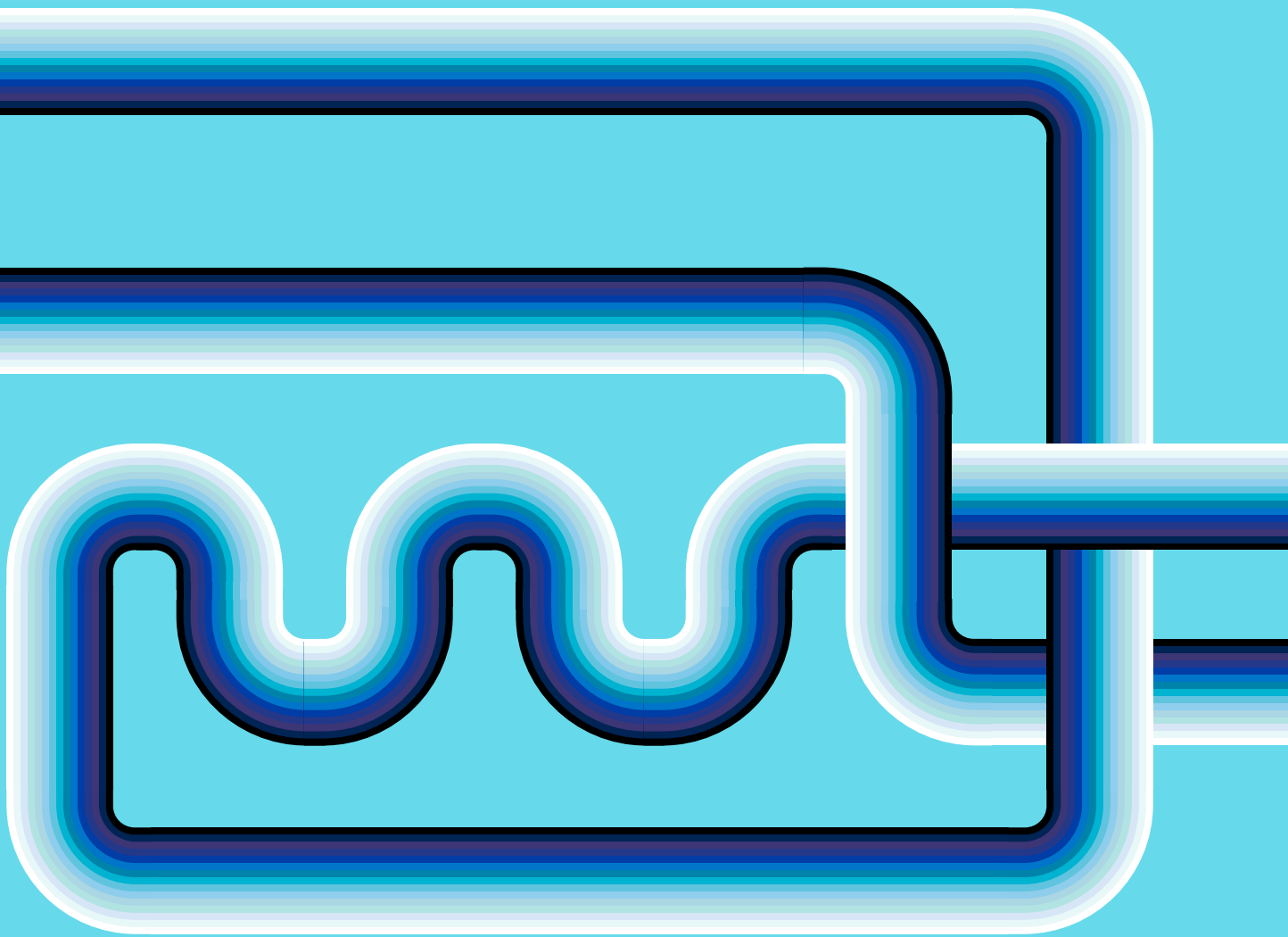


Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society  
of Friends (Quakers) in Britain

# Epistles & testimonies



Compiled for Yearly Meeting,  
Friends House, London  
4–7 May 2018





This booklet is part of 'Proceedings of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers in Britain) 2018', a set of publications published for Yearly Meeting.

The full set comprises:

1. The *Agenda & notes*, with introductory material for Yearly Meeting 2018 and annual reports of Meeting for Sufferings, Quaker Stewardship Committee and other related bodies
2. *Epistles & testimonies*
3. *Minutes*, to be distributed after the conclusion of Yearly Meeting
4. The formal *Trustees' annual report* including financial statements for the year ended December 2017
5. *Tabular statement*.

All documents are available online at [www.quaker.org.uk/ym](http://www.quaker.org.uk/ym). If these do not meet your accessibility needs, or the needs of someone you know, please email [ym@quaker.org.uk](mailto:ym@quaker.org.uk).

Printed copies of all documents will be available at Yearly Meeting.

All *Quaker faith & practice* references are to the online edition ([www.quaker.org.uk/qfp](http://www.quaker.org.uk/qfp)). In many cases these correspond to the printed Fifth edition.

Yearly Meeting of the  
Religious Society of Friends  
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# Epistles

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# 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 2017.*

## 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 per cent 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 per cent 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 per cent 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 2017 and after the deadline for 2016 epistles. Their content reflects the diversity of our worldwide family of Friends.

# From Europe and the Middle East

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## Belgium and Luxembourg Yearly Meeting

Greetings to Friends everywhere from the Belgium & Luxembourg Yearly Meeting.

We held our residential yearly meeting for the second consecutive year at Maldegem in East Flanders, from 12 to 14 May 2017. The guiding theme of this year's gathering was "Quaker lives, personal lives – what can I say?" Twenty-six adult Friends attended, as well as three children. We were pleased to be joined by Friends from Britain Yearly Meeting, France Yearly Meeting and Netherlands Yearly Meeting, as well as by a representative of the Europe and Middle East Section of the Friends' World Committee for Consultation, who brought a message of greetings from Europe and Middle East Section (EMES). We also received a message of greetings from the FWCC's World Office. We began on a joyful note by welcoming a young Friend into membership.

We adopted an open model of organisation: Friends attending the gathering were invited to put forward subjects for workshops which they wished to hold and these were put into the timetable: there were three or four such sessions for each timeslot and Friends could choose freely which groups they wished to take part in, with the possibility of moving between workshops.

The subjects of the workshops could be divided into four broad groups: nurturing and developing our meeting; examining our faith; living our faith; and living as Quakers in the world. In considering the holding of meeting for worship, while trying to strengthen Quaker practice, we are minded that we should not only tolerate but embrace each other's differences, strengths and weaknesses. Although we have a thriving Quaker community we are mindful that

constant effort is needed to maintain this and to reach out to people in the different language communities. At this yearly meeting some workshops naturally moved into languages other than English.

Although we have no creeds, we have Quaker testimonies, but these must not be imposed on Friends as a substitute for a creed. Our faith is grounded in silent worship and comes from leadings from within. We spent some time discussing theological terms, especially those used in Christianity, and we found that they opened up a deeper debate. One result of this workshop was a resolve to see how this discussion can be taken forward in future deepening sessions. As Quakers we can find inspiration in many places and a workshop on blues music and Quaker spirituality surprised us with new insights. We also learned that even simple questions such as "who am I?" can lead to thought-provoking responses.

It has never been more important to speak truth to power and we resolve to continue the discussion on how we can improve our visibility and influence, amplifying our voice in order that we can live our faith in the world more effectively.

There is a need and a desire for Quaker values in the world and we note that many people, especially the young, share our concerns. We are convinced that there is an important role for Quakers and for organisations such as the Quaker Council for European Affairs in an increasingly troubled world. It is up to all of us to increase our efforts to meet this need.

In and on behalf of Belgium and Luxembourg  
Yearly Meeting

Ruth Harland, Clerk  
Chloé Tan, Assistant Clerk

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## Central European Gathering of Friends

Brno, Czech Republic

On 18–21 May 53 people including nine children and one dog, Berta, met in Brno, Czech Republic for the 21st Annual Central European Gathering. Although Friends transcend all borders, we acknowledge people coming from Austria, Belarus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, Ukraine and United Kingdom. A gathering of families, of friends, of Quakers indeed. The Central European Gathering has been evolving towards a regional meeting from a bridge-building started by Austria, Czech Republic and Hungary and Europe and Middle East Section (EMES), gathering isolated Quakers and groups in central Europe.

The gathering began with country reports. The highlights included the growth in meetings in Poland and the influence in Czech Republic of funding by Bader Philanthropies. In retrospect, we highlight the importance of welcoming newcomers at the beginning of future gatherings. There were presentations by Gabriela Hotovcova, Michael Luick-Thrams, Kristjan Laes and Jasmine Piercy, and a video by Charles Tauber. Cathy Butler facilitated a workshop on identity (including feeling at home among Quakers). Jalka introduced us to her work on creative, constructive handling of conflict. Julia Ryberg of EMES talked about and encouraged us to develop small grant fund projects to strengthen our Quaker groups and the links among us and document, for example, our Quaker practices and histories.

Friends remembered dearly Waltraud Engel and Evzen (Eugen) Schart. We brought their presence amongst our midst through our words and memories. The children outside offered us a sense of continuity. Music has become an important element in Central European Gatherings.

We thank Czech Friends who organized the gathering in the beautiful setting of Penzion Zahrada in Brno. Just as this gathering has evolved into a vital Quaker community, we as Friends have deepened our sense of each other and of our faith as part of our identity.

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## Epistle from Friends World Committee for Consultation – Europe and Middle East Section Annual Meeting

Held at Haus Venusberg, Bonn,  
Germany 4–7 May 2017

To all Friends everywhere greetings. We wish you vibrancy in your meetings: Vivacita! Zivost! Vitalite! Liewenskraaft a vitaliteit! Elinvoima! Medryckande vibrerande! Die strahlende Lebendigkeit! Beogacht! ¡Vibrantes con mucha vida! Opgeweekt en blijmoedig!

We send loving greetings from a beautifully wooded area on the edge of Bonn, where 46 Friends have met to bring our business up to date, see one another's faces, hear one another's stories and gather inspiration for the development of Quakers in Europe and the Middle East.

Our theme of 'Vibrant meetings, vibrant section', introduced by Simon Best of Woodbrooke, was followed by useful small group discussions. Vibrancy includes the creative imagination that helps us work effectively to bring the future into being – an apt link with the function of Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) Geneva. Lindsey Fielder Cooke inspired us with practical examples of the ways in which QUNO's quiet informal provision of safe confidential discussion spaces makes a contribution on unpopular fronts and helps persuade diplomats of the interrelationship between issues such as human rights, peace-building, and climate change. She argued that climate change is only one of nine great challenges, the first two being biodiversity (extinction) and chemical pollution. Yet she also named specific examples that gave us hope that change is occurring and our efforts can help accelerate positive action. We urge Friends to consult the QUNO website, for its list of concise reasons for Friends to take urgent action on climate change.

We were glad to hear of the continued vibrancy of European & Middle Eastern Young Friends, an organisation now over 30 years old. A separate discussion focused on changed provision for teenagers/young adults. Plans in hand for the Quaker Youth

Pilgrimage would leave 16–18 year olds without dedicated events; EMES is exploring ways to ensure that teenagers continue to have opportunities for transformational meetings with one another.

We learned of the dedicated work of volunteer Friends at the Eurosatory Arms Trade Fair. They provide a necessary distinctive protesting voice, seeking real contact and not confrontation with arms dealers and customers.

From a Czech Friend we heard of exciting developments for Quakers in Central Europe; with EMES support, isolated Friends have met annually since the mid-1990s as the Central European Gathering of Friends. Now this has led to the major step of deciding that Friends in Poland, Hungary, Austria and Czech Republic will combine as the Central European Regional Meeting and will support the growth of emerging small meetings and worship groups spanning several languages and cultures. Preparatory meetings and the main gathering are now held three times yearly as they learn their responsibilities and develop their practice.

The Conference of European Churches sent out an Open Letter on the Future of Europe to its members in 2016, requesting responses in preparation for the 2018 General Assembly in Novi Sad. Were we prepared to strengthen the voice of Quakers as a peace church by endorsing the draft Quaker response which was brought to us by a small group of Friends who had been working on it since the Peace & Service Consultation in 2016? Only by doing so would EMES be in a position to put a strong peace church view at Novi Sad. Our discussion movingly emphasised the underlying unity of European faith groups and the importance of our being a visible part of the Conference. We wholeheartedly decided to endorse the document and to commend it to yearly meetings.

Following an introduction from Julia Ryberg, we spent time in small groups thinking about how any of our Section's meetings outside Britain Yearly Meeting might put forward imaginative projects as applications to the Small Grants Fund (or spiritual growth fund, a nickname that appealed to everyone as being immediately appropriate). Projects might

be to help meetings document their own stories and those of key individuals; this would itself grow and strengthen the meetings and would provide outreach tools. Visiting and interviewing other meetings could be very stimulating. Work on key documents could help increase the number and range of Faith & Practice documents (pamphlets, booklets, books, webbooks) across our Section. We have much to explore further, new ideas to try, friendships to maintain and develop, work to do, hope to nourish by action.

Several workshop sessions led us deeper into agenda topics. Some of us learned about theories of conflict resolution. Others spent time considering worshipfully what intervisitation is, reminding ourselves that it stems from meeting to “see one another's faces and open our hearts one to another” as George Fox put it in the Yearly Meeting Epistle of 1668. We were moved to hear how crucial the long tradition of such visiting is to isolated Friends and we thought of our responsibility to help support worship in our small European groups. This brings just as much joy to visitors as those being visited. It is a truly mutual enrichment. We encourage Friends to think of committing to this as a theme in their own area, yearly and regional meetings. If each meeting found a minimum of one Friend to visit another meeting, whether nearby or across a border, we should greatly deepen the awareness of ‘Friends on the bench’ of being members of a Section and should create widening webs of F/friendship.

In our time together we widened those friendship webs informally through sharing meetings for walking, for museum visiting, for entertainment – and for learning to draw Quaker cartoons (though we shall never match the skill and wit of our teacher Erik Dries).

We part, grateful for this opportunity and hoping to meet again in Bergen, Norway in June 2018, shortly before the bicentenary of the founding of Quakers in Norway. Norwegian Friends have accommodation at the event for more than three times the usual number of participants. So come and join us and support the growth of intervisitation in the Section!

Sue Glover Frykman, Clerk

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## German Yearly Meeting

13-16 October 2016

Concern for our planet and worries about sustainability and climate change were at the forefront of our yearly meeting in Bonn right from the start. But the yearly meeting was also encouraged by the hope of unreasonable optimists who spoke to us through the epistles of many other yearly meetings. We found it exciting and inspiring to hear excerpts from selected epistles from around the world, read to us by several Friends.

