive room for meetings. Rupert listened to us all in a totally non-judgmental and keenly interested way. Rupert made very light of the enormous physical, domestic, medical and psychological burden that he carried after Anne was taken ill. He drove Anne to Wymondham Meeting as long as it was physically possible, until just a few months before his death.

Rupert prepared for and moved towards his death in a conscious way. His acceptance, his generosity, his mindfulness were all quite exceptional, and of course, quite characteristic of him. We find that he provided a model of good dying for us all.

God’s grace showed not only in much that Rupert did but also and simply in who he was. We all have that of God in us, but in some of us it is clouded over by what is more worldly in our humanity. In some of us the cloud of ‘stuff’ is so nearly transparent that the light shines through – in what we do, yes, yet somehow more essentially in what we are. Rupert was one of those rare shining souls, a “verray, parfit, gentil knight”.

Signed in and on behalf of Norfolk and
Waveney Area Quaker Meeting
Held at North Walsham on 18 July 2015,
Michael Johnson, Clerk

Aileen King

8 iv 1923 – 11 iii 2014

Aileen was born on 8 April 1923 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, to a Scottish Canadian father and an Irish Canadian mother. They soon moved to the small town of Cayuga, 20 minutes from Lake Erie, from where she recounted many happy holiday memories. There she spent her childhood with her sister until the early death of their mother from cancer, dealing the family a blow from which they never fully recovered. Their father took the little girls to England and then left them in the care of his sister.

They soon found themselves in a Salvation Army orphanage in London, from which Aileen emerged at 14 years of age to find work. Aileen's working life started at a live-in boarding kennel, moving on to a Salvation Army hostel to live in and work for her keep. During the war years she was recruited to the army cook house but, after tipping a vat of custard over a rude sergeant, was transferred to an Essex farm in the Land Army. Here she developed a passion for horses, and she was often photographed with the gentle giant shires.

Aileen was a true feminist. Refusing to stick to 1950s social conventions and endure an unhealthy marriage, she chose to leave. As a single woman Aileen continued to live in Essex raising her family of three boys and a girl, supporting them by collecting rags and scrap with her beloved pony and flat trolley. She lived a fiercely independent existence which saw the family in some highly unconventional living quarters and together they survived well. Seeking truth, she found her way to the Quaker meeting in Malden. Quakers earned her respect for their straight-dealing honesty and their liberal, practical Christianity. Here she had a faith community to be there for her and her family. She was very much part of the meeting which helped her practically as well as spiritually.

Aileen was a highly intelligent woman but circumstances denied her an extended formal education. Showing remarkable determination she was a lifelong learner with a hunger to

develop her knowledge and understanding in a broad range of subjects. She was always curious and maintained an awe and respect for the mysteries of creation. As a voracious reader it was not unusual for her to be reading two or three books at a time. She was a brilliant storyteller and loved to debate and discuss ideas. She also wrote for some magazines and local newspapers and on one occasion had an article broadcast by the BBC. When her young daughter fell ill and the doctor was dangerously inept in his treatment of her, Aileen used her keen mind to find an alternative. Herbalism provided a way forward and she spent all of her life studying this ancient art. She qualified in Bach flower remedies and became known for her effective if unconventional advice. Her herbalism became part of her independence and, though happy to go to a general practitioner for diagnosis, she insisted on medicating herself and her family. Later in her life she spent many winters at Woodbrooke College. Here she enjoyed studying and could write to her heart's content. Aileen was uncompromisingly true to her beliefs. Although she didn't minister often in meeting, when she did it was profound and reflected her testimony to simplicity and peace. She was fully committed to peace in her own life and more widely, being compelled to protest and attend Aldermaston peace marches.

Aileen sought to see that of God in all people and her life was a testament to this belief. Her unwavering conviction to social justice and equality led her to extend her hand to others even at times when she had so little herself. She had friends from across the world and from all walks of life. Aileen sought those who were marginal or different and offered relationships of value and respect. Whether it be building friendship with the Greek Orthodox sisters at Tolleshunt Knights, teaching gypsy women to read, spending Christmas with the homeless, giving a stopping place to travellers, adopting an Irish family or offering herbal remedies, she shared freely all that she had. Aileen strove to live according to her beliefs, giving hospitality, a listening ear, advice for whoever came to her, and love. She was so proud of her family

and gave them self-belief, confidence to be themselves and unconditional love. Her horse-drawn funeral procession, blocking the streets of Malden, was an outpouring of the love she had inspired. People came from afar to pay their last respects to Aileen. Her family had a great matriarch, giving of herself equally to all of them – children, grandchildren and in later years her great grandchildren. Inevitably, her influence will be with all of us for many years to come.

Signed in and on behalf of Mid-Essex Area Meeting

held at Brentwood on 10 May 2015

Peter Garratt, Clerk

Ruth Margaret Marshall

07 iii 1950 – 27 i 2014

Ruth McAfee was born in Luton on 7 March 1950 to William (“Mac”), from Belfast, and Margaret Sjogren (pronounced Shroergren), who was born in Luton, though her family was Swedish.

Ruth was the second of their two children, the first being her brother David. The family moved from Luton firstly to Chesterfield and then to Doncaster, where Ruth grew up living opposite the Church of England, where they worshipped. She attended Doncaster Girls’ Grammar School and then read for a degree in education at Nottingham University. During her time there, one of her lecturers introduced her to Nottingham Quaker Meeting. While Ruth was drawn to Quaker worship, at home she remained a member of the congregation of her parish church in Doncaster. After university Ruth qualified as a teacher, but did not enjoy her teaching practice in Headingley, Leeds. Having been a member of the Puffin Club and a keen reader since her school days, she applied for, and got a job with, the Puffin Club as Schools’ Secretary. This involved correspondence and visits to those schools that ran branches of the club, as well as residential activity holidays. Ruth later became secretary of the Junior Puffin Club when it was founded.

Whilst Ruth lived in Chiswick and worked in Harmondsworth, she found her way to Hammersmith Meeting. It was a very short time after she and John Marshall met there that they became engaged at the British Museum. They married at Hammersmith Meeting on 23 November 1974. After buying a house she left the Puffin Club to start a family; firstly fostering three children and then having two of her own. When both Andrew and Ellen had started school, Ruth began to work there: first as a school meals supervisory assistant and then as a teaching assistant. Ruth felt that, although she could not change anything far away in the Middle East, she could make peace in her playground. Although she was a qualified educator, she much preferred interacting with and nourishing the children to the large amounts of administrative work that went with being a teacher. As in the Book of Ruth, she found fulfilment in her family and in helping others, not in paperwork (though she did, incidentally, always know where a spare stash of paper would be kept if ever anyone needed it).

For 25 years she faithfully ran the children’s meeting, contributing to shared lunches at meeting her famous “bottom-of-the-fridge soups” and apple crumbles, created with the help of the children. Each Friday she cleaned the meeting house, describing this routine as “bringing her mind to stillness whilst her hands were busy”. She was, as she said, a Martha. As she cleaned the meeting room she held each member of the meeting in the Light.