During the Cary Lecture, ‘Open to New Light’, given by Janet Kreysa, we heard about important scientists who had – or have – a Quaker background. Janet left us with the thought that, if we want to create a better world, “we have to be well-informed as regards political, technological, and economic issues”. We need science for observation and analysis, and religion to guide our actions.

The fact that no concerns were formally submitted to the yearly meeting this year gave rise to both critical reflections and encouraging thoughts which were expressed during ministry in our meetings for worship.

We are dismayed that Europe, when confronted by the suffering of refugees, is surrounding itself with barbed wire fences. We feel keenly the lack of our corporate peace work, especially in the face of the growth of conflict around the world and in the context of huge increases in arms expenditure. We feel that we have some responsibility for what happens in Europe, so we are increasing our support for the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA).

We are trying to reduce our expenditure on salaries in order to reduce our financial deficit. At the same time, we feel that our Society is being enriched as members, groups, and regional meetings take on some of the tasks on a voluntary basis once again. For similar reasons we are also moved to consider the future of our Quaker House in Bad Pyrmont.

One-hundred-and-ninety-eight participants met 13–16 October in Venusberg, Bonn, for the yearly meeting, which was enlivened by music this year. Thirty-seven children and young people enriched our gathering. Delegates and many other guests brought greetings and inspiration from other yearly meetings.

We are thankful that we have been able to meet together here in the spirit of love, mutual respect, and listening, and in the spirit of making an active contribution. And we are full of confidence as we send hopeful greetings to Friends throughout the world.

Sabine Alvermann and Neithard Petry, Co-clerks

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## German Yearly Meeting

2-5 November 2017

Loving greetings to Friends everywhere.

The 87th Yearly Meeting of German and Austrian Friends, held in our Quakerhaus (Quaker House) in Bad Pyrmont, was attended by 205 people. Our time together was greatly enriched by the presence of around 20 Friends from other yearly meetings, and also a large number of children and young people.

This year’s Richard L. Cary Lecture, given by Paul Parker, Recording Clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting, was entitled ‘Special offer! What do we Quakers have to offer the world in these turbulent times?’ Paul reminded us that, often in difficult times, Quakers have pointed the way towards a future with room for compassion, where human life is valued; we are called to do this right now if we really mean to live out our faith.

In the silence of our Quaker worship we search together for the truth, truth which some, but by no means all, call God; the very foundation of our faith, influencing, for many of us, every aspect of our lives. But far too many of us hesitate to reveal this, even to each other, perhaps because we are afraid of seeming peculiar, or even because we are unwilling to give the appearance of missionary zeal. But unless we demonstrate our Quakerism, how will the world ever get to know about us?

Paul Parker urges us not to “hide our light under a bushel” but to have the courage to be open about our Quakerism, clearly stating what we believe, and acting on these beliefs.

If we fail to do this it is as if we are all taking part in a shared picnic, but one where the picnic baskets we brought all remain firmly closed. Spiritual nourishment, both for ourselves and others, only takes place when we are ready to open up our picnic baskets and spread out and share the contents.

Maybe we cannot offer ready-made answers, but we are a company of seekers, able to offer both mutual support and companionship in seeking.

These ideas resonated with a concern that was already present in our meetings for business. Many of us, including Paul, only managed to find Quakers after years, or even decades, of searching for like-minded people; so what is it that prevents us making our Quakerism better known throughout Germany?

A further pressing concern is the existence in Germany of US American atomic weapons, stationed, with the cooperation of Germany, in Büchel in the Eifel region, available for use in the event of a Nato mission. We abhor the idea that such weapons launched from our land could be used to bring death and destruction around the world, and a group of us is starting an initiative in which we, as Quakers, plan to take part in non-violent protest, with the support of our yearly meeting.

The matter that exercised us most was that of the future, both of our historic house and of our continuing fellowship as Friends. Until recently many had been unaware of how often the Quakerhaus in Bad Pyrmont is standing empty. Very few local Friends now live and worship in Bad Pyrmont. The house only really comes to life during our yearly meetings, held there every second year.

With its practically unique architecture, it is a source of inspiration to us, but even so, its upkeep takes up a seriously high proportion of our budget. With all this in mind a project was initiated about a year ago to investigate possible

scenarios for the future, considering both the wishes of Friends and the financial possibilities. The hearts of many of us are stirred by the experience of sitting in the main meeting room, with its lofty ceiling, suspended from an invisible roof support, high above us.

This room, first built in 1800, means a great deal to most of us, being a place where we have so often experienced the Light during our meetings for worship and business. Here too we feel at one with all those departed Friends whose ashes rest in the adjacent Burial Ground.

As we explored all this together, we discovered that it is not only the question of our meeting house that is important, but even more, of the way we as a religious society go forward into the future.

We rejoice in the fact that our Young Friends are seeking to be more closely involved in the life of the yearly meeting, and we look forward to the exchanges with them that this closer connection will bring.

We have heard from our aid and development programme, Quäkerhilfe ( Quaker help) that they continue working in a variety of small projects, helping improve people’s living conditions, simultaneously aiming to promote peace, non-violence and cooperation. This includes the building up of the Alternative to Violence Project (AVP) in several countries. We were most interested to hear from one of our visitors, a member of AVP Sudan, as he described the work of AVP in his homeland.

Your epistles, read out at the beginning of our meeting, give us a deep feeling of connectedness with you as we strive to bring more Light into the world.

Sabine Alvermann & Neithard Petry, Co-Clerks

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# Ireland Yearly Meeting

To Friends Everywhere

We send warm greetings from Ireland Yearly Meeting, held from 20–23 April 2017 at the High School, Rathgar, Dublin. The theme of our yearly meeting was a quotation from Mahatma Gandhi “Live simply, so that others may simply live”. This theme was reflected in many of our sessions and special interest groups covering sustainability, ethical investment, tax justice, peace witness and the need for an inclusive society. We also tried to bring it forward into the practicalities of our meeting by requesting more local/organic produce, simpler meals including more vegetarian options and by considering the sustainability of our gathering.

Our Eco Quakers Committee reported on the progress made by individual meetings in developing Sustainability Plans. Our Investment Committees are bringing forward strategies to align our investments with our commitment to be sustainable by divesting of fossil fuel shares and considering positive social investments.

In response to a request for more spiritual reflection during our yearly meeting, we commenced each day with 30 minutes of silent worship in plenary session. We also met in small groups at the end of each day to reflect on the day’s proceedings. We continued, as in previous years, to facilitate worship sharing and bible study groups in the early mornings and candlelit worship in the evenings.

In our Ministry & Oversight session, the topic was “Feeling Alone”. We were deeply moved to hear the stories of Friends’ loneliness at particular times in their lives and how they came to an acceptance of being alone. We were encouraged to be sensitive to the situation of Friends and to listen. The words of our Lord from Isaiah 41:10 “Be not afraid, I am with you” brought – and continue to bring – comfort to Friends.

Our Public Lecture, given by Rachel M. Bewley-Bateman, was entitled “The way, the truth and the life – what does this mean for us today?” Rachel took us on a journey through history, tracing the origins of Quakerism and the impact of this on her personal journey. We reflected on the importance of truth and integrity as part of our Quaker witness in the world.

We welcomed visitors from a number of other yearly meetings and worship groups and sought to look outside our yearly meeting. We heard about the important work being done on our behalf internationally by the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) and by the Ecumenical Accompaniers in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI). Our Welcoming Refugees Group organised an information and discussion session on “A new life – an inclusive society – insights into enforced migration” which included speakers from Syria and Afghanistan. We heard that some refugees feel like trees that have been uprooted from country to country and they need our welcome and friendship to help them settle in.

As we reflect on our theme, we realise that it can sometimes take longer than we wish to introduce all the changes necessary to “Live simply”, even though some of these changes may be simple. We are reminded that the challenge is as much a spiritual call as a material one and that our vision of sustainability must extend beyond our meetings to our own lives, our families and our communities. “Vision without action is merely a dream; action without vision just passes the time, but vision with action can change the world” (Joel A. Barker).

Signed on behalf of Ireland Yearly Meeting

E Heather Bewley, Clerk  
Bairbre NicAongusa, Assistant Clerk  
Clodagh Davis, Assistant Clerk

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## Netherlands Yearly Meeting

To Friends everywhere,

In the shady woods around Bennekom we gathered in De Bosbeek for our Annual Gathering on the 19th, 20th and 21st of May, 2017.

60 Quakers from The Netherlands and abroad, among them 6 children, assembled to contemplate the theme 'Living the Transformation.' On Friday evening we worked in small groups on 'building bridges' (an extension of our overall theme) in a playful and creative way. With childlike enthusiasm, coupled with much laughter, we constructed bridges using blank sheets of paper, tape, staples and markers. We went through a hands-on process of design to achieve our goal; a pleasant alternative. At the presentation the final products were much appreciated by all Friends present.

The new international theme, 'Inclusive Safety,' developed further by two of our members, was presented from different points of view by four Friends, including Andrew Lane of the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) and Maarten van der Werf of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT). Johannes Borger and Kees Nieuwerth also shared about their activities, both in the Netherlands and internationally, to bring peace activists together, using this theme as a foundation. With fascination we listened to all four speakers, after which we split up into groups to dive deeper into the theme.

A crucial question was put forward during the weekend: how do we shape both our in- and outreach? This question requires further elaboration.

Saturday evening started with campfire and singing, followed by Friends dispersing into interest groups.

During the meetings for business, interludes with inspirational contributions of poetry, prose, images or music invited us to do more silent contemplation.

Being gathered with so many Friends, the meeting for worship on Sunday morning was a rich experience.

It was a beautiful and fruitful weekend.

Marlies Tjallingii, Clerk

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## Nordic Friends Yearly Meeting

We send our warmest greetings to Friends around the world from our combined Nordic Friends yearly meeting of 2017.

The Nordiska Folkhögskolan near Gothenburg, Sweden, was founded 70 years ago to manifest the peace in the wake of World War II. It rests in an idyllic setting on a hill overlooking a remnant of warfare: medieval Bohus Fortress (1308). The fortress is in ruins, while the school continues to carry forward a tradition of education, featuring a flourishing inter-Nordic curriculum, for all ages post-high-school.

The venue chosen for the Nordic Friends Yearly Meeting 2017 was appropriate not only for its practical and scenic qualities but also because of the fact that Jeanna Oterdahl (1879-1965) – a writer, educator, and Friend – was a co-founder in 1947. Jeanna taught here and also was on the board for 20 years. We have read her poetry and sung her songs in our meetings.

The theme for the gathering "Am I my brother's keeper?" was chosen to address our concern for the condition of the world today, where violence is too often normalized in our societies: in politics, film and TV, by the multinational war machine and its consequences, and with the erosion of the social contract in a world of rising conflict.

The theme was explored in a talk by Finnish Friend Jaana Erkkilä-Hill (in no less than four languages: Swedish, English, Finnish, and Norwegian). She helped us to see that our societies are full of Cains, who feel they are entitled to more and have the right to take it by force; and also the many Abels, the innocent victims, and how few Jobs, who accept the ups and downs in life with the gentle attitude that they deserve neither the good nor the bad. She also touched upon what can be done for the Cains we encounter, besides explaining their ill deeds by saying that they too were slighted. How do we nourish the good in Cain? Jaana concluded that Cain and Abel represent two sides of each human being, and each of our



societies, in patterns of both active and passive violence. In addressing this complex and difficult picture, our first response is to be “quietly waiting on God”.

We had workshops, in some of which we were using our thoughts and words to fathom the theme, in others motion or silence brought us to new kinds of consciousness.

The Friends Service Committees of Norway and Sweden focused our awareness through a quick series of learning stations covering their work in Central Africa, Bangladesh, Gaza, and other places. They had us write postcards and tweets urging those in power to ameliorate problems in these places –one offered the foreign minister an air ticket to visit Gaza.

We held a celebratory and welcoming worship for young Friends who have prepared for membership in Norway YM through their three-year youth “confirmation” program. It was a joyous and rich occasion of prayer, ministry and song.

Again we have appreciated the spiritual enrichment and extended fellowship of this gathering of the four Nordic Yearly Meetings. With large and small we have been one hundred and twenty-three souls, including visitors from six other European countries, India and USA. We look forward to meeting again in three years’ time, and leave with the hope that we may make positive contributions to peace wherever we go.

With our warmest salutations,

Hanne Hognestad, Norway  
Wilhelm Dahllöf, Sweden  
Leena Lampela, Finland  
Jessica Klaphaak, Denmark

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## Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) General Assembly

7–8 April 2017

To all Friends everywhere: We met in Brussels as the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA’s) General Assembly of European Yearly Meeting representatives. Building on 40 years of experience and support from yearly meetings, this was our first gathering since we changed our constitution and direction last October. This new era for QCEA comes just at the right time to live out our witness in newly focused workstreams of peace and human rights, giving a new context to Quaker traditions of advocacy, quiet diplomacy, bridge-building and networking across Europe.

As we complete our transition programme, we have confidence and hope that by this new approach we can really make an effective contribution to peacebuilding and dialogue in present-day Europe. With our staff, we have found the courage to continue speaking with decision-makers who have approaches profoundly at odds with our own and find new ways to move away from militarised solutions. In 2017, QCEA will also be examining immigration detention, in particular by shining a light on detention of children in Europe.

We are developing a comprehensive strategic plan which underpins the programme of work for our staff team, and hope to finalise that at our October meeting this year. We believe we are better able to articulate what QCEA does and is inspired to achieve. In our discernment on our funding and financial planning, we see the need to identify additional new funding sources, and we reach out enthusiastically to Friends everywhere to sponsor our project work in whatever way they feel they can.

We received and considered documents from two organisations: a declaration from a conference on faith and peace held in Croatia, and the draft Quaker response to the Conference of European Churches’ open letter on the future of Europe.

We look forward to engaging with the wider family of Friends at this year's QCEA Study Tour of European institutions (24 June–1 July), as well as our events with Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre (9–11 February 2018) and our conference with Quaker Peace & Social Witness in Brussels on 1-3 December 2017, entitled Sanctuary Everywhere.

In and on behalf of QCEA General Assembly  
Oliver Robertson, Clerk

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## Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) General Assembly

6–7 October 2017

To Friends everywhere,

Are you passionate about seeing and living in a world transformed? We are. That is why we, Friends from ten countries across Europe, gathered in Brussels on 6th and 7th October 2017 for the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) General Assembly.

As we came together, news was released of the award of this year's Nobel Peace Prize to the International Coalition to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). An encouraging and uplifting piece of news, in a context of a world ever more belligerent, and the European Union moving increasingly towards militarism in its policy, finance and practice.