Ruth sought practical response to needs: repairing clothes for elderly Friends, making gifts for newborns, and ensuring that there was always enough loo roll. She would, without fail, invite new attenders at meeting to her home for a meal, as her way of repaying those who had done the same for her in her days as a new attendee.

During her childhood she learnt to play the violin, but she switched to viola around the age of 13 after noting that the music was easier to play. In later life she loved playing with others and played in two orchestras with her daughter, never being one to simply sit around and do nothing – not even listen to music!

As a teenager she was deeply affected by a documentary called *The Great War* and consequently became steadfast in her pacifism. She spent her free time visiting every cemetery in the A-Z map and was rather disappointed to complete this task. She would descend on fabric stores, carefully planning what each piece of material would be used for, and harboured a lifelong fondness for the East End. At 17 she met Seamus Heaney, and from then onwards maintained a lifelong passion for the poet.

Ruth's grandsons brought great joy and lightness to her life, and she took pride in sharing details of their triumphs and escapades with friends. On holidays she preferred to see where ordinary people lived to viewing the tourist magnets of the location. She enjoyed the crafts of cooking and sewing, as well as gardening – a gift inherited from her father and passed on to her son. She was a dedicated letter-writer, penning over 100 Christmas cards a year and never allowing any friend or acquaintance to fall off the list following a birthday, bereavement, illness or achievement. Ruth was particularly devoted to writing each note by hand, as the act of writing brought her closer to her friends. She took pleasure in spending time with her friends, but disliked the intrusive nature of the telephone, no matter who the caller.

Ruth found resonance in the writings of William Penn and Isaac Penington, particularly the former's passage 22.95 in *Quaker faith & practice*: "...we cannot love to live, if we cannot bear to die" and the latter's passage 10.01: "Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness...". These are the two phrases that were often on her lips. Hammersmith Friends cannot recall Ruth ever attending a business meeting in her 40 years as part of the worshipping community. However, she was faithfully present at meeting for worship, in the same seat, every Sunday of the year unless she was away on holiday. She found sustenance in meeting, but absolutely dreaded having to minister; for her, it was always Spirit-led, and she was entirely powerless to prevent being pulled to her feet by the Spirit. Her ministry was often domestic in nature, capturing that of God in

everyday life, within her home and through her relationships.

Ruth was not by nature a joiner, and took seriously the responsibilities that went with any role she accepted. It took a long time for her to be persuaded that she should apply for membership of the Religious Society of Friends; indeed, so overdue was this that immediately after her acceptance she was appointed as clerk of overseers, and her first task was to present herself with her own book for joining.

Ruth was clear about her faith in God and was a daily witness in her kindness, compassion, simplicity, generosity and creativity. She enriched so many lives in her exercise of hospitality and pragmatism. Ruth made a difference in so many small (often unnoticed) ways and helped to make the world a kinder, better, more peaceful place. In the words of George Eliot, "...the effect of her being on those around her was incalculably diffusive: for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life..."

This is her testimony to the world.

Signed in and on behalf of London West Area Meeting

held at Westminster on 18 January 2015

Caroline Nurse, Clerk

James McCarthy

17 xi 1917 – 23 iv 2015

"Aspire to charity – it is the will of God
Aspire to kindness – it is the gift of God
Aspire to gentleness – it is the strength of God
Aspire to love – it is the breath of God."

Jim McCarthy was born in the heart of London on 17 November 1917, the youngest of three brothers.

His Christian faith was at the heart of his being throughout his life. His stories of his childhood and teenage years were full of anecdotes about

the 'Mission' and the Boys Brigade. He learnt to play the cornet there, and this may have been the start of his lifelong love of music – though he always said that he played it very badly!

Jim continued his education at night school and through the 'Adult School' movement. He remained committed to this movement and involved with it throughout his life.

Through walking and talking with a Friend he had met through the Adult School, Jim became convinced that his faith would not allow him to fight, and he registered as a conscientious objector. He remained in central London throughout the war and the Blitz, and at least once his home was destroyed.

During this period he was very involved with the West London Methodist Mission based at Kingsway Hall. His particular role was in arranging social events, keeping people's spirits up, but he also assisted with services and with helping those in need. He made many deep and lasting friendships during this period – notably with Katie, whom he subsequently married, and with Donald Soper.

Jim and Katie were married after the war and lived for many years in Highgate, North London.

They enjoyed meeting people from all over the world. Jim was also a prison visitor at Pentonville for many years. They became involved with Muswell Hill Quaker Meeting, and Katie joined the Society of Friends there, though Jim remained a Methodist.

They moved to Wimborne in 1985 and soon became very much part of the community there – involved in the Adult School, peace groups, British Heart Foundation, as well as being a committed part of Poole Meeting, most especially the children's meeting. Jim and Katie had no children of their own but showed love, care and interest to generations of children and young people who came to our meeting, establishing relationships that in many cases lasted to this day. Jim remained a part of the Poole children's meeting team until his increasing frailty made this impracticable.

Jim and Katie took over hosting Wimborne's monthly Sunday evening meeting for worship in 1989, and it remained at their home until 2014, when Jim's increasing frailty made it too much for him, and Wimborne Meeting had become well established.

Jim was greatly saddened by Katie's death in 1997 – though, for him, her spirit was always there. He was greatly supported by many very dear friends and continued to be involved both with the Quaker meeting and many community activities.

He was a guide at the Minster, a member of the Methodist 'Men's Forum' and the Music Society among other things. He loved going to Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra concerts at the Lighthouse in Poole. He also continued to act as Father Christmas at his local playgroup and primary school for many years – a role he filled to perfection!

Jim's elder brother, Tom, and his wife, Elsie, along with their children Joseph and David, emigrated to the United States in the early 1950s. Jim and Katie often visited them there. In later years Jim loved to visit them all for summer holidays and to be a part of their family in Detroit, and also to receive them at his home. David recalls how much Jim loved London, and how he used to take him and Joseph around the streets on bikes on Sunday before dinner to show them all the historic places around the area.

Jim eventually applied for formal membership of the Society of Friends in 2013. This was one of those joyous occasions when formal procedure was far from appropriate, and Jim was welcomed on the spot with a resounding 'Hope so!' from all present.

Jim was one of the kindest, gentlest, most cheerful and most cheering men that you could wish to meet. A warm, witty and very quick sense of humour endeared him to all, especially the young. He was always ready with a joke. He always had something good to say to those he met, and had a wonderful knack of speaking to children at their own level and drawing them into conversation.

And when he became house-bound he felt very lucky that people came to see him. “What a wonderful world”, he would sing – often altering the words to suit the situation and his feelings about the person with him!

He made you feel as though you were highly valued, that it was of great value that you visited him and you were the only person of importance to him at that moment. That is a real gift.

His own home, with its memories of Katie, was very important to Jim and he was very keen to stay there until he died. As he became frailer he needed many carers, and he had a unique gift for making close relationships with them. He was unfailingly grateful for their attentions. It was very special to Jim that this hospital-style care enabled him to stay at home as long as he did. But he was ready and wanting to go. “I’m past my sell-by date,” he would jest, “I’m all ready to go but haven’t had my invitation yet.”

It is often said, when people as well loved as Jim leave us, that a light has gone out. In this case it is only the tired and worn physical side that has left us. The light remains, and it is for us to follow it.

Signed in and on behalf of Bournemouth
Coastal Area Meeting
held at Wimborne on 13 September 2015
Tom Sanders, Clerk

William Grigor McClelland

2 i 1922 – 6 xi 2013

“Above all, he was a man with a clear moral compass who brought compassion and a concern for social justice and social harmony to all of his undertakings”

Steve Hilditch, Grigor’s son-in-law,
Newcastle Journal, 21 11 2013

Grigor grew up in Gosforth, the son of Arthur and Jean McClelland – his father, paternal grandfather and great-grandfather having been Friends. He attended Leighton Park School in Reading. Even at this early stage, he chose as

his topic for the school’s speech competition in 1939 “When we have won the war”, and argued against punishing Germany again as at Versailles. He went on to university but the war interrupted his studies. He joined the Friends Ambulance Unit (FAU) and later Hadfield Spears (another relief organisation), and saw service in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Italy, France and Germany. In the two years he undertook relief work, he also met Diana Avery Close, a fellow Quaker: they married in 1946. Grigor’s experiences during and after the war are graphically recounted in his later work: *Embers of War – letters from a Quaker Relief Worker in war-torn Germany* (1997).

After his service with the FAU Grigor completed his university studies, and his contribution to Quaker peacemaking continued, including visits to the USSR in 1952 and China in 1955. His Swarthmore Lecture entitled *And a new earth: making tomorrow’s society better than today’s* was given in 1976.

Grigor was a man of many talents, and used them to benefit the world as he felt led. His academic achievements included the *Journal of Management Studies*, of which he became the founding editor and which, after 50 years, remains hugely influential. He set up Manchester Business School, becoming its first director and setting a new standard in management education. Later he became visiting professor at Durham University Business School. He found time to write seminal books on retailing and competition, whilst at the same time managing the family’s grocery business, Laws Stores, from 1949 to its sale in 1985.

We also celebrate those other aspects of his life: the approach to philanthropy, to public service and his involvement in the North East community. In these he followed his leadings and used his skills. He managed to combine the practical and ideal by his service on many public and private bodies. He served on the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust from 1956–1994, becoming its chair in 1965. That body occupies a unique place in Britain’s voluntary sector, as the initiator and catalyst for many projects of pioneering importance. He and Diana set up

the Millfield House Foundation in 1976 to help mitigate deprivation in the North East – a trust that has had great influence in promoting social change by funding work that informs discussion and affects public policy and attitudes, with the aim of empowering communities. In 1988 Grigor became a founder and chair of the Tyne & Wear Community Foundation – still the most successful organisation of its kind in the United Kingdom – which has secured millions in funding for the voluntary sector in the North East. He also found time to chair the Washington New Town Development Corporation, which succeeded in regenerating a number of pit villages in outer Sunderland into a model new town with decent housing and job opportunities. He also participated in the lengthy negotiations which eventually led to the establishment of Nissan's huge facility in Washington: a real coup for any new town.

Newcastle Local Meeting experienced another of Grigor's visionary projects when he was already in his eighties. It was his enthusiasm and perseverance that brought into being the Newcastle Conflict Resolution Network (part-funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust), now well established and becoming widely known for its innovative approaches in preventing and managing conflict at local level.

His Quaker influence was found at all levels: many found his ministry in meeting for worship both helpful and profound, and in local and area business meetings his insightful contributions, always coming from his sense of the Spirit, often guided the meeting to the right path. His ministry provided clear and striking guidance for so many of us who have reason to be thankful for his profound insights over the years.

Grigor was always busy but he knew how to pace himself and do justice to all the many jobs he chose to do and still find time to be a loving husband, father, grandfather, friend and Friend. Diana died in 2000: together they had provided generous hospitality over many years. In 2003 he married another Newcastle Friend, Caroline Spence, and acquired a second family with whom grew mutual respect and love.

Grigor was not always an easy man to work with, and women colleagues could find his attitude patriarchal. But his smile and grace, his hospitality, his openness and welcome to all, particularly newcomers to meeting, showed the life in this tall, imposing man with a carrying voice.

Steve Hilditch writes in summary:

“Despite his long list of achievements, Grigor will be most fondly remembered for his generosity of spirit, his charm and ability to engage positively with anyone he met, his extraordinary memory for people and events and his personal kindness.”

Let Grigor's own words close this testimony:

“Compassion, to be effective, requires detailed knowledge and understanding of how society works. Any social system in turn requires men and women in it of imagination and goodwill. What would be fatal would be for those with exceptional human insight and concern to concentrate on ministering to individuals, whilst those accepting responsibility for the design and management of organisations were left to become technocrats. What is important is that institutions and their administration be constantly tested against human values, and that those who are concerned about these values be prepared to grapple with the complex realities of modern society as it is.”

Quaker faith & practice 23.47

Signed in and on behalf of Northumbria Area Meeting

held at Tynedale on 13 September 2015

Susan Bennett, Clerk

Hugh McGregor Ross

31 viii 1917 – 1 ix 2014

We remember Hugh as a person of humility and spirituality, who throughout his life encouraged younger Friends and attenders. He served as an elder for over 50 years; at Jordans, Hampstead, Highgate and latterly Painswick meetings.

A birthright Quaker, descended from Margaret Fell, his formative years were spent at Swarthmoor Hall and his Quaker heritage meant a lot to him. Swarthmoor Hall had fallen into disrepair when his aunt, Emma Clarke Abraham, bought back and restored the property.

Hugh graduated in engineering from Cambridge in 1939, just before the onset of the war, but declined a job offered to him at Rolls Royce because of his pacifist principles. Instead, he taught mathematics at Leighton Park and Great Ayton schools.

When as a conscientious objector he was summoned to a tribunal at Lancaster Castle, it was a meaningful coincidence for him that his ancestors, Margaret Fell and George Fox, had been imprisoned there.

Many years later, when Hugh learnt that my son had a hard time at school after wearing a white poppy, Hugh sent a card to encourage him.

In computing circles, Hugh is remembered as an early pioneer. He was involved in the development and sale of the PEGASUS digital computer in the 1950s, and later with character codes and data transmission.

As Chairman of the British Standards Institute Data Processing Committee, he travelled the world, becoming deeply involved in the development of ISO10646. This universal character code ensured that the language of computing accommodates all the diverse scripts of the world – from Arabic to Inuit.

In retirement he wrote two books on George Fox, *George Fox – a Christian Mystic* and *George Fox Speaks for Himself*. The latter was translated into Russian.

In his search for spiritual truth and harmony in life, Hugh began to research the Gospel of Thomas, which had been discovered buried in the sands of Egypt in 1945. The text predates much in the New Testament and was untouched by orthodox revisionism.