Through QCEA we are creating a world where the intrinsic equality of all people is respected. For example, a child is a child, wherever they come from. Children should be treated with dignity and special care. The human rights team are helping policy makers to work on practical alternatives, so that the detention of child migrants may become the exception, and then history. The report published in July formed the basis of their contribution to a conference on the issue held in Prague in September 2017.

In a fearful world, where the dominant discourse is about “security and defence”, the QCEA Peace team offers new hope and an answer to the question: “If not military intervention, then what?” They are developing tools that enable decision makers to put peace building and soft power at the heart of their theory and practice. A full report will be launched at the turn of the year. It will show how every sector of human endeavour is amenable to becoming a peace building project, and how links can be created between different spheres of activity.

Reflecting on our presence together in epilogue and prologue, we cherished our spiritual fellowship, grounding in faith and prayerful discernment, and nurturing of the “hope of things yet unseen” (Romans 8), which are all central to the work of QCEA.

We are excited about the programme of work ahead, set out in the context of a vibrant strategy document, adopted by the General Assembly. In particular, we look forward to the Sanctuary Everywhere conference to be held jointly with Quaker Peace & Social Witness of Britain Yearly Meeting (QPSW) on 1–3 December 2017, to the developing work on challenging the hate discourse against migrants in the comments sections of news websites, the initiative to take care of the psychological needs of volunteers working with refugees, and the development of safe and legal ways for migrants and refugees to find safety, through limited territorial visas and the creation of community sponsorship programmes. We trust the focussed and energetic team to deliver these plans, and pledge to hold them in the Light and go back to our meetings to seek resources for the work, without which it could not be done.

How can you support the work of QCEA?

Andrew Lane,  
Quaker Council for European Affairs Director

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# Ramallah Friends Meeting (Quakers)

February 2017

Epistle to Friends worldwide

This second month of the year in Palestine is a time when the cold of winter begins to break. Between the hard stones which scatter the hillsides, life once dormant emerges once again. Within a few days, beautiful red poppies will carpet the surrounding fields as if to remind us that life abundant is always close by.

In this 2017 year, the wider Palestinian community will mark 50 years of military occupation and nearly 70 years since the beginning of the tragic displacement of the Palestinian people known as the Nakhba. Meanwhile, the people of Gaza, largely a refugee community themselves, are going on 10 plus years of an incapacitating and inhumane siege. As a consequence, four generations of Palestinians have now experienced displacement, daily hardship, the de-development of their society, and the denial of their basic rights.

The Ramallah Friends Meeting, formed in the early 1900's, has borne witness to this historical reality, sharing faithfully throughout the years both its sufferings and joys, by consistently offering an inclusive space for both spiritual nourishment and physical refuge. We, therefore, take this occasion to:

1. Recall our history of service, including the offering of emergency shelter and the schooling of children whose families were uprooted from their homes on the coastal plain because of the Nakhba in 1948;
2. Affirm our continued steadfast presence and ability to adapt our ministries throughout the past half century of a harsh military occupation and all its constraints;
3. Invite Friends and fellow sojourners worldwide to join us, as they are led, in non-cooperation with violent structures that deny freedom, equality and justice;

4. Commit ourselves to lay, in new and bold ways, an ever-stronger foundation, envisioning a continued relevant and vital presence in the heart of Ramallah; and
5. Express our deep appreciation to Jean Zaru as we mark the 30th year of her service as clerk of the Ramallah Friends Meeting while, at the same time, celebrating her continued involvement in the life of the meeting.
6. Friends, in all manner, the meeting stands at a new year waiting on the Spirit and eager to affirm life in its abundance by continuing to build a culture of peace and nonviolence, in a city and a region experiencing prolonged upheaval.

First day meeting for worship continues at 10:30 in the morning in the historic meeting house. The tradition of mid-week meeting for worship has been revived, fostering fellowship and offering additional opportunities for worship.

The meeting's gardens offer an oasis of greenery and solitude in a bustling city and chaotic world. The witness to the daily living of a theology of nonviolence continues to be faithfully shared with travelers, far and wide. In addition, essays, meditations and queries are regularly made available on our new website; and frequent updates may be found on our Facebook page.

Throughout the coming days and years, we seek to remain both steadfast and forward thinking as we affirm abundant life in the midst of a tumultuous reality; and thereby be reminded that the business of our lives is, "...to turn all treasures we possess into the channel of Universal love..." (John Woolman)

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# Switzerland Yearly Meeting

2–5 June 2017, Herzberg near Aarau

This year the Protestant churches mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, a matter of special relevance to many Swiss. Yet, as we learned in our Annual Gathering this year, this was part of a much longer process of revitalization beginning in the 11th century and out of which Quakers too emerged. Three speakers – an historian, a theologian, and a specialist on the Waldensians (one of the early reform movements) — spoke to the theme of ‘An exploration of roots and what may be growing from them’. They described how these early reformers, distressed by how Christianity was currently being lived, were led to call for a return to the simple teachings of Jesus. What they proposed bears striking similarity to the principles we Quakers espouse: simplicity, equality, commitment to the truth, pacifism, and direct experience of the Divine. Luther proclaimed that it is God who works in us through his Spirit when we open ourselves in trust.

Renewal and revitalization is also the immediate challenge now facing Swiss Friends. Swiss Yearly Meeting is comprised of several worship groups and one monthly meeting. Our declining membership, the strain on our clerks and committees, and our deep concern about the state of our world pressed us to think about the future of our Yearly Meeting and how we can best strengthen it. Putting our minds to it, we came up with ways to streamline our administrative structure and processes. We proposed to create a team of clerks to share the work more widely and to reduce the number of committees while maintaining commitment to inclusiveness. A number of ideas arose for simplifying the decision-making process and promoting connections among dispersed Friends.

Despite the challenge of three languages – German, French, English – we found much in common. During our three days together, we enjoyed a rich array of workshops on Quaker practice, dreamwork, our identity as Quakers, and the very impressive work of Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO).

Even the meetings for business were a surprising source of new insights and knowledge of Quaker practice that we do not ordinarily learn in the silence of meetings for worship. In the evenings, we considered the multiple messages in selected Bible readings. We sang and our more talented members told stories and played music. It was Young Friends who brought an especially precious contribution to the spiritual side of the meeting. Their epistle accompanies this one.

## Kids' epistle

This weekend our main topics were: silence, listening and action. On Saturday, we started with silence. We discussed inner and outer silence, what silence is for Quakers or others, and how it influences daily life. Finally, we asked ourselves whether being in a group or alone affects silence.

Next was listening. We discovered that it's not only taking but also giving and finding a balance. We also played games to experience it physically.

The last thing was action. On Sunday morning, we led a session with the rest of the meeting. After this, we understood that many Quakers believe change or action does not need to be big and/or bold to be important. We took from this that small actions in everyday life can make a change in the world.

We also enjoyed a lesson of calligraphy with Michel, we sang a few pretty songs with Senovio, and made bookmarks to sell to support Junior Nzitare.

# From Africa

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## Chavakali Yearly Meeting

The 21st Annual Delegates Conference of Chavakali Yearly Meeting was held at Demesi Friends Church from 16th August to 20th August, 2017.

Demesi Friends Church is situated off Kisumu/Kakamega Highway about five (5) kilometers westwards from Mbale market along the murrum road. Demesi Friends Church is in Demesi sub-location Izava South Location Chavakali

Division, Sabatia Sub-County and Vihiga County of Western Kenya.

The name Demesi was derived from the native man who had come from Southern part of Maragoli and since he was a foreigner he was murdered by the locals and hence the name 'Demesi'. The founders of Demesi Friends Church were Paul Kigame, Enos Luzuvi among others in the year 1912.

The area experiences modified equatorial type of climate where the inhabitants practice small scale mixed farming.

The conference was officially opened by the Presiding Clerk Chavakali Yearly Meeting Abineah Chavangi. He read from the books of Mark 2:13-17 and Mathew 28:16-20. He reminded the 298 registered delegates from the 15 monthly meetings that they are followers of Jesus Christ and that they should leave Demesi as good Disciples of Christ.

The theme for the Conference was 'Looking for a righteous dwelling' which was derived from 2nd Peter 3:13-14 and was introduced by the main speaker, Pastor Simeon Belengu from Malava Yearly Meeting.

The speaker further explored the theme, reminding the believers that there should be love,

faithfulness, kindness and patience among all Church members and leaders. He further said that those who walk in righteousness have peace, joy and love. He referred to Romans 14:17, Ephesians 4:1, Psalms 15 among others. He also urged believers to respond to God's call and know that to get to the kingdom of God, we must live righteously. Believers should long for a new heaven and new earth.

He assured the believers that God forgives sins even if they are as red as blood. The main speaker dwelt heavily on repentance and forgiveness reminding believers that they should lay all burdens aside. He gave reference from the book of 2nd Corinthians 5:17 and Hebrews 9:27. He further urged believers to love and to forgive as it is a two way traffic. He emphasized on self-sustaining attitudes that Christ Jesus had with reference to Philippians 2:2-5, Lamentations 3:40.

Other topics covered were Effective Communication by Kahi Indimuli, (The Principal Chavakali National High School, Agri-business by Dorice Mukaya of Rural Outreach Programme (R.O.P) Africa and Edgar Ala from Nairobi Yearly Meeting who is also the Reading Clerk Friends Church in Kenya (FCK), taught about Church Stewardship.

The conference was also blessed with visitors from Friends World Committee for Consultation, Africa Section (FWCC), Friends Church in Kenya (FCK), and Friends United Meeting – Kisumu Office (FUM) among others.

The Young Friends Programme (Y.F.P) Praise and Worship team played a vital role during the period. Monthly meeting church choirs competed in singing and the leading choirs were given gifts.

The Conference was officially closed by the Presiding Clerk Abineah Chavangi who read the closing minute and declared the 21st Annual Delegates Conference closed.

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# Nairobi Yearly Meeting

31st Annual General Conference, 3  
September 2017

To all Friends worldwide

Greetings in the mighty name of our lord Jesus Christ.

The above conference was held from 30th August to 3rd September 2017 at Friends Center, Ofafa Maringo situated 6 km's east of Nairobi City. This is a former rescue center for the Mau Mau victims of the post-independent struggle.

The weather was cool at about 26°C. The conference was held a few days after the National General Elections. The delegates prayed for peace in the nation. The mood of the conference was warm and jovial and with 347 delegates in attendance from all the 21 monthly meetings. In attendance were representatives from the Friends United Meeting (FUM), Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) Africa Section and Friends Church in Kenya (FCK).

The conference was officially opened by the Presiding Clerk Simon Angote. In his opening remarks, he welcomed all the delegates to the conference and wished them well in their deliberations. He confirmed that all the resolutions of the past conference had been fulfilled and asked all leaders to hand over smoothly and support the incoming leaders. He said the church had strong structures which required operationalization.

The theme of the conference was 'Enhancing servant leadership,' derived from John 9:4. The main speaker was Pastor Nathan Lihanda, the Chairman of Friends Church (Quakers) Nairobi Yearly Meeting Mission Commission.

Reflecting on our theme, the main speaker said that servant leadership is about people. A servant leader should be merciful, selfless and serve in the spirit and power of God. He should be disciplined, focused and a team player. He reminded the delegates that they should serve the Lord while there is still time and that we are justified by faith and not the law.

During the conference, 18 marriage officers were commissioned, a new General Superintendent and his Assistant were also commissioned and new leaders inaugurated to serve for the next three (3) years.

We considered topical issues like; 'Spiritual & physical church growth' and 'dealing with chronic diseases'. The delegates undertook Bible study on the book of 2nd Timothy every morning, received and also adopted reports from programmes and commissions. Conference resolutions were read and adopted. It was resolved that the yearly meeting will partner with Friends Theological College for continuous development and empowerment of church members.

Yours in the Lord's service,  
Stephen Magwilu, Incoming Presiding Clerk

# From the Americas

In the USA, many yearly meetings of the unprogrammed tradition belong not only to Friends World Committee for Consultation (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). Some yearly meetings belong to more than one grouping.

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## Alaska Friends Conference (AFC) 2017 Annual Meeting

Wasilla Alaska, 6 August 2017

To Friends Everywhere:

Alaska Friends met in our rustic meeting house at Dickerson Friends Center in Wasilla. Our theme was 'Embracing diversity: accompaniment and witness.' We enjoyed glorious weather and warm water in Ashley Lake.

We welcomed four Fairbanks and Anchorage leaders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to worship and discuss mutual concerns and work on climate justice. We recognized that climate disruption is an issue for all people, but minority communities are more threatened. We shared our hopes and dreams for our community in 50 years if we successfully address the threat of climate disruption. We described diverse and welcoming communities recovering the sense of shared endeavor and mutual support some experienced in early Anchorage. We envisioned healthy children fed from abundant fisheries and local farming, enjoying a restored natural environment.

We asked ourselves to indicate our position on a spectrum from despair of success to confidence of successfully addressing climate disruption and achieving our shared vision; our positions were distributed throughout that spectrum. We also asked ourselves to indicate our position on the extent to which we felt engaged and empowered to address our concerns and bring about our shared vision. Most of us felt empowered and engaged, not having given up.

Friends and NAACP leaders described a wide range of practical local actions underway as

part of the solution: scholarships for training technicians to install solar panels, working to install solar panels on a local school in a low-income neighborhood, an interfaith coalition advocating for sustainable environment relying on renewable energy, a mobile solar power generator. Following shared worship, we felt inspired and committed ourselves to continuing collaboration on climate justice and other common concerns.

Alaska Friends have been very active in wider Quaker organizations for many years, relishing the opportunity to worship and share experiences with Friends from around the world. We devoted sessions to describing recent activities within these organizations. Four AFC Friends attended the 100th Anniversary of American Friends Service Committee (AFSC); they were especially enthusiastic about the Plenary

Address of Erica Chenoweth on the power and effectiveness of non-violent social movements, based on extensive global research. We are hopeful about FGC's determination to undergo a rigorous assessment to identify and root out institutional racism. FWCC's success in bringing together Friends from different traditions and different continents has been inspirational and sometimes transformational. Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) has been astonishingly effective in advocating US policies and legislation that advance Friends' vision of the world. Legislative visits with the Alaska Congressional delegation were important in retaining access to health care in a recent series of votes.

As a series of isolated monthly meetings, our yearly gathering renews our joy in community, our spiritual connections and our hope in sharing our vision of a diverse and welcoming community, in right relation to the world.

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# Cuba Yearly Meeting

Gibara February 19, 2016

Sisters and brothers united in the life supreme:

The Yearly Meeting of Friends (Quakers) in Cuba gathers its representatives in its 90th year, with our gaze fixed on the message of the Lord:

The harvest is abundant and the laborers are few. Therefore pray to the master to send out laborers into his harvest. Onward! Luke 10:2

It is good to tell you that the time spent in our gathering has been in orderly, regulated sessions about matters directed to the service of the Lord. In our worship our members received instruction and messages which call us to bear witness with passion and dedication to the work of the Lord.