Hugh translated the original Coptic-Greek manuscript into English and published a well-received series of books, providing his

interpretation of the gospel's meaning and significance. This resulted in him being invited to lead discussion groups well into his nineties, travelling throughout the country, to Woodbrooke and other meetings as far as Scotland.

Hugh and his wife Carole moved to Painswick in 1979, where they played an active part in the Quaker meeting. When he was too frail to attend meeting in person, they would sit quietly at the appointed hour to be with us in spirit, and Hugh remained interested in news of Friends to the end.

We remember this advice he shared, on giving vocal ministry:

“To minister is to serve. Will the contribution be of service to some, at least, of those present?

Will it speak to the heart of hearers?

Will the contribution rise like a fountain from a still pool of water, and the words fall back again into the silence?”

Signed in and on behalf of Gloucestershire
Area Meeting
held at Painswick on 12 April 2015
Jane Mace, Clerk

Janet Pascoe

10 ix 1932 – 8 x 2014

Janet Pascoe, née Clark, worshipped at Uxbridge Meeting for the last four decades of her life. She became a central pillar in the life of the meeting and gave service to most of the tasks that active participation in a local meeting requires. In fact she gave much more than was often required of her, and her hard work and extensive commitment to the meeting, its place in the community, and the fabric of the building were important aspects of her Quakerism. Janet was always the person who would go ‘the extra mile’, because she believed it was right to do so, although she wouldn’t consider it as ‘extra’.

Born into a Quaker family in 1932 in Sheffield, the family returned to Sri Lanka (then Ceylon)

where her father was a rubber and tea planter. Returning to England, the family moved to Somerset during the war and Janet attended Sidcot Quaker School, supported by her great aunt, Dame Elizabeth Cadbury. She often spoke of her days at Sidcot and it seemed that this period of her life had a great impact on her. Whilst Janet and her sister remained as boarders at Sidcot her parents moved to take on the wardenship of Jordans Hostel. After leaving Sidcot Janet's education was completed near Lake Geneva, where her love of mountains and associated sports was developed.

Completing a degree in German at Manchester and then social work training at the London School of Economics, Janet worked as a social worker for London County Council. Later in her career, after looking after her three daughters, Janet moved to teaching and for much of her time worked in local secondary schools teaching English but with a special interest in those who had difficulty with the language or for whom English was not their first language. This interest led to her last teaching post in Southall in a secondary school with a very high proportion of young people for whom English was not the family language. In addition to the day job, Janet also taught English as a Second Language at evening classes. Janet's love of the written word was often to be shown in her ministry to the meeting, where she had the gift of relating some deep spiritual thoughts to ideas and insights that she found in the writing of others.

Her marriage to Michael in 1956 led to a move to South Wales, but she returned to Denham and then in the late 1960s to Ickenham. Her daughters recollect that one reason for moving into the Uxbridge area was so that they could go to mixed sex schools, which Janet and Michael preferred to the sexual segregation followed in many schools elsewhere at that time. In addition to this, Janet's daughters recall that she encouraged them to be "independent and free-thinking" and to act positively with courage – reflections of Janet's own approach to her life.

Apart from her role as a mother and full-time teacher, Janet always found time to contribute

more widely to issues in which she held strong beliefs. A member of Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the Labour Party, she was also instrumental in forming one of the first Community Relations Councils, chairing the Hillingdon Community Relations Council for many years. An individual who was refused membership by the council submitted Janet to an extended campaign of personal abuse and harassment, which she bore with restraint and patience. Professional retirement released her energies to support other causes, and in Uxbridge Meeting she is particularly remembered for her passionate opposition to the war in Yugoslavia, witnessed by her support for a dissident Serbian radio station, B29, that attempted to provide an impartial account of the conflict until suppressed by the Serbian Government. It is said that weighty Friends had to discourage Janet from taking her bike to Sarajevo and standing on a bridge there as a human shield against the bombardment of that city.

Janet's bike was an important tool for fundraising. She undertook many sponsored cycle rides for Quaker charities and Britain Yearly Meeting funds, including visiting Geneva, Hungary and Cumbria. When no longer able to use her bike, Janet took to her feet and undertook sponsored local walks, sometimes terminated, to her great frustration, by the police who were concerned that the routes she chose may not have been the wisest for a lady of increasing years. But this was evidence that her determination to continue along the path she had marked out for herself remained towards the end of her life.

On a personal level Janet was a quiet, almost self-effacing person, but behind which it was possible to detect a significant questioning intellect and strong determination. Her Quakerism was expressed through her many commitments rather than through personal proclamation. But one had the sense that behind what at times was a very driven approach there was a deep spiritual being, which was the source of much of her energy. Her service was given with such generosity that her own comfort and

convenience was largely ignored, a trait that sometimes caused concern to those nearest her.

A stroke in 2008 deprived Janet's family and Uxbridge Meeting of much of her gifts and abilities, and deprived Janet of the physical means to live independently. Janet accepted her new circumstances with dignity and she let go of the need to be 'doing something'. She was able to thankfully receive care for herself and to enjoy the shared memories of her earlier life with family and friends, a life that was lived 'in the Light'.

Signed in and on behalf of London West Area Meeting
held at Uxbridge on 15 March 2015
Caroline Nursey, Clerk

Oonah Pim

21 iv 1913 – 24 ix 2014

Oonah Pim was born in Dublin on 21 April 1913, into a long-established and strongly Quaker family. She died in Pembrokeshire on 24 September 2014, aged 101.

Attending Quaker meetings as a small child with her parents, she clearly remembered that all the men had beards and that all the women sat separately. Her own grandfather, dignified on an elevated bench, presided.

The whole of Ireland was then still part of the United Kingdom, and she remembered the chaos, after 1918, when republicans fought for independence and the British Government sent in troops. There was indeed a lot of fighting in Dublin, and Oonah remembered having to stay inside the house and lie on the floor when rifles were being fired all around. Indeed, her father told her to lie still and not to scream. She remembered snipers on neighbouring rooftops. Both sides in the conflict had agreed short periods of ceasefire so that families could get food and other essentials. Only nominated people were safe to go out at these times, and Oonah's father wore his Sunday suit and top hat to make sure he was recognised. The

fighting went on for several years, and when independence came to southern Ireland Oonah's family decided to move to London.

Oonah was 11 when they left, and she was then sent to a Quaker girls' boarding school in Darlington. She discovered that she was good at games, and after she left school in 1931 she trained as a teacher at the Bergman Osterberg Physical Training College in Dartford. She then taught Physical Training in schools, starting at Berkhamstead Girls High School. She remembered seeing the Jarrow Marchers pass by, being impressed by the marchers' dignity. In this period she was active in the Womens' Freedom League. She was selected for an exchange programme with the United States of America and sailed there on the German liner *The Bremen* in 1938. Because of the threat of war the American girl did not come to Britain, and Oonah used her time to see America including Mexico, where she ran out of money. She spent some days without food before being helped by the British embassy. This episode seems typical of the adventurous spirit which we saw in Oonah. The return voyage on *The Bremen* was an interesting time because talk of war with Germany might have prevented the almost empty German ship from docking at Southampton.

Evacuated to Wiltshire at the outbreak of war, Oonah drove ambulances and ran physical training (PT) classes for women working in factories in the south and west of England.

Appointed Adviser and Organiser for physical education (PE) in Wiltshire and then Hampshire, she returned to her old Dartford teachers' college in 1945 as a senior lecturer.

When the Northern Ireland Government decided to improve physical training in their schools they decided they clearly needed someone acceptable to both Protestants and Catholics to take charge of training the necessary staff. Oonah was suggested and chosen, since, as a Quaker, it was thought (correctly) she could not be pressured to take sides. She became the first Principal of the Ulster College of Physical Education in 1953, and stayed there

developing the college until 1972, with the college then becoming part of the polytechnic and afterwards part of the University of Ulster. When 'the Troubles' in the north started in the 1970s, Oonah was one of the few people able to walk with impunity in both Catholic and Protestant streets in Belfast, since she was known and respected in both communities. It was for performing this job in the Province so effectively that, after her retirement, Oonah was awarded the Order of the British Empire by the Queen.

In the wider community she was for a time President of the Soroptimists; she was involved in youth club work, in the Keep Fit Association and in the Central Council for Physical Recreation. She also advised the Government of the Republic of Ireland on specialist teacher training.

At her retirement dinner in Belfast, at the height of the Troubles, she was presented with a radiogram. Too large for her to take home herself, she was told not to worry as delivery was arranged. The radiogram was, however, confiscated at a roadblock. Much, much later that night, as the sole resident of the isolated country house where her training courses were based, Oonah heard a loud banging at the door. Going down and opening the door, she was confronted by several masked men carrying her radiogram. Delivery had been accomplished.

Oonah came to live in Solva in Pembrokeshire in 1978. She spent much of her time after that befriending those whom she called "the elderly", many of whom were often much younger than she was, taking people in her car to social events, to medical appointments and so on. She was always a safe driver, and she continued until she was 98 when, by her own decision, she stopped and finally sold her car. She was well known and respected in Solva and, indeed, across the wider community.

Oonah was a founder member of the group which eventually became St Davids Local Quaker Meeting, serving as correspondent and then clerk for a number of years. She continued right into her late nineties to be a really central and much loved member of the meeting. She

also attended services at St Michael's Roman Catholic Church, and became a noted figure in the St Davids Council of Churches.

On the occasion of her 90th birthday, 500 guests joined together in Belfast to witness the conferring of an Honorary Doctorate on Oonah for services to education.

One of her Ulster students, and a well-known Oonah protégé, was Kate Hooey, Member of Parliament, and the first woman Sports Minister. Kate recalls Oonah as Principal at the Ulster College: "She was what can only be described as a truly gracious person. In her long flowing cloak she would stride out with her dog to walk the college grounds most evenings. No problem or worry was too much for her and the sympathy and common sense she bestowed on all of us was what helped to develop not just our teaching skills, but also us, as responsible and trustworthy citizens."

Oonah was a very sharp, intelligent and observant woman. Always keen for a conversation, she loved discussing aspects of life, the nature of people, and, as a birth-right Quaker, the changing forms of Quakerism and spirituality. She loved meeting young people and, especially, children, really relishing occasional "all-age" meetings.

With a wide range of experience over a long life, she had a generously benevolent view of humanity, though being quick to face up to hypocrisy and cant. Shrewd and thoughtful, she impressed all the people she met.

For members of St Davids Quaker Meeting, her calm and dignified demeanour was a welcome sight every Sunday morning, signifying her obvious personal sense of spiritual peace and her continued sense of enquiry into the nature of things.

Signed in and on behalf of South Wales Area Meeting
held at Swansea on 14 February 2015
Carolyn Sansom and Frances Rutter, Co-Clerks

Joy Simpson

3 xi 1922 – 12 i 2015

Joy was born in Harrow, North London, and attended Haberdasher's School. She joined the Civil Service and during World War II she worked for the Ministry of Agriculture and drove around the countryside meeting with farmers. She was also billeted in Blackpool, a time she always remembered with fondness and which seemed to involve a lot of dancing with soldiers.

She met and married GW (Nick) Simpson in 1947. Nick was a teacher, and they moved to March in 1951 when he took a post at the secondary school. Joy was active in the Women's Institute, in March and beyond. She and Nick joined Centenary Baptist Church and remained active members there for years. It was around 1990 that Joy met up with Quakers, and found the silent worship so powerful and nourishing that she began regularly attending at Wisbech, and then became a member. For more than 20 years she was one of the pillars of Wisbech Local Meeting. She was 'front of house' for us, always one of the first to befriend newcomers and engage them in conversation. In the last two or three years of her life, when she needed a spiritual and community base closer to home, she re-established ties with Centenary, and for some time she was a Sunday Baptist and a Wednesday Quaker.

Joy had a lifelong love of the performing arts, an interest that began as a child when she was taken to theatres by a relative whose job was to provide live animals for the London stage. She was an amateur actress with the Anglian Players. She loved to dance; when she was 60 she decided to learn to tap-dance. She was a friend of Covent Garden and for years regularly attended dress rehearsals. She was a great storyteller and a great reader. The Baptists say, "We will always remember Joy, most of all for the way she made the Word of God come alive."

Joy's Christian faith was her strong foundation, and she lived her faith in many ways through the years. She worked with Meals on Wheels, and

did relief work with Ugandan Asian refugees. At one point she did independent assessments for people facing Social Security tribunals. She studied Russian and went on a tour to the Soviet Union. She was extremely caring for friends and neighbours, at the expense of herself at times. She considered it her business to take care of people. She never considered it anyone's business to take care of her – she was fiercely independent, and found the transition to a stage of life where she needed help and support herself very difficult. Fortunately she came to that stage very late, and did not have to put up with it for very long. During the last year of her life she instructed everyone to pray that God would make up his mind to let her die before Christmas. God missed the deadline by about three weeks.

Joy was a vigorous, energetic person who dealt with people in a direct, straightforward way. She could occasionally be a bit too "plain spoken", but never with anything like malice. She had a gift of hospitality, giving lots of parties when Nick was alive and they were younger. Even at 90, she could make any gathering into a party. When she attended our midweek meeting and shared lunches, she always had a tale to tell, and she regaled us with her punchy and spirited conversation. We would tell her how much we valued her presence, and she would say, "Yes, well, you know I only come for the food."

She made us laugh. She made us think. She made us welcome. We remember how she was comfort and support to friends in trouble. We remember how, if we managed to give her some help or service, she said we were ruddy marvels, gold-plated and all. Towards the end of her life, she often said goodbye with a blessing. It might be "The Lord bless you and keep you, my dear, the Lord make His face to shine upon you, and give you peace." Or it might be, "Bless your cotton socks."

We were blessed to have known her.

Signed in and on behalf of Cambridgeshire
Area Meeting
held at Jesus Lane on 14 February 2015
Keren Butler, Assistant Clerk

Arthur Taylor

1 xi 1916 – 6 x 2014

Although Arthur Taylor became a member of the Society of Friends comparatively late in his long life, throughout it he lived out the Quaker testimonies to peace, justice and equality.