These ideas are based in taking up again the universal priesthood of the first Quakers: Go to every place and carry the glory of the Most High to the nations!

Even with our differences, the Eternal Power of God is working, and so we feel in a surprising way how we hear that voice, and many of the members of our assembly answer, **HERE AM I!**

We hear names: Moses, Samuel, Paul, Peter, the other important disciples of Jesus, yes, but...  
What canst thou say?

We are living in times in which the planet Earth is deteriorating, we are all on that planet's surface, some to the north and others to the south, but we are created as the human species, developed and transformed by the love of the Father for everyone. From our communities we seek the blessed presence; only that can lead us to respond to the necessities we suffer.

In our gathering united voices proclaim: Take us to where human beings need your word, need your desire for life, where there is no hope, where there is no joy, simply because there is no knowledge of You.

Cuban Friends feel the joy of sharing with our brothers Julian Grant of New England Yearly Meeting, John Huyler of Intermountain Yearly Meeting, and Estuardo César Nufio Vargas of

Guatemala Yearly Meeting who was the preacher of the word of God during our assembly. How do we respond to the voice of our Lord Jesus Christ?

**LEAVE EVERYTHING ELSE AND HOLD TO THE PROTECTION OF THE LORD GOD OF LOVE, TO HIM BE THE GLORY.**

Quaker Friends, in Isaiah 6:8 the Lord says: "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"

We must shine wherever our footsteps go, and so let us proceed with a spirit peaceable and mutual.

We hear today the voice of a Quaker woman, Caroline Fox (1841):

**"LIVE UP TO THE LIGHT THOU HAST . . . AND MORE WILL BE GRANTED THEE."**



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## Illinois Yearly Meeting

24th day of Sixth month, 2017

To Friends Everywhere,

As Charles Dickens memorably wrote, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.” Historians view history as a basic model or paradigm to see the past as a process of continuity versus change. Many of us are challenged to understand the change in our lives and in our culture on a local, regional, national, and international level. Aspects of this concern are pulsating within meetings throughout Illinois Yearly Meeting (ILYM) especially recently. In part, this epistle is based on active listening to Friends within our meetings, following ILYM Announcements, and reading meeting newsletters. The communities of conversation, among old friends and new friends, cultivated connections among us. During the last year, Friends shared concerns of racism and connecting with Muslim communities.

Four decades ago, during an interview James Baldwin, the author and social activist replied to television personality, Dick Cavett’s query, “Why aren’t Negroes more optimistic? It’s getting so much better.” Baldwin replied “It’s not a question of what happens to the Negro. The real question is what is going to happen to this country.” His answer still seems relevant today. What could we do to help the country move forward to make it better for black lives? What was the need and what will would we do about it? There was a need for more information about being a good ally. This started with active listening and increasing engagement. Many Friends individually viewed the recent documentary, “I am Not Your Negro” based on the writings of Baldwin. Several meetings have acted by engaging with black communities and learning about black culture. St. Louis Meeting hosted a movie night where they showed 13th. This movie was directed by Ava Duvernay and is about the thirteenth amendment and the prison system. Friends in Urbana and Champaign also watched this film in a community-wide event. Further north, Friends in Evanston engaged in

a weekly program entitled DAR (Discussion About Racism) where they attend events, showed films, and had talks about racism in their community.

What other needs do we have as a community? How do we adapt to the rapid changes in newsfeeds and media? Friends across ILYM assessed this need and began to take action. Evanston, Urbana-Champaign, and Northside meetings worked with leaders in Muslim community centers and mosques to arrange times for Friends to visit these places. This was another example of increasing communication and being an active listener. By visiting new places and having new experiences with an open mind and open heart, Friends can increase their empathy with others whom they may not typically engage with.

How have these actions reflected our Quaker principles and actions of the past? Historically, Friends have a strong history taking social action to begin to break the frequent pattern of being a passive members in their community, such as going to prison for not attending the required Church of England. By 1700, 7,000 were imprisoned for their Quaker beliefs and practices. Here in ILYM, during the past year, meetings have enacted change within their own meeting and beyond. In the coming year, Friends can continue to create change by assessing their meeting’s needs, discovering why that need is there, then using Quaker process to make social change a reality.

*I’m Nobody! Who are you?  
Are you – Nobody – too?  
Then there’s a pair of us!  
Don’t tell! they’d advertise – you know!  
-I’m Nobody! Who are you?*

*Emily Dickinson*

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# Indiana Yearly Meeting

To Friends Everywhere;

Indiana Yearly Meeting met in its 197th annual session from 7th Mo. 27 through 29, 2017 at Quaker Haven Camp, near Syracuse, Indiana. Other than some overnight rain and some cloudiness, the Lord blessed us with wonderful weather to enjoy our camp, fellowship, and business meetings.

The theme of our yearly meeting, 'Show Me Your Glory,' was taken from Exodus 33:18 "Then Moses said, 'Now show me your Glory.' " This text was used for our devotional messages, led by Mark Wright, former IYM pastor and founding and senior pastor of Brandywine Community Church.

We continue to be amazed at the way God blesses and moves within Indiana Yearly Meeting. The presence of the Holy Spirit was felt throughout our meetings and worship giving us unity, encouragement and hope. Surely, the Glory of the Lord was felt in this time and place.

We continue to be blessed financially by fully funding our 2018 budget and the yearly meeting assessments continue to exceed 100% fulfillment for the fourth year in a row. For the first time in recent memory we did not need to have a minute to remove outstanding unfulfilled assessment balances.

We approved the recording of four ministers of the Gospel during our sessions. Three were first time recordings with one transfer of a pastor to Indiana Yearly Meeting. It is also noted that there are a significant number of pastors either in the recording process or at the start of the pipeline. We approved moving Danville Friends from the status of preparative meeting to full monthly meeting status. It was exciting to note that we increased in numbers in our adult, junior and overall membership of the yearly meeting. Indiana Yearly Meeting is flourishing for which we give God the praise and glory!

The Faith and Practice Committee continues its hard work to review *Faith and Practice* to update it to meet the current culture of Indiana Yearly Meeting and improve practicality relative

to our current reality. With this in mind, we approved removing the requirement of quarterly meetings but stressing the encouragement of quarterly meetings where they continue to meet and remain active. We also approved adding a section to provide minimum requirements and definition for Coordinating Committees within a monthly meeting.

During one of our business sessions, we were pleased to extend the call of Doug Shoemaker as superintendent and Pat Byers as assistant superintendent through the year 2020. We are blessed by their leadership and grateful that they make their home within Indiana Yearly Meeting.

At the 'Feast of Faith,' the annual dinner celebrating the end of our sessions, we enjoyed a well cooked meal by the staff of Quaker Haven Camp and a musical program by this year's worship leaders, Zion's Joy. Zion's Joy is a large contemporary gospel group based in Indianapolis, Indiana.

We were pleased to welcome visitors from Everence, the New Association of Friends, Barclay College, Georgetown Friends in Illinois, Baltimore Yearly Meeting, John Moru of Turkana, Multiplication Catalyst Ministries, the Louisville Worship Group and other affiliated Friends.

As we close our yearly meeting sessions for another year, it is with great humbleness and thanksgiving to God who is the reason for our existence and the center of all we do. He truly 'showed us His Glory' during our gathering here at Quaker Haven and it is with great anticipation and excitement we look forward to what the Lord has in store for our body in the year ahead.

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# Intermountain Yearly Meeting

June 11-18, 2017 (including early days, Ghost Ranch, Abiquiu, New Mexico, USA)

To Friends Everywhere

As is always the case, we were enchanted by our surroundings at Ghost Ranch this year: canyon walls changing colour throughout the day, cottonwood leaves rustling in the breeze, vultures spiralling up into clear summer skies. Yes, there were also a few gnats and no-see-ums, but they were manageable distractions. While it is true that Friends can gather and practice in any setting, it is also true that many attenders of Intermountain Yearly Meeting have developed a special fondness for this place which, among other things, evokes many memories.

Each year at IMYM we have the opportunity to integrate creative practices with our lives as Quakers. We believe that the arts at IMYM offer a relaxed and contemplative way to go inward, as well as opportunity for deepening fellowship among Quakers. This year, during early days, many Friends contributed to a huge mural. Our own “contra-band” got everyone moving at the Friday night contra dance. And on Saturday night, we were entertained by a variety of creative pursuits, including story, song, and some homespun comedy.

While the arts nurture the contemplative dimensions of our yearly meeting, business meetings reflect the outward movement of our faith. This year, we passed a minute endorsing the 2017 Border Convergence sponsored by the School of the Americas Watch as a nonviolent means of opposing the militarization of the border and the mistreatment of those who cross it. This event will take place Nov. 10-12, 2017 in Nogales, Mexico. It was also noted that two of our meetings, Mountain View Monthly Meeting in Denver and Albuquerque Monthly Meeting, are currently offering sanctuary to immigrants without documentation who are threatened with separation from their families.

Our theme this year was ‘About Money: A Call to Integrity, Community, and Stewardship.’ In our worship sharing groups and discussions we were reminded, on a personal level, how feelings of fear, guilt, defensiveness, secrecy, resentment, denial, worry, and pain can be disabling and also that sharing these feelings can be liberating. We were also reminded that ethical considerations about money, whether regarding personal budgets or meeting finances, have powerfully spiritual roots. Many worship sharing groups considered Jesus’s words in Matthew 6:21: “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

Pamela Haines, our guest speaker this year, who has been active in peace, justice and environmental work in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Friends and in the Friends Economic Integrity Project, brought queries that challenged us to consider our values and spiritual orientation toward money. How do our traditional testimonies—Integrity, Simplicity, Equality, Community, Peace—guide us in making money decisions, both in our personal lives and in our meetings? How can we live in a growth economy that profits from war, exploitation, and environmental destruction? Pamela shared her belief that materialism damages the soul and the fabric of society and that an economic system based on greed and unlimited growth generates even more evil than war. She asked us to consider the role of conscientious objectors? Do we object to the economy we live in? If so, on what basis? And how do we respond? She invited us to write our own statements of conscience, a challenging exercise that led to much thoughtful discussion.

Ethical considerations of money were especially prescient this year as we are preparing to adopt a pay-as-led system for our 2018 gathering. We believe that a payment system based not only on one’s resources, but also on spiritual discernment, will make our annual gathering more accessible to all Friends (as has been demonstrated by New England Yearly Meeting). Adopting the pay-as-led system for our yearly meeting will also be a way of bearing witness to the belief that “our resources are gifts from God

to be held in trust and shared” (*IMYM Faith & Practice*).

Once again, Senior Young Friends offered us their gifts in another listening session this year. Adults listened in worshipful silence while young Friends offered their responses to a variety of queries on the theme of identity. With careful reflection and great poise, they spoke to the role of ethnicity, religious affiliation, socio-economic status, and gender in shaping identity. “Identity is about more than just gender,” said one Young Friend. “It’s about who and how you love. Love is at the root of it all.”

Later on in meeting for business, we considered the possibility of a move in the event that we outgrow Ghost Ranch. Several Friends spoke to difficulties—distance, accessibility, and heat among them—that this location poses to those who have physical challenges. Whatever the facility, one Friend said, what’s crucial is how we care for another. We were reminded again that wherever we gather, love is at the root of it all.

With Gratitude  
Molly Wingate, Clerk

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## Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative)

Seventh month 29, 2017

To Friends Everywhere:

“There is that of God in everyone, but it lies dormant in us like a seed that has been trampled underfoot. As Quakers we try to become nurturers of the seed and not trampers of it. If nurtured, the seed will grow and give us new life. As we seek to follow the promptings of God, we will be called to live our lives in new ways.” *Will Taber*

We send you warm greetings from Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative), as we gather at Scattergood Friends School Seventh Month, 25-30 for the 140th annual sessions of our yearly meeting.

This week we have explored the theme, “Building Bridges.” Peter Clay with guests, Christine Nobiss, Plains Cree-Salteaux of the George Gordon First Nation and founder of Indigenous Iowa, and Donnielle Wanatee Bi-we-ni-wa Thunder & Eagle clan from the Meskwaki Nation, an advocate for Iowa and its people, led a panel on building bridges with Native Americans. Tender listening and respect among the panel speakers allowed us to hear more deeply, to share their respect and care for each other. Decolonization of our minds and consideration of received history were presented to us with authenticity and care for nurturing relationships among us all.

On Fourth Day we were blessed with a concert and sing-along with Tom Rawson from Orcas Island, Washington. We found our spirits lifted and our hearts energized as we sang our way through the evening. Fifth Day afternoon gave us another opportunity to sing, laugh and open ourselves to the Spirit with Tom. He was a gift for us all.

José Woss of the Friends Committee on National Legislation brightened our days with his warmth, interest in us, and sharing his work with FCNL. He spoke with us about race and mass incarceration on Fifth Day. We much appreciated his invitation to have intimate conversations with one another, sharing experiences of our own racism or how we responded when we have witnessed the hurtful words or actions of another.

Linda Rabben attends Adelphi Friends Meeting in Maryland, is an anthropologist and human rights advocate. She shared her thoughts and experiences with the history of sanctuary and asylum. She encourages Quakers and other faith communities to discern how to respond to the present moment, when many vulnerable people are targets for detention and deportation.

Elizabeth O’Sullivan again led us in Bible study each morning after breakfast. Her approach is fresh, and her passion for her subject engaged and moved us, as she linked our theme of Building Bridges with her knowledge of the Bible.

We greatly appreciated Shirley Scritchfield’s pre-meeting consideration of Moving Beyond Silence on First Day morning.

We are especially grateful for the depth and tenderness of our consideration of Scattergood Friends School. We heard the Head’s report of the School, the Farm report, the report from the Academic Director, and the report of the School Committee. We stand with the school community in its fullness of heart and recognition of the challenges that lie ahead in increasing the number of students. We are delighted and impressed with the strength of community and education that the school is providing. We understand the importance of our own outreach, know that we need to share our knowledge with our communities. We are thankful for Thomas Weber and the entire staff for their good work. We do not take their commitment to the school lightly. Scattergood Friends School gives the yearly meeting purpose and direction.

Our final evening together culminated as always with a talent show planned by the Junior Yearly Meeting and Young Friends. Sharing and laughter brought us to a gathered sense of Light and Love.

We have been singing, visiting, washing dishes, setting tables in the dining room, sweeping floors, serving food, and even doing a little weeding one afternoon in a flower bed. We have found ourselves with open hearts and minds as we have worshiped and learned together. We are grateful that we continue to read and send epistles. We give thanks.