His convictions were born of personal experience. As the only boy in his Shropshire village to pass the eleven-plus, he was very conscious of how poor his family was. At school they had military drill every Friday, and he described his village as “feudal”. Always one to question accepted beliefs, he remembered questioning early on why the men had to doff their caps to the local gentry.

His experience of working in the Rhondda in the 1930s deepened his sense of social injustice and was the beginning of his peace activism and socialism. As he wrote, “there has to be something wrong with a world that has to have a war to give a man a job... This was the turning point in my life.”

He started to attend a Friends’ meeting in Coalbrookdale, collected for Republican Spain, and became involved in anti-conscription and peace activities.

He was a conscientious objector in World War II, but was exempted from military service because of his job with the Ideal Benefit Society (a job he held until retirement, becoming Business Production Manager).

He married Margaret in 1944, and their daughter Yvonne was born in 1946. She says, “I grew up in a very politically active household”, for Margaret too was involved in the peace movement as secretary of West Midlands Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and on the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament national executive. After the war Arthur was active in the Peace Pledge Union and on the national board of *Peace News*. Yvonne remembers Vera Brittain coming to tea!

“Every stage of our lives offers fresh opportunities.”

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In his retirement Arthur worked hard in the field of social living; he felt the importance of creating sustainable communities. He was a trustee of the Redditch Housing Association and chairman of the board of the Waterloo Housing Association; he helped it grow from ten units to 500. He held this post well into his nineties, and was made president at the age of 93.

When Arthur formally became a Quaker, he was equally energetic in serving his local and area meetings. He was a natural choice for the Woodlands Quaker Home committee and became its clerk. He served Stourbridge faithfully as collector and as an overseer.

One of Arthur’s favourite poems advises, “Let there be many windows to your soul”. He was a very private person, but the poems he loved (and the poems he inspired others to write) open a window to his sense of the sacred mystery of life. The poem by Ella Wheeler Wilcox quoted above, which he read every day, also speaks of “the golden waves of love”. He liked to quote William Blake:

“And we are put on earth a little space,
That we may learn to bear the beams of love”.
That sums up Arthur. He will be greatly missed.

Signed in and on behalf of Central England
Area Meeting
held at Cotteridge on 12 May 2015
Claire Bowman, Clerk

Bernard Vaughan

8 vii 1944 – 21 x 2014

Bernard was born on 8 July 1944 into a Quaker family living in Peterborough and he took part in meeting for worship at Peterborough Meeting House all his life, together with his sister Cynthia, who still worships with us. The Vaughans were one of the founding families of Peterborough Meeting, having moved to Peterborough from Willesden in London in the 1930s, when the Baker Perkins factory (a Quaker company in those days) relocated. At the time

of his death on 21 October 2014, Bernard had been living in the same house with Cynthia and her husband James for many years, in a village just outside Peterborough.

Bernard attended Walton School in Peterborough and went on to study to be an electrical engineer at Peterborough Regional College (then Peterborough Technical College). Bernard worked for Hotpoint as an electrical engineer for all his working life before retiring in his early sixties.

Bernard put his great practical skills to use in the service of Quakers. He installed the electrics in Peterborough Meeting House, which he kept up to date. Electricity is the only power source in Peterborough Meeting House as there is no gas connection, and a sophisticated computer-controlled circuit was installed by Bernard in order to keep the meeting house warm but not waste electricity. Bernard was a very quiet man, who would come to the meeting house to attend to the electrics or do some other task and not expect help or thanks – he just got on with it.

Due to his considerable practical skills and conscientious nature, Bernard has been a longstanding member of the Peterborough Meeting House Management Committee, which sees to the care and repair of the meeting house and garden. He was involved in all matters relating to the care and maintenance of the meeting house and garden, sometimes meeting contractors regarding work which Peterborough Meeting was commissioning, but more usually doing the job himself.

A Friend remembers a happy time with Bernard, putting up the new children's climbing frame in the garden, commenting that Bernard helped her assemble the climbing frame and that he was very patient with her limited knowledge of power tools. She said his quiet humour kept her frustration level down and she remembers the incident every time she sees the children playing on equipment. Another Friend also recalled the installation of the equipment and that the children had tested the new equipment to its limits and it proved a bit wobbly, so Bernard fixed it more securely in the ground

with scaffolding poles – again without saying anything; he just did it.

Bernard was particularly good at talking to some of the destitute people who come to Peterborough Meeting House for help, being kind but not making unrealistic promises of assistance. There was one particular man, called Harry, who had an alcohol problem and often slept rough. He regularly called at the meeting house on Sundays (after meeting!) for a cup of tea, some biscuits and some companionship. He often spoke to Bernard and would ask for Bernard if Bernard was not in the room. Bernard's quiet kindness seemed to be of help to him.

Several Peterborough Friends mentioned Bernard's dry sense of humour – again the word "quiet" was used. One said that over the years, as she got to know him, they had many quiet laughs together. She enjoyed walking around the garden with him, talking about the plants, the birds, the little flowers poking through the grass – about nature. It was a gentle time with a gentle man, who was never in the forefront, but quietly picked up jobs which kept the meeting house 'ticking over'. (Another job which Bernard did was to keep the bird-feeders in the garden supplied with nuts and seeds.)

In his younger days, outside of his Quaker life, apart from work, Bernard enjoyed amateur radio and was a "radio ham", a hobby he shared with non-Quaker friends. These friends have spoken warmly of the kind and humble way in which Bernard would offer help and assistance if they needed it.

In later years, Bernard went on cruise holidays with Cynthia and James and they visited many exotic places together, the last cruise being down the east coast of Canada and the United States, a few weeks before his death.

A Peterborough Friend sums it up: "I remember Bernard as a quiet and reassuring presence at the meeting house. If any questions arose about the building or the electrics, he would invariably have the answer – and usually the very tools required somewhere about his person! He always

took the time to talk, even when engaged on a task, and would explain things carefully. I feel he had a great sense of pride in the meeting house and the garden, and he was diligent about making sure the birds were properly fed. If a problem arose, he would greet it with an infectious chuckle and get on with the job. I am aware that he paid many visits to the meeting house during the week to do jobs or check on things. He did this very unobtrusively. He lived out the grace of God in his life through faithful service to the meeting and genuine friendship and patience towards other people”.

Signed in and on behalf of Cambridgeshire
Area Meeting
held at Jesus Lane on 14 February 2015
Keren Butler, Assistant Clerk

Jim Waterhouse

8 viii 1926 – 20 xii 2014

Jim Waterhouse was born in 1926 in Bamfurlong, Abram, Lancs, in what is now Greater Manchester. He and his young brother, considerably the youngest of the family, formed a strong bond. His father was a colliery carpenter and it was in his workshop that Jim learnt many of his early skills.