In love,  
Deborah Dakin, clerk

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## New England Yearly Meeting

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to discern what God’s will is —his good, pleasing, and perfect will.” Romans 12:2

To all Friends everywhere:

We who gathered for the 357th sessions of New England Yearly Meeting at Castleton, Vermont, August 5 – 10, 2017, have joyful news to share with you, of ways the Spirit has been moving among us and of possibilities for personal and social transformation that were opened to us this week.

Many of us arrived at Sessions burdened by grief, fear, and worry about the multiple crises that are threatening the world, and we were happy to find that this year’s theme, “Living into Transformation,” spoke to our troubled condition. Through our plenary session and Bible Halfhours, workshops, interest groups, and other programs, we were helped to understand more clearly why the promised coming of God’s blessed community of peace and justice on Earth calls for nothing less than a radical makeover of our racist, classist, economically unjust, and violence-driven culture.

Although the ethnic, racial, and economic diversity among New England Friends is not as great as in many other yearly meetings, we are still a microcosm of the larger culture, and we struggle with many of the same internal tensions and conflicts that can hinder the Spirit from acting through us. Many of us come from privileged backgrounds of which we are largely unconscious, making it difficult to see how others among us are being harmed by the workings of the same dominant culture that benefits us.

Transformation of the dominant culture thus requires embarking on our personal transformation and learning to continually question our basic assumptions, imagine new possibilities, and model new values. But the renewal of our minds means more than being

inspired by messages that people presented to us at yearly meeting, which may leave us sitting on the fence, unable or unwilling to commit ourselves to action because we have not yet undergone the necessary inward transformation.

There are many barriers to transformation—feelings of despair and helplessness, social pressures, unwillingness to venture outside of our comfort zones, and plain old middle-class comfort—that need to be overcome. This can occur only when we allow the Spirit to break open our hearts, illuminate our shortcomings, and galvanize us into life-changing action.

Our good news is that we have in fact witnessed many instances of such movement of the Spirit within our yearly meeting over the past year, all emerging from deep waiting worship and corporate discernment of God’s will. Some Friends felt the Spirit leading them to put their bodies on the line in radical climate action. Some moved ahead with key decisions relating to peace, economic justice, and ecological integrity that had been under corporate discernment for years, waiting for unity and clarity among Friends coming from very different points of view. Way has opened for others to significantly realign organizational structures and policies with the yearly meeting’s mission as it is currently understood.

Movement of the spirit within our yearly meeting also has been seen in recent gains in attendance, improvements in our financial health, the emergence of dedicated leadership, and the development of programs that reach out to and nurture our monthly meetings. Spiritual discernment has been evident when in many discussions the primary question was not whether the yearly meeting could afford to take a certain step but whether in the Light of the Spirit it was the right thing to do.

Our Bible Half-hour speaker, Marty Grundy, noted the parallel between the transformation we have seen within our yearly meeting and the process of healing and reconciliation followed in 12-step recovery programs. After admitting our utter helplessness and turning our will over to a higher power, we form or seek out supportive

communities in which more experienced seekers illuminate the path ahead and provide a steady hand to those who falter.

We are most afraid of being known for what we are. Letting go of that fear allows our hearts to be broken open, for alienation to be healed, for damaged relationships to be restored, for conventional notions to be displaced by divine wisdom, and for our convictions to be translated into action.

Finding strength in our common humanity was the essential aim of the early Jesus movement. The vision of Jesus challenged prevailing social rules based on control, domination, and competition that resulted in great inequality and injustice. It offered new models for relationships based on sharing and cooperation. This was the vision that animated the social witness of early Friends, which in turn inspired many of the social and economic experiments of the past three centuries.

Our plenary speaker, Ruby Sales, focused on one of today's most serious barriers to a just and peaceful society—the persistence of white supremacy, a spiritual malformation that evolved from old social structures, empires determined to maintain their power, wealth, and dominance.

It has encouraged privileged whites to stay in a womb-like ignorance, where they maintain the illusion of safety and comfort while racial tensions continue to worsen. Both oppressors and oppressed are indoctrinated with the false belief that these patterns and structures are natural, inevitable, and unalterable. There is little hope for changing the system of domination directly, given the tools that the powers have at their disposal. Thus we begin the great transformation from within.

Climate change is another crisis, also rooted in spiritual malformation that resists anything more than token regulation because of its deep roots in empire and the culture of dominance over people and planet. However, possibilities for change may be greatest when the Empire seems strongest, yet fatally weakened by internal contradictions and disconnection from reality.

There are no shortcuts to healing and redemption. One Friend at this year's Sessions, Xinef Afriam, offered this thought-provoking parable: he compared the struggle for personal and societal transformation to the radical changes that take place when a caterpillar becomes a butterfly. A major crisis occurs whenever any organism reaches the point where it cannot continue in its present state; it must either transform into something else or collapse and die. The caterpillar's structure dissolves inside its chrysalis, but some "imaginal" cells remain. They pass on a kind of blueprint for a new structure and orchestrate its miraculous unfolding.

Friends are called to be the imaginal cells in a similar process of social metamorphosis, as the present social order is becoming increasingly unstable and self-destructive. We carry a vision to the world of other possibilities for the future than those of collapse and death. We bring hope to the millions of people rejecting the idolatries and absurdities of empire and yearning for new ways of living together based on mutual caring and sharing.

It is in this sense that, in a quote shared by one Friend, "Imagination is sometimes more real than reality, and reality is less real than it seems." Transformation can be both messy and threatening, and only our love for the Light of Truth can take us past the point of feeling, as another Friend put it frankly, "I want to be transformed, but I don't want to change."

Many of us were blessed by experiences of life-giving personal and community transformation. We embark on the renewing of our minds and return to our home meetings and communities with lighter hearts, better prepared to engage the powers with a greater sense of urgency and hope.

In the Light,  
Fritz Weiss, presiding clerk

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# North Carolina Yearly Meeting (Conservative)

Seventh Month 16, 2017

Dear Friends Everywhere:

We gathered at UNC Wilmington, NC on Seventh Month 13-16, 2017 for our 320th Annual Sessions. As we gather we remember our distant Friends with great fondness and love. This year we are gathered under the theme ‘Our Life is Love: the Quaker Spiritual Journey’, also the title of a book written by Marcelle Martin. Marcelle not only gave the plenary talk on Sixth Day evening, she also led the Bible Study based on the writings in her book. In her book, she outlines the ten different stages of the Quaker spiritual journey. She uses examples from both early Quakers and modern-day Quakers to illustrate the steps.

On Fifth Day evening, we were grateful to hear from several Friends during a panel discussion on Living our Love. Cynthia Doran spoke of her family’s journey into greater faith through her son’s incarceration. Morgan Barlow shared about saying “yes” to a leading to undertake Alternatives to Violence Project work with prisoners. Susan Wilson spoke about following God’s leading to love in various ways throughout her personal spiritual journey. A time of rich worship-sharing followed the panel discussion.

Our Young Friends always enjoy coming to Wilmington for yearly meeting as frequent trips to the beach are part of their program. Each evening the Young Friends helped lead intergenerational activities. On Seventh Day evening, they MC’ ed an intergenerational talent show with many jokes, skits, and musical acts. The adults also participated with song and music and the first ever Quaker Lady Speed Knitting Competition. Good fun was had by all.

The Financial report is not usually the most spiritually inspiring time during yearly meeting. But this year we had put before us information that led many people to speak from the heart and share deeply. It is always amazing the places that God finds to shine a light from our hearts.

The Book of Disciple revision is in its fourth year. The committee has been faithful in its work and the Body is grateful for all it has done. The revision work this year moved us to listen deeply to each other and to allow time and space for everyone to sit with the revisions and hear God’s voice. We labored with the story of our Quaker ancestors and with language that reflects who we are in this present time. We identified discussions that we will need to have in the future that will allow us the opportunity to look at how we define ourselves. We are richly blessed to have undertaken this work and to have people who are gifted by God to do this work.

We were blessed to hear in-person reports from Quaker House, American Friends Service Committee, Friends Committee on National Legislation, and Friends World Committee for Consultation. Incredibly passionate and productive members of our yearly meeting represent us in all of these organizations. Our representatives commented that for a small yearly meeting like ours we have a wide influence in the Quaker world. We are grateful. In particular we were grateful to have Lynn and Steve Newsom from Quaker House come and give their final report to us before their retirement in September. Quaker House has flourished under their direction and we look forward to seeing this continued under the new director, Kindra Bradley.

We hold you in our hearts and pray that you are able to feel the Love that we have for you. May you experience the Love of God with which we have been so richly blessed. Please know that it would warm our hearts if you were able to visit with us next year. We will meet for our 321st session in Greensboro, NC, Seventh Month 12-15, 2018 if in accordance with Divine Will.

Nancy Craft, clerk



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# North Pacific Yearly Meeting

Seventh Month 2017

To all Friends everywhere:

Two hundred fifty-four Quakers of all ages from all corners of the Pacific Northwest gathered on the green, tree-covered campus of the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington, as North Pacific Yearly Meeting met for its 45th Annual Session, July 26-30, 2017.

Our theme this year has been ‘Everything is Connected.’ Friend in Residence Peterson Toscano presented a lecture-performance which included three moving sketches using comedy to connect his personal story as a gay man with gender nonconformity, Bible stories, and climate change. We used focused worship to consider a minute first proposed by Multnomah Meeting in Portland, Oregon, regarding welcoming transgender and gender nonconforming people into our meetings; this minute was seasoned carefully through the monthly meetings during the last year, seasoning that continued through conversations and small-group discussions among Friends at this Annual Session. The Young Adult Friends presented their own minute in support of action on this concern by the yearly meeting. Heartfelt responses were shared by Friends. Following worship, Friends were treated to tender musical ministry by Friend Anna Fritz, a cellist/singer, lifting the issues we were grappling with into spiritual space. Friends later united on this minute, following a deep, patient, Spirit-filled business session, with one Friend standing aside.

Contra dancing, Community Night skits, Bible study, daily early morning worship, and worship in song led by Friends Jonathan and Rosy Betz-Zall and folksinger and former NPYM presiding clerk Tom Rawson, rounded out Friends’ experience. A song Tom presented, John McCutcheon’s “Christmas in the Trenches,” regarding the ad hoc Christmas Truce of World War I brought about by the soldiers themselves, brought tears to many eyes.

We were aware as we met that a new yearly meeting was being formed nearby, as Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends (pastoral), following a difficult process, split into two yearly meetings over the issue of human sexuality. A letter was drafted to be sent jointly to both Northwest Yearly Meeting and the new Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting, honoring our existing relationships and welcoming the new yearly meeting into the family of Friends.

Friends heard from Kate Gould, a Friends Committee on National Legislation staff person in Washington DC, on the power of persistent and persuasive citizens’ advocacy; and from Mary Klein on her work as editor of *Western Friend*. Junior Friends (High School age) led a Spirit-filled and humorous community-building exercise. We gratefully accepted the final version of our newly revised Faith and Practice, seasoned carefully over the last twelve years, which will be published this year by *Western Friend*.

When we meet again next year on this same (hopefully construction-free) campus, we will be experimenting with Abundant Financing, a form of financing Annual Session by asking Friends to pay as led instead of charging a fixed amount. We will also be addressing racism and white privilege as a rising concern within our yearly meeting.

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## Northern Yearly Meeting

With gratitude for our time together we send greetings to Friends everywhere from the 2017 Annual Session of Northern Yearly Meeting held May 26-29, at the Lions Camp in Rosholt, WI. Two hundred forty-nine of us, including 52 children and youth, took part in our worship, business meetings, children and youth programs, workshops, interest groups and play.

Our theme, 'Moving Forward: Having Difficult Conversations About Diversity', was explored throughout the weekend. An intergenerational event on Friday evening focused on getting to know ourselves and each other. Recognizing that diversity exists across many dimensions, we were challenged to consider the assumptions we make about each other. Our Saturday plenary urged us to go deeper in exploring our implicit biases. We found it refreshing to have high schoolers and young adults take leadership roles. We also expanded opportunities for worship sharing throughout each day with queries focused on culture, identity and the challenges of discussing racial equity in our meetings.

Our children and youth engaged deeply with our theme. The high schoolers thoughtfully explored the nuances of violence and their responses to it and then brought queries about non-violence to the middle schoolers. The middle school group considered the question 'who is your neighbor' and how to communicate across differences. The older elementary group engaged in an interview and photo project uncovering attitudes and perceptions about racism among those attending Annual Session. Friends who travelled to El Salvador with photos and video clips from last year's early elementary group brought messages back to this year's group, helping these children to see their connection to the Quaker youth of El Salvador. Our preschoolers filled in outlines of their bodies with pictures of their favorite things and then used those to explore their differences and similarities. Children of many ages modelled inclusiveness through seemingly endless tag games of 'Everybody's It'. Many adults were moved by the work of leaders and volunteers in the children and youth program. Their gifts

nurture values that we hope our children will carry out into the world.

In meeting for business we recognized movement in our midst resulting from work that often involved difficult conversations. We were pleased to hear that FGC is moving forward with an institutional assessment of racism and we followed through on our commitment to financially support this project. We look forward to hearing more about the process and results of this assessment and applying these to our own yearly meeting and monthly meetings. We approved a letter to El Salvador Yearly Meeting inviting conversation about where God is leading the relationship between our Yearly Meetings. We heard with great excitement that three Friends meetings in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area will sponsor a new Quaker Voluntary Service program in the Twin Cities starting in 2018. And we celebrated the long-awaited publication of our new *Faith and Practice*.

While the theme called us to change how we engage each other around diversity, we maintained traditions that allowed us to play and to nourish each other: swimming, hiking, biking and boating during the day; singing, dancing, playing cards and board games at night. We found joy in the renewal of old friendships and in the beginning of new ones.

In our plenaries we were encouraged to make sure that our engagement with difficult conversations does not end with this Annual Session. Many Friends present shared their leadings to engage in new conversations in the wider world through current and newly forming Friends Committee on National Legislation advocacy teams and other forms of activism. We heed the words from *Courageous Conversations About Race* to stay engaged, expect discomfort, speak our truth and expect and accept non-closure. We acknowledge our lack of experience and our need to develop skills to maintain this process. This is not the work of some; it is the work of all. As our children would exclaim, "Everybody's It".

Shel Gross  
Nancy Newman  
Julia Isaacs

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## Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting

Greetings to Friends Everywhere! Ohio Valley YM met for its 197<sup>th</sup> Annual Sessions at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana from June 14–18, 2017. Our theme was ‘Moving Together with the Spirit.’ With great joy we reconnected with familiar Friends and welcomed many who were attending for the first time. As one person put it, each year we reconstitute the Body! Or as another Friend exclaimed, “We have a love fest!” The date for annual sessions was a month earlier this year in hopes of accommodating the schedules of more families, and we did see an increase in the number of children attending.