His connection with the Christian faith began early when evangelical ministers in the local Anglican mission church played a large part in his childhood and he became a young Sunday school teacher at 14 and Scout leader at 16. However, by the age of 20, in 1947, he was no longer a devotee of the Anglican Church, but felt himself to be a communist, no doubt a result of the war and of his work in Abram.

The influences of education and that of his father shaped his early professional life. In 1938, aged 11, Jim won a scholarship to Ashton in Makerfield Grammar School and the family moved to an old farmhouse in Bamfurlong where his father’s workshop was now adjoining. Although this meant lots more jobs to help with, Jim was spurred on to academic success and

won the chairman’s prize for the highest school certificate grades. The headmaster recommended science sixth form for Jim, but his father said no and in 1942 he followed two of his uncles into Naylor’s structural steel works.

His hope of joining the drawing office was soon achieved and he continued his studies at Wigan Technical College. At 18 he applied to join the RAF but Naylor’s had applied for reserve occupation status. The company was moving into civil/structural work rather than colliery equipment, including items for Russia after the end of World War II. By 20 he had achieved a 2nd class BSc engineering degree.

Jim’s professional life can best be described as devoted to the needs of others, especially in the practical tasks with which he was involved in the UK and most particularly abroad.

In 1947, at the age of 21, he moved to the City of Birmingham Water Department. He helped to tackle post-war damage, remodelling the entire system, including the supply from the new Claerwen Reservoir and then designing rapid sand filters to replace old filter beds and waterworks near Coleshill, supplying Nuneaton and Coventry. In 1950 he joined Southport & District Water Board, and whilst working on boreholes and pumping stations on the Lancashire plain he also managed to study geology and became an associate member of the Institute of Civil Engineering. He progressed to a job with Inland Waterways in 1953. This post included improving the navigation of the River Weaver for larger vessels carrying salt cargoes heading for Ireland. The famous swing bridge on the A49 is another testament to Jim!

There is a sense in Jim’s life during the 1950s that he was looking for something more, which just required a catalyst. This came as the result of a ‘difference of opinion’ with one of his superiors leading to an impetuous job application; it was 1955 and a development engineer was needed for the Tema water supply from the Volta in the Gold Coast, an important post in a country preparing for independence and needing to develop its bauxite reserves potential. Jim moved on to Ghana in 1957 as hydrologist for

the whole of Ghana and engineer in charge of waterworks for the capital, Accra. However, the new government minister under Kwame Nkrumah requisitioned the main generator, creating a very difficult management situation. In 1958 he moved back to the United Kingdom, joining a firm of consulting engineers, based in London, but still travelling to many places overseas.

With all this moving about he did though manage to meet his future wife, Susan, through a shared interest in walking and debating at the Nonplus Club in Westminster. Susan, who had a physics degree, was from a Jewish background and had newly returned from three years working on low-cost housing projects in Israel. They married in 1959 and during the years that followed, Jon, Ben, Abraham and eventually Deborah arrived. Jim was combining family life with a lot of overseas travel, designing waterworks abroad. After a narrow escape in Uganda ahead of Idi Amin's coup, he decided to do research on the re-use of treated sewage effluents with applications in his engineering work. During this period Susan was an early supporter of the National Housewives Register, an organisation which later became the National Women's Register. 1968 brought a post at Silsoe College of Agricultural Engineering, partly funded by Overseas Development Administration, teaching in term time and working abroad during vacations; here he progressed to be Head of Field Engineering and about this time the children insisted that they be included in the travelling lifestyle of their parents.

Jim became associate professor at the Memorial University of Newfoundland in 1976, later to become full professor. Susan held various posts within research and education and the boys progressed through university. However, Deborah expressed a wish to go to university in the United Kingdom and so the family came to Hereford in 1986, where two years in the sixth form there enabled her to go on to Manchester University. Meanwhile Jim, now 60 and feeling too young to retire, returned to Newfoundland to complete the academic year there.

Through friendships in the 1960s, Jim and his family were introduced to Quakers in Dorking. Jim became a member of Hereford Meeting in 1988 whilst Susan enjoyed the cathedral for its music. In Hereford Susan, Jim, Sue Nichols (née Leach) and Brian Redmayne formed the Rent Guarantee Scheme to help homeless people find accommodation, a scheme taken on later by Hereford Council. Sadly Susan died in 1994.

In 2003 Jim moved out to Staunton on Wye to become a neighbour of the Redmayne's. From here Jim joined us at Almeley Wootton Meeting, where he drew on the many skills he gathered through his long and colourful life to become a valued member of the premises committee for the meeting house and grounds, treasurer and many roles besides, but above all a true Friend to all of us.

Jim loved the meeting house, cared for it using his precise engineering skills honed from many years of experience, but above all he loved meeting for worship and often delivered ministry in his quiet, thoughtful way, weaving experiences during the week into it. His ministry was uncomfortable for some, thought-provoking for many and often grounded in the biblical texts, emanating perhaps from his evangelical upbringing. He was unafraid of using the God word when he felt it appropriate and upheld, and was an anchor of traditional Quaker thinking – an element that helped to maintain a healthy spectrum of ideas in Almeley Wootton Meeting.

The love expressed previously in this testimony is an emotion through which Jim will be remembered. In love he protected all of us from an egocentric view of the world. During his final years, as insults to his body increased, he never once complained or spoke about this or that stay in hospital, rather his conversation focused on the future. Sometimes he could appear stubborn and annoyed if his world view was challenged, but as Friends got to know him, loving the meeting as he did, he was being protective and caring. Jim sometimes expressed hostility to the Roger Prichard Room project, which he considered a conceit, but was treasurer to the

project throughout, though never convinced that the funds would be raised. He kept a photocopy of every cheque sent to the project committee, because he really did believe that we would have to return the money.

When the Roger Prichard Room was complete, it was suggested that the first meeting for business should be held there. The meeting went ahead without Jim, at least initially, because our business meetings are meetings of worship. It is a testimony to Jim to his life-long experiences, to his perceived stubbornness, but above all to his spirituality and to his anchor that business meetings continue to be held in the meeting house.

Thank you, Jim.

Signed in and on behalf of Southern Marches
Area Meeting
held at Bishop's Castle on 5 September 2015
Jeff Beatty, Assistant Clerk

Monica Weeden

1930 – 22 vii 2014

Monica Weeden, who died on 22 July 2014 aged 84, attended Kingston Meeting for more than 50 years. She never sought membership of the Religious Society of Friends. Nevertheless, in practice she was as much a member as anyone in the meeting, serving it steadfastly throughout, being involved in most of its activities and on many of its committees.

Whenever there was a jumble sale to be organised or an event to be run Monica would be found working efficiently and cheerfully in the thick of it. She enjoyed cooking and could always be relied upon to provide for the monthly Quaker lunches held at the meeting house in Eden Street. Quaker lunch would not have been the happy and successful institution that it became had it not been for Monica and a few other stalwarts.