As we gather here this year, we discover Spirit in all the usual places. Worship sharing groups going deep, workshops providing tools for nurturing relationships, children laughing, exchanged smiles and reacquainting hugs, little pods of people engaged in conversations, sharing meals in the cafeteria, early morning walks and worship, singing together, catching up with old Friends and learning about the lives of new Friends. The annual Variety Show united us in laughter, music, and celebration. These usual finding places are important to us as we reaffirm that we are moving together in Spirit.

In our business sessions we were challenged to create openings for the Spirit to move throughout the yearly meeting. We approved a proposal developed in response to a leading that came to us last year to create a program of intervisitation among monthly meetings to bring life and nourishment to all parts of our body. We committed as individuals to visit other meetings in the yearly meeting, and as meetings to plan shared events or activities with other meetings. Older friends were challenged to listen to younger voices, and to reconsider some traditional practices. In our discernment about which wider Quaker organizations to support financially, we heard the concerns and enthusiasm of young Friends to support the work of newer organizations where life of the Spirit is breaking through, and we were challenged to make such changes at a faster pace. We approved several additions and revisions to our *Faith and Practice* in the expedited approval process, with the goal of completing the revision by 2018. The revisions included a set of greatly simplified queries, which prompted considerable discernment about the approval process.

Lynn Newsom presented a powerful plenary session on the work of Quaker House, work that bridges

the divide between the largest military base on the planet and a little house in Fayetteville, North Carolina. This work includes support for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and moral injury, support for conscientious objectors, and raising awareness about torture, sexual abuse, suicide, and domestic violence in the military. It is remarkable that Quaker House is now welcomed onto the military base at Fort Bragg, and accepted by the local community as a faithbased organization advocating for the needs of veterans. Lynn reminded us that veterans are children of God who have been injured and who need compassion and a place to go for support.

Benigno Sánchez-Eppler of FWCC shared his ministry of crossing languages, cultures and theologies. He urged us to resist the separating spirit and to mend separations among Friends. We learned about the longing and frustration of wanting to be part of what others are experiencing through singing a hymn that only some of us knew. He compared being separated from a home language, culture, or spiritual practice, or even forgetting or devaluing what we used to know and love, to losing a great treasure. He reminded us that we are a body with a womb that can be filled with a quickening of the Spirit. What is the new life that is eager to be born? We were reminded that some Friends experience a walking away from the treasure box of Christian language, by forgetting a language that used to be our own. We were admonished that Friends might need to do some inner work to reclaim this treasure. Losing the language of Early Friends, do we not lose some of their wisdom? We were urged to cross borders, recreate relationships, and heal the injuries that caused our separations.

In our worship sharing groups we shared personal experiences of the movement of the Spirit, and listened compassionately to one another about times of conflict in our meetings. We found it healing to reach deeply into the sacred center of our lives and move together with the Spirit in these small groups.

As we have moved together this week, we continue to find new and awakening manifestations of the Spirit. We want Friends to know that the living Spirit deeply binds us together. We are learning to live as the body of Christ. “Our differences will want us to fight for them, but our love will make no room for the violence!” Spirit blows us together, it loves us together, and we move with its breath and instruction as we turn ourselves inward to hear the Teacher and Guide.

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# Ohio Yearly Meeting of Friends (Conservative)

08-07-2017

“There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.” Psalm 46:4

To Friends everywhere: We send you greetings from Barnesville, Ohio, a small, rural town just west of the Ohio River and the Appalachian Mountains. The first Friends moved here from more Eastern states very early in the 19th century. Some Friends among us trace their families back almost to those first Quaker settlers, some of us have become Friends very recently, and still others somewhere in between. This year, as usual, we have visitors from an ever wider geographic area, coming from neighbouring states, California, and as far as Australia. We come for these annual sessions, drawn together once again through the gentle love of Jesus Christ.

We have heard this week in vocal ministry that God’s hand is stretched out still to every living person. We need not be afraid, for we know God to be a living and faithful Father who cares for each individual when we let him and even when we don’t. One Friend testified that when he began to worry either about his sense of dwindling personal faith or about his meeting dying out, he heard God’s voice saying, “Wait a minute! Your faith is the result of God’s infinite faithfulness, no matter what. Your faith is a freely-given gift from God. You do not earn it or create it.” We are each given a measure of faith with which we can experience Christ in us, the hope of glory. And with faith in God, we can have hope, even for things not now seen.

As we addressed our business agenda this week, we noted a sense of God’s healing, both for individual Friends and for us as a gathered meeting. We had revisited a matter of property ownership about which we could not find clearness last year. We still have not found unity, and Friends with differing perspectives have all again suffered disappointment, but we were able this time to speak clearly, briefly, and calmly to each other, to listen deeply and ultimately to wait to be shown God’s way forward.

Also in our business sessions we have found comfort and peace in being part of a body that is actively at work in many ways and, to our surprise, even in the gentle rhythm of hearing and accepting our various committee reports. We were glad to hear answers to our General Queries from each of our quarterly meetings, giving us a sense of the Life within each quarter. We were encouraged in our meeting of ministry and oversight by the report from a few of our members who had been sent out in Christ’s love to visit a larger Friends’ group, and by a report from one of our members who travelled from his home in California to visit each of our monthly meetings and worship groups in ministry of encouragement.

Our evening sessions and morning sharing series have offered opportunity for intellectual stimulation to serve our spiritual growth. Henry Jason, with expertise in Latin and Greek, helped us understand the meanings of a number of key words used in the New Testament and by early Friends. Henry taught us with respect to religious authority that “*Primus est Spiritus Christi*.” The Spirit of Christ is primary. Christ’s Spirit inspired the writers of the Bible and it is through Christ’s inspiration that people can understand it. Henry declared that the purpose of those writings is to point us to that which words cannot express. Jack Smith, working from Carole Spencer’s book *Holiness: The Soul of Quakerism*, helped us to a better understanding of the meaning and role of holiness. Jack noted that the Old Testament teaches us that God is holy.

The New Testament calls us to live in Christ’s love, allowing God’s grace and power to enable our obedience to God’s leading us step by step into more complete holiness. As we write this letter to you, we are looking forward to an evening with David Eley, who plans to share his spiritual experiences while visiting Jerusalem last fall.

As we reflect on our experiences at our yearly meeting this year, we note that in spite of all the troubles we see around us, the promise – the reality – is that God and God’s caring love will continue over all. We are encouraged not to be anxious, but to look to God. Live in God’s love so fully that your experience of it opens its peace and power to those other people whose paths cross yours.

In Christ’s love, Philip W. Helms

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# Pacific Yearly Meeting

June 14-19, 2017

To Friends Everywhere:

Greetings from the heart of Pacific Yearly Meeting. Our clerk, Diego Navarro, introduced the theme of our 71st session, “Awakening to the Presence”, by reminding us to soften and open to the Spirit. Pay attention to your body. Listen to your heart and your gut.

Sky Road Webb welcomed us to the land of his people, the Coast Miwok. Young Adult Friends spent time with Sky Road during their pre-yearly meeting gathering, and joined him in leading a Miwok song. The teens in Junior Yearly Meeting went to Point Reyes Seashore with Sky Road for a service project. Throughout the week at Walker Creek Ranch, we saw deer, gray fox, raptors, and other wildlife from the plenary tent and near our worship-fellowship groups.

We cheered for Friends from meetings in California, Nevada, Hawaii, Mexico and Guatemala; visitors from other Quaker yearly meetings and organizations. Newcomers, and Ministry and Oversight committee, had special nametags to encourage us to approach them.

Our Ministry and Oversight committee asked us to respond to the question, “What makes me feel welcome at Annual Session?”

- Even if you don’t know me, sit with me at meals.
- Connect with me as a person before raising committee business.
- Ask me how I am, or how Spirit is moving in my life.

Zachary Moon, an adult child of Pacific Yearly Meeting, returned to share his experience of receiving an unlikely call to become a Navy chaplain. God calls insistently, like a cat pawing us awake to be fed. This call brought more questions than instructions. What does it mean to be a good Quaker? Who am I to turn away from what God gives me?

Clarity came through a thousand little moments over years, testing questions with friends and

strangers. For the past eight years, Zachary has ministered to the suffering of hundreds of marines, sailors, and their families.

We see and acknowledge those in our midst whose lives have been shaped by war and its institutions. We also question our own complicity in the seeds of war. What do we pass on to our own families? Do we still pay war taxes? Do we see our own privilege, in distancing ourselves from people who participate in wars on our behalf?

When the Spirit comes, we do not know how it will manifest. We explored examples from the writings of early Friend Isaac Pennington and from the book of Acts. The apostles were given messages they themselves did not understand. When they spoke in obedience to the Holy Spirit, others did understand. We are reminded that seeds seldom resemble what they grow into.

How do we nurture the Presence among us?

Ministry is a team sport. We need to make it the center of our lives. We need elders to midwife the birth of our deepest gifts.

In this Annual Session, we have used the practice of eldering, or spiritual accompaniment, to support us in staying awake to the Presence. Elders are paired with clerks and others with work or ministry to carry.

Every meeting for worship is grounded by Friends arriving early and deepening the silence. Junior Yearly Meeting and Young Adult Friends have held our worship with tenderness and care. In our plenary sessions, at least one Friend remains in silent worship, as spiritual accompaniment for our collective discernment. The clerk meets regularly with a support group, and has invited past yearly meeting clerks to open each meeting for worship for business with reflections on Quaker process.

This year, open committee meetings have taken place on two different days. This allows for committee work to be visible, and for complex issues to be addressed outside of business meeting and brought back.

One issue that is still working on us is a desire for a new name for our Ministry and Oversight

Committee. How can we shed the association with overseers of enslaved people, and still express the guidance and accountability we seek from this committee?

Fewer Young Adult Friends came this year, and many could only afford to do so by working in the children's program during the day or receiving financial assistance. Young Adult Friends are exploring new ways to support each other, to be more integral to the yearly meeting, to include young people of different classes and situations.

How many of us reach out and listen to people of different generations, backgrounds, languages, gender identities? How many of us answer the call to connect with Friends with disabilities?

Many of us yearn for fellowship that feeds us more deeply. Some find this in worshipsharing, in affinity groups, in the dining hall, spending time with the children of the meeting, or on committees. Others wish for more free time for music, yoga, or writing. Many of us have never walked to the Turtle Pond or on the Enchanted Forest trail. Might we find time next year?

We are grateful to all the people who make the Annual Session possible. Being held in these ways facilitates our openness to awaken to the Presence. May all of us and you, our Friends, remain open and faithful to the Spirit.

Diego Navarro, Clerk

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## Sierra Cascades Yearly Meeting

Isaiah 43:19a: I'm about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

To All Friends Everywhere:

Earlier this year the leadership of Northwest Yearly Meeting decided that the best way forward was to split off a new yearly meeting for those local meetings who could not align with the current Northwest Yearly Meeting Faith & Practice statement on human sexuality. Local meetings who had written minutes or statements affirming same-sex relationships were given no option; any other local meeting could choose to join with those first four (West Hills Friends, Camas Friends, Eugene Friends, Klamath Falls Friends) or could go independent. The legal separation deadline, set by the Administrative Council, is June 30, 2018.

During this, our last annual sessions as an entire meeting, the departing local meetings and several interested individuals met in parallel business sessions to begin our work. Did we feel led to form a new yearly meeting or association? How will we begin? How will we know if we want to be a part if we don't know what it is?

It has been difficult. We need to make clear our desire to be radically inclusive, as Jesus was, without falling into the same exclusionary trap that caught Northwest Yearly Meeting.

We used small worship sharing groups to get to know one another. We listened deeply to a panel of four LGBTQ+ Friends who spoke movingly of their experiences in faith communities through their lives. We began to form committees to help us with our work, determined to make any new structure or work open and inviting to marginalized people, especially from sexual minorities, but also aware of racial, economic, and cultural minorities.

In an earlier informal meeting last spring, the gathered Friends stated their intent to be inclusive, acknowledging that Northwest Yearly Meeting had not been so in the past. This week we approved the following statement:

“We are led by the Spirit to commit ourselves to recognizing the full participation of LGBTQ+ people in all aspects of the life of the new yearly meeting.”

We also were clear that we did want to move forward as a Quaker, Christ-centered yearly meeting. To that end we have approved the following Friends to serve:

Co-presiding Clerks: Cherice Bock and Eric Muhr  
Assistant Clerk: Jon Kershner  
Recording Clerk: Matthew Staples  
Contact us at: [clerks@scymf.org](mailto:clerks@scymf.org).  
Website under construction: [scymfriends.org](http://scymfriends.org).

And we found our name: we are the Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends.

We covet your prayers, your support, and your visits if you feel so led.

In the name of the One who makes all things new, and on behalf of those Friends gathered today (both in body and in spirit),

Jan Wood, Acting Clerk

Epistle Committee: James Hibbs, Julie Peyton, Tom Stave

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## South Central Yearly Meeting

Greetings to Friends everywhere,

South Central Yearly Meeting gathered at Greene Family Camp in Bruceville, Texas on Easter weekend, April 13-16, 2017.

This Easter, South Central Yearly Meeting celebrated our 25th season at Greene Family Camp. Friends gather in this bucolic setting to find refuge and peace and to settle in the joyous work of our annual meeting. Our location deeply informed our experience. The camp is owned by the Union for Reform Judaism and is filled with the vibrant art of Jewish Children. The wildflowers were in full bloom, and the often-temperamental Texas weather brought sunshine, clouds, breezes and no rain. This allowed nature walks and boating to solidify our connection to the living earth. At night we could see planets and stars in the dark sky.

Our silences were punctuated with birdsong; in evenings Friends gathered in fellowship in the dining hall with instruments to bring music and song, and in daytime children's voices brought smiles to all.

Workshops, mealtimes and meetings around the spacious campus meant long treks between rustic buildings. We brought wheeled vehicles to navigate the campus from babies in strollers to elderly using walker's, younger friends on bicycles, and the wheels on everyone's luggage. Inside the theater, we saw a framed painting of the tree of life which was echoed on an attendee's body.

Cielo Grande Quarterly Meeting brought us this year's theme, "Climate Change, Environmental Racism, Friends' faith and practice: What's the connection?"

This proved timely as planning progressed. Current events echoed these concerns, namely the Dakota Access Pipeline protest. Guests and speakers from Standing Rock, along with many of our own members brought their histories, their expertise and their passions to provide timely, informative and inspiring workshops, home groups, keynotes and panel discussions.

Our faith and practice must remain the foundation supporting our work, as it inspires all peoples who are called to act in community on their shared concerns.

We grow in our awareness of white privilege and its effects, and were called to use this consciousness for positive change. The urgent need to address climate change should inspire our personal choices and our activism when we return to our homes and communities. A Friend who is a water protector encouraged us to stop using plastic straws to decrease our use of plastic and protect marine life. These small individual changes can make huge collective environmental impacts.

Yearly meeting brought together friends from across Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana; some traveling over 500 miles to spend a few days amongst Quakers. We heard reports from the Friends we send to 10 Quaker organizations and five ecumenical and local activist groups in the states. We saw young hipsters, hip oldsters and all sorts of Friends in between.

Intergenerational relationships are deep and essential to many of us. As mostly convinced Friends from small and isolated meetings we value this spiritual Fellowship even when we struggle together for right protocol and procedure. Our project for writing our own Faith and Practice was reinvigorated this year, and the committee remained most concerned that we express our uniqueness.

As liberal Quakers in the mostly conservative south we struggle to maintain our presence in our communities. Questions were raised on our relationship with Friends General Conference. Programs that were utilized have faded, although we remain true to the values exemplified by FGC. For us, we need to move past the old paradigms and create new relationships among monthly meetings, our yearly meeting, and FGC that are based on mutual participation.

Seeing our youth program expand this year, as more youth attended and more adults were inspired to facilitate them, was gratifying for all. We will be sure to take this fellowship and our role as protectors of each other and our creation home with us.



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## Southeastern Yearly Meeting

Loving Greetings to Friends Everywhere:

Southeastern Yearly Meeting gathered in Fruitland Park, Florida, USA, Fourth Month 12-16, 2017 with 162 Friends in attendance, including 21 children. There were many first-time attenders at our sessions, as well as Friends who we had not seen in recent years. Visitors from Quaker organizations and other yearly meetings enriched our gathering and reminded us of the bonds of love that bind us to Friends the world over.

The beauty of the Life Enrichment Center, situated on the shore of Lake Griffin made us appreciate how fortunate we are to meet here. Early morning worship was in the natural cathedral formed by the towering live oaks. Every morning the ministry of the breeze in the trees and the singing of the birds brought the closeness of God to the remembrance of our souls.

Our Friends community held our beloved ProNica in the Light as they struggled with complex issues within their organization. After worship sharing with a concern for ProNica, Friends continue holding ProNica in the Light and are available to offer spiritual support and guidance.

Story-teller, Bible scholar, performance artist Peterson Toscano delivered the annual Walton Lecture titled “Discerning our collective calling: love, hope, & climate justice.” This unique three-act lecture/performance brought to us an understanding that climate change is not only a reason for despair. Rather than being paralyzed with fear, we can see ourselves as honored to be living in this time and being a part of the movement for climate justice. Climate change effects people of color, women, and people lower on the economic ladder more severely than white people, men, and those whose economic situation is better. Addressing climate change is not only a matter of technology, it is a matter of justice.

In the workshops led by Peterson, “Beyond Lightbulbs and Polar Bears. Overcoming Shame and Fear: Leading in a Time of Climate Change” and “You Already Have Skin in the Game—Justice, Pets, and Coffee Beans”, SEYM Friends heard stories from several of Peterson’s characters to bring us out of guilt and shame about climate change to a place of hope. We formed pods (small groups) and explored our stories and how we might reach others to open the sometimes difficult dialog about climate change.

Friends were excited to receive the first report from our Field Secretary for Earthcare. Beverly’s first six months in this new position have been very active. We look forward to moving forward together in discerned action for the care of our planet and each other.

Friends described powerful worship sharing sessions. It is one of the things that many of us love most about our gathering. Queries and quotes about our earth and our personal relationship to it were inspiring.

We are deeply grateful for the many Friends who shared their gifts and leadings through a variety of informative and inspiring workshops. The breadth and depth of the spiritual gifts of SEYM Friends and Friends who travelled to be with us are a blessing to our community. A great difficulty for many Friends attending yearly meeting is having to choose between workshops being held at the same time.

SEYM Friends feel renewed in our call to be faithful. Guided by Spirit we can look forward to walking cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone, sharing what we have learned and being a blessing to all.

In the Light,  
Phoebe B. Andersen, Clerk

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# Western Yearly Meeting

July 30, 2017

To Friends Everywhere:

“Joined by every supporting ligament” was the theme for this year’s Western Yearly Meeting. Using Ephesians 4:16, “From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work,” Western Yearly Meeting gathered in Plainfield, Indiana from July 27-30, 2017 for our 160th annual session.

Over the past several years, the themes of each gathering have continued to build on each other, providing a framework for unity and growth to meet today’s challenges. From recognizing and encouraging spiritual giftedness, becoming better stewards, and laying a foundation for growth; we moved this year to consider the process of strengthening each part so that we can, together in the Spirit, withstand the forces that threaten to weaken us as we move forward.

Quaker Lecture speaker, Max Carter, had his childhood roots in Russiaville, Indiana (a part of Western Yearly Meeting.) This connection made his Thursday night presentation especially meaningful. He reminded us through historical anecdotes that the growth of Quakerdom was not without conflict, disagreement, and heartache. What allowed the Quakers to survive as a group, was that despite stretching “every supporting ligament,” (sometimes to nearly breaking) they recognized they were united by love and the Spirit which is stronger than any outside force. He pointed out that each generation has been faced with deep social conflict, threats to theology, advances in technology, and resulting changes in culture. Each generation emerged stronger because they faced and worked through the challenges. The current generation does not need to be the exception if we remember that love and the Spirit of God sustains us.

Like many faith bodies today, Western Yearly Meeting faces the realities of outside forces competing for the time of members, a dwindling number of active adults due to aging and its

effects, and reduced numbers of new members. While several individual meetings are seeing growth, others are struggling to remain viable, and several have been laid down. We recognize that it is the actions of the current generation that will revive the fervor that draws in people for Christ. Individual meetings have already started reaching out into and engaging the communities around them in a wide variety of ways. At the same time, these meetings are working to strengthen the support and nurture of current members. These meetings have realized that strengthening requires action! The annual Memorial Service provided an opportunity to remember those who have gone before us and the roles each of them played in helping the current generation grow and strengthen.

Western Yearly Meeting was well represented at the Friends United Meeting Triennial and those who attended reported growth in understanding and strengthening of relationships as a result of attendance. Balancing this “outreach” to the world is the “inward” care and nurture that will result from successfully reaching the financial goal for the Western Yearly Meeting Pastoral Ministry Excellence sustained fund. As grants are made from this fund, everyone in Western Yearly Meeting will have a part in helping pastors retire with dignity, and reduce the financial strain of those entering pastoral training.

Each year provides an opportunity to program the annual meeting differently, adapting it to meet the needs of those attending and encourage new attenders. This year was no exception. Morning devotional speakers were local leaders. Meetings for business were shortened to a two-hour session on each of the first three days, encouraging written rather than oral reports with opportunities for discussion provided. Western Yearly Meeting approved a minute encouraging members to support discussion and legislation abolishing the death penalty in the case of severe mental illness. A proposal to change current procedures regarding nominations and area meetings was considered to meet the challenge of reduced membership and still maintain a framework for future growth.

Afternoons were filled with engaging workshops and interest group sessions. Workshops included: “Practice in Peaceful Problem Solving” presented by the Indianapolis Peace Learning Center; “Communicating for Peaceful Resolution” presented by the Alternatives to Violence; and “Drug Addiction and How the Church Can Help,” a panel discussion conducted by especially qualified community specialists. A wide variety of additional interest group sessions reflected the diverse needs and concerns of the members of Western Yearly Meeting. Intergenerational activities were well attended and new evening activities such as a Festival of Fun and an open-to-the-public free concert with Tim Grimm were tried for the first time.

Saturday morning started with a Pancake Breakfast sponsored by the Quaker Men as a fund raiser for the mission in Belize. After the business session, workshops, and interest groups, the mission emphasis continued. Quaker Men and the USFW met for a combined session led by Oscar Mbali from Nairobi who is assuming pastoral responsibilities in Belize. This was followed by Quaker Men/USFW meals and business, and the public concert!

Sunday was a day of rejoicing. Musical gifts of individuals and groups from within Western Yearly Meeting were highlighted in an uplifting program presented prior to the Sunday morning closing worship service and the official recognition of our newly recorded minister, Kathy Luethje.

As we move forward “To strengthen every ligament” by putting our faith into action, your prayers of support and encouragement are appreciated.

In Christian Love,

Sarah Lookabill, Presiding Clerk  
Elizabeth Ann Carter, Recording Clerk  
Kay Carter, Assistant to the Clerk

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## Wilmington Yearly Meeting

“This is the single question facing Wilmington Yearly Meeting this weekend: What is the presence in our midst saying to you, in this moment? I invite you to hold that question in prayerful silence for a moment, and then continue to hold it through the discussions this afternoon and the business sessions tomorrow.”  
Kelly Kellum, Clerking Workshop, 7/28/17

To all Friends Everywhere,

On January 15th, 2017, Fairview Friends Meeting adopted a minute entitled ‘Same-sex marriage Wilmington Yearly Meeting position,’ and sent it to the yearly meeting for consideration. At mini yearly meeting sessions in March, held in Tennessee, the Fairview Minute was presented to the Permanent Board. Based on this minute, our Presiding Clerk, David Goff, set us the challenge of discussing at our annual summer sessions whether or not we could allow individual meetings to discern on their own which marriages to take under their care.

Around that central business, other issues were discussed and other stories were told. In our pre-Yearly Meeting Retreat, Megan Fair spoke about the work of FCNL’s Advocacy Teams. In our business sessions, we heard from Jim Reynolds about painful budget decisions at Wilmington College that included cutting the position of Ruth Brindle, Quaker Heritage Center Curator. We had an excellent clerking workshop, led by Kelly Kellum of North Carolina Yearly Meeting. We enjoyed musical ministry offered by Patti Kent of Living Word Friends Church, and heard an update from Ms Candi Young about exciting new plans for the Belize Friends School. At our annual peace lecture, we heard from Migwe Kimemia about his work in Dayton with the American Friends Service Committee.

The emotional weight of this year’s session, though, lay in our joint discernment around Fairview’s minute. We found, laboring together on this question that we could not come to unity.

Some of those who spoke to the question shone the light of Truth on the deep differences that divide us. We disagree about the nature of the

authority of Scripture. We disagree about how to balance the witness of Scripture with the witness of the inward experience of God. We disagree about the authority of the yearly meeting over monthly meetings. We disagree about the continuing nature of revelation.

While acknowledging these disagreements, we affirmed our love for the fellowship. We heard friends share their deep love and appreciation for one another, the relationships that have formed over the years, and the unique place Wilmington occupies as a 'middle of the road' yearly meeting. Is it, in fact, part of our witness that we continue to meet together despite our differences?

Yet there were some who felt that these disagreements hamper our trust in joint efforts like our camping program. Others thought that our ability to work together in efforts like Friends Disaster Service indicated that our trust can grow through common work.

We asked some troubling questions: If we are not in unity and do not see way forward, will continuing in organizational fellowship become more harmful to us than helpful? Can we trust one another in joint work when we cannot agree on what to teach our children?

One Friend expressed frustration with the design of the discussion, noting that it seems like, once again, we're just kicking the can further down the road. Many felt that the discussion time was not long enough and that Friends needed more time together.

At the end of our business session, we approved, with standing ovations, minutes of appreciation for the work of Ruth Brindle and Doug Haag, who is concluding his service as our Executive Secretary. As divided as we may be on theological questions, we are united in our support and gratitude for one another.

One Friend asked if Cuba Friends Meetinghouse could be opened early on Sunday morning so that Friends could gather and pray for our yearly meeting, to general approval. In closing, Clerk David Goff named our pain and confusion in his prayer: "Our hearts hurt. We love each other, but this disagreement still divides us. We don't

want to separate but we don't see our way clear to go forward together."

We continue to walk in the Light that we have, and pray that more will be given. We pray also that this epistle finds you in good faith, filled with the living Christ and willing to go where He leads and do what he asks of you.

On behalf of Wilmington Yearly Meeting,  
The Epistle Committee: Jonathan Goff, Dan Kasztelan, Julie Rudd

# From Asia & the West Pacific

## Australia Yearly Meeting

Epistle to Friends everywhere

Ta Marra, open hands

Ta Marra, open hands

Greetings from Australia Yearly Meeting 2017 where we were welcomed to the beautiful lands of the Kurna people among the sand dunes at Adelaide Shores Beach in a moving dialogue between Kurna Elders and Friends.

We gathered from meetings across Australia and with overseas Friends; mid-winter sun gracing our days and a full moon our first night. Amid a 'community of cottages', our children, young people and adults engaged with each other and the ocean environment, deepening the impact of Earthcare and other like ministries over our week-long program, urging us to make spiritual connections with nature, with one another, and with local First Peoples; while jets overhead from the nearby flight path reminded us of the cost of carbon emissions.

During an all-age meeting for worship the children hosting it asked: 'How do we care for the earth and for people?' and many friends reflected on whether they were doing enough. One small boy ministered: 'I care for the bugs and other people'. Later, Friends responded to a moving ministry of music by Junior Young Friends. We are deeply concerned at the impacts of climate change and recognise that business as usual is not an option.

Visual presentations by Friends in the Earthcare session on the theme of spirit of place were linked by the spiritual and emotional experience of connection with natural and green spaces. David Carline, elder of the Kooma/Gwamu nation, and his niece Cheryl Buchanan, Aboriginal rights activist and writer, in their Backhouse lecture deepened this idea of connection to country reminding us that for Australia's First Nations Peoples this goes back tens of thousands of years through their ancestors. David and Cheryl shared stories showing how they have let their lives speak and are using their gifts in the service of their communities. The Earthcare committee also asked Friends 'If nature is a conversation, what is it saying?' Cheryl Buchanan urged us to: 'Speak to the land. Listen to it. It will heal you.'

From their epistle, we learned Tanzanian Friends were encouraged to 'embrace the Eagle's life style, its strength, power, patience, vision, eyesight'. A vision of a powerful Australian bird emerged when Cheryl spoke of the confirmatory welcome to country David Carline received from emus running toward him when he travelled to Kooma/Gwamu country, and of the Emu songline going from there across to the Kimberly and down to South Australia.

YM began with gratitude on hearing that the UN treaty to ban nuclear weapons was adopted by 120 countries. However without Australia's signature, much is still to be done. From two winter schools came an afternoon of peace witness. Bearing messages in support of signing the treaty and explaining the health impacts of war, and a large banner with the words 'Honour the War Dead by Ending War', around sixty Quakers walked purposefully and prayerfully to the Adelaide War Memorial.

Australian Friends again felt connected to the wider Quaker community when American Friends' epistles told of their challenge in responding to white privilege and Ramallah Friends of their continued struggle in this their 50th year under military occupation. With a bag packed full of funeral notices representing the weekly heartache that is common across many Aboriginal families and communities, the Backhouse lecturers spoke of the continuing consequences, injustices and trauma of colonisation.