Perhaps, however, her most sustained contributions were the less conspicuous ones

– her practical advice, her total reliability and, above all, her faithful but forthright presence. These qualities were especially notable in the 30 years during which, as a member of Premises Committee, she organised all the room lettings for the Eden Street meeting house. This required her usual efficiency, friendliness in meeting and showing tenants round the building and tactfully, yet firmly, dealing with those who lost the keys they held, or failed to observe the necessary rules. She also dealt with the cleaners and helped with the garden.

Monica was a trained calligrapher, first learning the art at school aged 11. To the end of her life, she maintained the meeting's memorial book as well as helping with those of other meetings, lettering marriage certificates and many other documents.

Her accomplishments in many other crafts extended to superb needlework. Her hands were never idle and latterly she had donated many pieces to charity.

Throughout their long and devoted married life Monica was part of a formidable team of two with her husband Geoffrey. Monica and Geoff had met first at primary school, though the relationship did not flourish until 12 years later. Monica had trained as a nurse for four years at Westminster Hospital in central London. During that time she met Geoff again when they were brought together by their respective elder sisters. They married in 1953. For many who came to Kingston Meeting, Geoff and Monica were quiet mentors and guides to Quakerism, who became friends with small 'fs' as well as large. One reflection of this was the discussion group/coffee evenings that Geoff and Monica organised and hosted for many years in their hospitable home. These were occasions that warmed and stimulated the participants and through them infused Kingston Meeting with spiritual inspiration.

Monica's service, however, extended beyond Kingston Meeting into the wider community. Part of this was, for many years, representing Quakers on Kingston Council for Voluntary Service. Another part was through her work

as a nurse. After her elder daughter, Angela, was born, Monica and a small group of like-minded women started a family planning clinic in Surbiton. At the time such a thing was barely respectable and it met with some opposition in the borough. But the clinic thrived. She trained as a family planning nurse and worked regular clinics in Surbiton for 13 years as well as training other nurses.

A course in public speaking led to her giving talks to schools and local groups on sexual health and family planning. Together with Geoff, who had trained with the Marriage Guidance Council, she hosted marriage preparation groups at their home. She was at this time also involved with the National Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospital.

By 1975 the family (by then there were three children) needed less of her time and she decided to return to full-time nursing by training for a year at the North East Surrey College of Technology (NESCOL) in Epsom to be a health visitor. After qualifying she worked with Kingston families for 15 years until her retirement in 1990. Meeting her in Kingston, one would often find her greeted by people whose families she had cared for and whose names and often birth weights she nearly always remembered.

In true Monica fashion she meticulously planned her retirement. She and Geoff cultivated a large garden whose vegetables supplied their hospitable table and for many years the flowers on Sundays for meeting for worship. She volunteered for the charity Victim Support, where for ten years she helped victims of crime and prepared witnesses for court appearances. Together with four others she started the Kingston branch of the University of the Third Age (U3A) and served as both chairwoman and secretary for three years. Her association with the U3A lasted for over 20 years until her final illness, by which time she had been involved in the U3A choir, one of the music groups, latterly the patchwork group and in organising U3A holidays and days out with the General Activities Section.

The many strands of Monica's life came together, like her patchwork, into an inspirational and harmonious whole. Those who knew her will remember her generosity, her service to others, her warmth, wisdom and lack of pretension. She upheld so many 'old fashioned values' while effortlessly embracing new ideas, technology and experiences. Her lively mind with its incisive observations shone through even in her last days while her body began to fail. With typical pragmatism and courage, she settled her affairs and said her goodbyes. She was able to fulfil her wish to leave her body to medical science, which will enable others to further their knowledge through her generous gift.

Signed in and on behalf of Kingston & Wandsworth Area Meeting

held at Esher on 15 February 2015

Gillian Ashmore, Clerk

Harry Youngman

2 vii 1922 – 18 i 2015

Harry Youngman was born on 2 July 1922. His father was a fire officer on the River Thames. Harry grew up in central London living with his family in the fire stations where his father worked. He often spoke of his love of the countryside as a result of the lack of gardens and trees when he was younger. Harry was an able student at school. He gained a scholarship to attend a high school where he acquired his baccalaureate. Harry registered as a conscientious objector during the war at the age of 18 and was sent to Wormwood Scrubs for one month. He found the experience traumatic and rarely, if ever, spoke of it. He did, however, speak of going to the prison governor to request a single cell due to the treatment of the other prisoners towards him. Later he was allowed to work, nursing ex-servicemen returning from the war zone. Harry found employment at this time difficult and continued to take on different jobs. He eventually found work for a while at Oxford Botanic Gardens, being in charge of the greenhouses. After the war he went to work as

the gardener of a Quaker vegetarian guesthouse owned by Arthur Mann at Street in Somerset. It was here that he was introduced to Quakers and also where he met Elfriede, who had come to England from Germany in 1949 to work as an au pair, and as Harry put it, they 'clicked'.

Harry spoke German and the couple went over to Germany to meet Elfriede's family. It was not an easy journey. Harry was horrified by all the destruction. Elfriede's mother and family were very concerned when they heard she was going to marry an Englishman – their enemy, but when they learned that he was a Quaker, their attitude changed. They had heard of the Quaker food kitchens that had been set up during the post-war depression and knew that Quakers believed that Germany's suffering must be relieved if another war was to be avoided.

Harry and Elfriede were married at the Friends Meeting House in Street in 1952. Soon after, they became wardens of Charlbury Youth Hostel, where their son Peter was born. They then moved to Kennington just outside Oxford, but Harry continued to find it difficult to get employment as the prejudice against conscientious objectors was still much in evidence. So unable to support their growing family, having now a daughter, Hazel, they returned to the Youth Hostels Association movement, becoming wardens at Holmbury St Mary in Surrey. In 1962 they became wardens of Dorking Friends Meeting, which enabled Harry to train as a teacher at Southlands Methodist College in Wimbledon. They were hard up during these years and it was only after Harry qualified as a teacher that they began to have a secure living. Harry specialised in working with children with extreme learning difficulties and moved to Linton in 1972 to work at the former Ruggets School for special needs in Ware, Hertfordshire.

After they moved to Linton, they became members of Saffron Walden Meeting. During the following 37 years, as a couple and individually, they played a very active role in the meeting community. In addition to holding various offices within the meeting, they will also be remembered for their enthusiasm and

hard work organising monthly Saturday sales outside the meeting house, raising significant funds for Quaker Peace & Service Committee [the forerunner of Quaker Peace & Social Witness] in particular. Harry and Elfriede also regularly supported the small Quaker meeting at Bardfield. They enjoyed gardening and long walks and organised summer picnics. Harry enjoyed playing the piano. In spite of Elfriede's health problems they remained active until the onset of Harry's dementia. After Elfriede's death in 2009, Harry moved to a care home near Edinburgh to be close to his daughter, Hazel. He died there peacefully on 18 January 2015 at the age of 92.

Harry will be remembered for his unfailing good humour, his gentle kindness and his strong Christian principles – he was not known to complain. He was valiant for the truth.

Signed in and on behalf of Thaxted Area Meeting

held at Saffron Walden on 14 June 2015

Paul Parker & Loes Reeve, Co-Clerks