An encouraging State of the Society address felt the pulse of each regional meeting and offered the idea that 'We need in every community a group of angelic troublemakers'. The Australian Quaker Narrative Embroideries express our history of Spirit-led work and inspire us to continue our rich 'tapestry' of practical actions. We worry about our diminishing numbers and too few to fill the roles we have created; but in ministry were reminded that although small in number we are 'a noisy people'. Despite some early unclear pathways, we see how the Spirit often then seems to call forth energies to work in new ways.

Bilyanina yartanga

Let there be peace.

In peace,

Jo Jordan, Presiding Clerk

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## Japan Yearly Meeting

19–20 November 2016

The Japan Yearly Meeting was held on the theme of 'Sharing spiritual gifts' (Corinthians 12: 12-27), on 19–20th Eleventh Month, 2016 at the Tsuchiura Monthly Meeting; 57 members attended. We had a great pleasure to have with us Bae HyunDuck and Han Gyeol from Korea and Sejin Pak from Australia.

In the theme of 'Connecting with Friends overseas', there was a report on the Korea Daejeon Retreat; four members from Japan participated. The need to build bonds between Korean and Japanese Quakers was expressed. Bae HyunDuck spoke about the history of Seoul meeting and the current situation.

Discussion was focused on activities such as protest against the construction of the naval base, and 'three step worship' for solidarity of life peace activities. We could not participate in the FWCC Conference in Peru, but we learned from the letter and other materials.

In 'Sharing Vision', Young Friends talked about the ten-year history and the joy of involvement among Friends and members, strengthening supportive feelings with excitement. Also, along with the thoughts of Friends who have been involved in the Friends Center, there was explanation of the difficulties with aging buildings. There are several recommendations on how to utilize the facility, we hope that wisdom will be given in our prayers.

The meeting for business examined and approved the yearly meeting report of 2016 and the activity plan and budget for 2017. We also approved amendments to the usage regulations of Fuji cemetery.

After the session, Nitobe Memorial Lecture was given by Gerry Yokota of Osaka Monthly Meeting entitled 'Witness for Peace: Learning from Nelson Mandela'.

In peace and Friendship, Sachiko Yamamoto, Clerk

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## Japan Yearly Meeting

18–19 November 2017

The Annual General Conference of Japan Yearly Meeting was held on November 18–19, 2017. Our theme was 'Let Our Lives Speak,' the words of George Fox inspired by James 2:14-18. The conference was hosted by Tokyo Monthly Meeting; 34 in attendance.

In the first symposium, 'The Legacy We Leave to the Next Generation, Visible and Invisible,' representatives of each meeting shared the following:

- the hope that we may cherish what we have learned from the models set by our elders and fulfill our responsibilities as members
- the desire for recognition of the value of mutual respect for diversity and our tradition of openness and generosity
- the hope that the children of the meeting will grow up with an awareness of the presence of God in their lives and the joy of working with them
- the importance of letting the younger generation feel free to choose from the models they witness rather than feeling compelled to accept advice
- the hope that intergenerational relations among Friends will be as peers rather than hierarchical, and that we share a global vision.

We felt a common sense of what we want to convey in these experiential testimonies from various age groups, and hope to continue to sojourn in this spirit.

In the second symposium, 'Journeys to Membership in the Religious Society of Friends and How We Welcome Visitors,' four new members spoke about how they were drawn to join. In one case, it was related to her daughter entering Friends Girls School. In another case, the journey began with attendance at a Christian church during a period of study abroad. For a third, the opportunity was occasioned by a child enrolling in a Friends kindergarten. For another, it was through the introduction of an acquaintance. The occasions were various, but all were led by God. We feel hope in all these encounters. Attenders were also inspired by the witness of the clerks of our monthly meetings, who shared their local traditions of welcoming all visitors as friends, of active outreach, and of respect for individuality.

The meeting for business approved: the 2016 Yearly Meeting report; the plan and budget for 2017; the plan for the timely demolition of Friends Center Annex; the laying down of the Shimotsuma Meetinghouse Working Group and the Friends Center Planning Committee; and nominations of new executive committee members.

After the general meeting, we had the opportunity to deepen our acquaintance with representatives of: Aiyuen, Japan Friends Service Committee, Shoutomo Gakuen Kindergarten, Shouyuu Gakuen Kindergarten, and Friends Girls School.

Sachiko Yamamoto, Clerk

# Testimonies

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## 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 fragrant 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.

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# Graham James Badman

27.ix.1933 – 6.xii.2010

Graham James Badman, known as Jim, was born and brought up in Street, moving to Somerton aged 30, when he bought the hi-fi business Watts Radio. He first became aware of Quakerism when he worked in CIC Engineering, a branch of Clarks, on leaving the Royal Air Force (RAF). Street Quaker Meeting first became aware of Jim when he walked into meeting for worship wearing his RAF uniform in the late 1950s.

He married Dorothy Buckler, a personnel officer of Clarks, at Street Quaker Meeting in 1958. Quakerism became important to Dorothy and she too joined Friends and served Street Meeting as elder for many years. Their daughter Fran was born in Somerton in 1963. Dorothy helped in the shop but suffered severe heart problems from which she died in 1983.

Jim married fellow elder Judith Foley at Street Meeting in 1984 and in 2009 they celebrated their Silver Wedding. During those years Judith introduced Jim to travel to Canada to meet his new in-laws, California where his daughter and son in law lived for a time and to Ireland to meet Judith's family. In his last ten years, in spite of increasing health problems, he and Judith often visited Worcestershire to stay with his family and see his grandson and granddaughter.

Jim was a man of intense creativity and originality, whose poetic gifts and humorous wordplay were reflected in two very popular self-published anthologies. He cared deeply about the town he lived in for most of his adult life and believed in the importance of community engagement. His great love of literature and the arts was reflected in the Somerton Summer Arts Festival which he helped to establish and the Somerton Literary and Poetry Society (SLAPS) which he started.

Jim served as a Governor of Strode College, was a member of ex-services Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and of a local Somerton peace group. He and Judith hosted many University of the Third Age (U3A) groups in

their home – music on his superior equipment, science and technology among others.

It says much about Jim's strength of spirit that few of his friends realised he had struggled with depression and anxiety for much of his adult life including many months hospitalisation in the 1960s. The fear of a recurrence dogged him into the 1990s when he had the courage to reduce and finally cease his medication for depression and sleeplessness.

His service for Quakers included many years of taking the teenager Children's meeting at Street including camping at Spiceland Meeting. He served for many years also as an elder and on Premises Committee and served briefly as deputy registering officer for monthly meeting.

Nationally he served as a monthly meeting representative for several years on Quaker Home Service (QHS) and attended many Peace Conferences at Swanwick amongst other Quaker commitments.

Jim was someone who wore his Quakerism lightly and believed 'that the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life'. He earned huge respect, trust and love among all the communities to which he belonged. Six of his friends gave a day a week to work in his shop when he was hospitalized for his first new hip. He trusted his customers with expensive equipment to try in their own homes before paying him a penny. People usually live up to one's trust, he said.

When the first Somerton Festival incurred a large debt, he published his first booklet of poems to help lower it and it was the only item in his shop which he manipulated people to buy. William Sessions published his second book some of which were sold for the Festival funds but some for the Quaker Leaveners. After Jim's death a couple of Festival committee members wrote of him much the same words: that he added an aura of calm, clear thinking and common sense to meetings. His light heartedness ensured they were fun, not a chore. Other Somerton people spoke of his kindness, his humanity, his positivity and his unique views on the world around us. He added to the

gaiety of wherever he was. Jim was enthusiastic about everything and this inspired enthusiasm in others and from that they were enabled to discover hidden talents which he encouraged to blossom.

Jim was a diligent reader of “The Friend”, “Quaker Monthly” and “Friends Quarterly” and they often inspired his ministry as did other reading such as “The Hitchhikers’ Guide to the Galaxy”, the last often quoted during Quaker Campers meeting for worship in England, Wales and Ireland. His ministry was always tempered by humour to get across the deeper truth and even five years after his death his ministry is missed at Street. His compassion for his fellow members of the human race was always in evidence, as was his kindness gentleness and willingness to help others.

Jim wrote a reflection on death: “So of what shall I die? And how? It occurs to me that to die laughing could be a good way to go. Certainly to live laughing is a good way to stay. I discovered this many years ago as I slowly recovered from a work-related depression. Many religious people made this discovery. George Fox with his ocean of light which overcame his darkness is an example. So let us walk cheerfully over the world, greeting total strangers, even on public transport!”

The grace of God truly shone through every part of his life.

Signed in and on behalf of Mid-Somerset Area Meeting, held at Street on 10 September 2017

Andy Hall, Clerk

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## Brontë Bedford-Payne

12.xi.1928 – 6.viii.2017

In her teenage years, Brontë and her sister, Elizabeth, lived with their aunt’s family, who kept sheep at Drebley near Bolton Abbey. She explored widely on her bicycle, coming to know and to love the uplands of the Yorkshire Dales, its people, birds, flowers, buildings, history and the lay and feel of the land. On one such tour, she first visited Airton Meeting House, where a relative of hers had formerly been a resident warden, and in the restoration of which she was later to be closely interested. The habits of keeping a personal diary and of making notes of what she observed served her well in later life, when she produced several books and gave talks on local history and related topics. She was an excellent public speaker.

During the war years, Leeds Grammar School for Girls was evacuated to Bolton Abbey. Brontë attended as a day pupil and went on to study dentistry at University College in London, an unusual career for a woman in those days. She married a fellow dentist, Richard Arthur Bedford-Payne, on 13 September, 1952, at Bolton Abbey. They raised two children and had a thriving practice in Letchworth Garden City. Brontë had several placements as a schools’ dental surgeon, including six months as a locum in Orkney in the early 1970s.

Eventually, the call of the north became irresistible and in 1975 they bought Low Mill, on the Grassington side of Linton Falls, where they established themselves as the local dentists with a side-line in fish farming. Brontë specialised in children’s dentistry. She had a wonderful ability to relate to people, so much so that decades after she had retired people would say with pleasure, “she used to be my dentist when I was a child”. During this time, they had memorable caravan holidays with their family and friends. Brontë also had a rich creative life, as a pianist, a writer, and an outstanding needle worker. While living in Letchworth and at Low Mill, she and Richard were active attenders of Quaker meetings. They each joined Skipton Meeting (Settle Monthly Meeting) in 1994, a few months before Richard died. A year later, Brontë moved to Summers Barn in Grassington. In 2012 she transferred

the listing of her membership to Airton Local Meeting (Craven and Keighley Area Meeting).

Brontë was active in the Grassington Peace Group and in the Upper Wharfedale Field Society, which she served as General Secretary for ten years, and then as its President in 1999. In 2001, she was made an Honorary Life Member of the Field Society, for which she organised study groups, projects and field visits. In the last days of her final illness, she was concerned that a trip which had been arranged months previously and which she had intended to lead should go ahead as planned so that its participants would not be disappointed.

Among all her varied interests, Brontë also gave much time to Friends. She served as an Elder of Skipton Local Meeting and as an editor of the meeting's newsletter; she was a Trustee and frequent Resident Friend at Glenthorne, the Quaker guest house in Grasmere. She was one of the first Friends to be interested in and actively support restoration of the Airton Meeting House, joining with a few others to huddle in blankets in a circle around a noxious paraffin heater as we worshipped in the partly-unroofed building for almost two years before it was repaired. On one such occasion, she went out to hush a noisy party of walkers who were peering into the windows of what they thought was a derelict building and was just in time to hear one of them say to the others, "Look! They're in there. They're doing it. They're doing it right now!". She explained that "it" was Quaker worship, not witchcraft and sent them on their way.

In 2000, Brontë was inspired by an article in *The Friend* to create an Airton tapestry panel. Typical of her ability to bring people together, the nine whom she assembled for this project included embroiderers and non-needle workers, local school children, members of Skipton Meeting, and residents of Malhamdale. Brontë wrote of the project, "We were not an established group of men and women looking for something to do .... we were a group of local people, not all Quakers, who came together, purely to create an embroidered panel, a thing well made, which would add to the rich heritage of historical interest in Malhamdale".

Several Friends have said that what they have valued most about knowing Brontë was the pleasure

of her company. Travelling with her on country roads to visit farming friends or a favourite wildflower meadow and simple trips between Grassington and Airton were enlivened by her pointing out the origins of scars on the landscape, places where her relatives had lived, the ages and purposes of particular walls and buildings, an ancient rabbit warren or an archaeological site. She was thoroughly embedded in the Yorkshire Dales and generous in sharing her love and knowledge of it. Visitors to her home were warmly received, with tea and much-appreciated homemade ginger biscuits. She was equally welcoming to newcomers to Skipton and to Airton Meetings. One Friend said, "I will always remember how welcoming, reassuring and informative she was towards me as a newcomer". Other Friends have said, "she was always approachable and easy to talk to .... sometimes a bit timid, but at the same time there was real steel in there.... there was a touch of gentility.... Brontë's capacity for recognising the abilities of others.... working with Brontë was a privilege as well as a delight".

Brontë was never a very conspicuous Quaker. She shuddered at the idea of wearing a lapel badge that said, "I am a Quaker ask me why", but she kept our testimonies and she lived her Quakerism to the full. In doing so, she enriched the lives of all who knew her.

Signed in and on behalf of Craven & Keighley Area Meeting, held at Airton on 12 November 2017

Laurel Phillipson, Clerk

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## David Alfred Binney

13.i.41 – 23.iii.17

David Alfred Binney was born in Finedon, Northamptonshire in the dark days of 1941. He enjoyed telling the story that his birth was registered in a coal hole in Wellingborough town hall as the previous night the building had received a direct hit. For the first few months of his life he slept under the stairs. His family moved to Rugby in 1942, to North London in 1947 and then to Cambridge.

David's father was a Methodist minister, which involved the family moving frequently, so David and his younger brother Paul were sent to a Methodist prep school, Prior's Court, at the age of ten and three years later to Kingswood School, Bath. For David, this was the end of family life as he had known it. However, he was happy at both schools and at Kingswood he received an excellent education where he was encouraged to be intellectually curious. David's spiritual journey which had started at home continued at Kingswood. He was very active in chapel life and had the opportunity to be involved in devising services, setting challenging subjects for sermons and dissecting them afterwards. He studied Greek, Latin and Ancient History at A Level and went on to read Classics at Kings College, London from 1960–1963 and was an active member of MethSoc.

For the next 11 years David worked at the BBC. This was a happy time in his life, all spent in radio studios. He started as a studio manager, eventually specialising in music and producing programmes for Radio 3. Despite enjoying this well-paid job, he felt that he wanted to do something more challenging that would be directly useful to other people, so in 1974 he left to train as a Probation Officer. The training completely turned his life upside down and liberated the person he had always thought he was, but who had remained buried.

David worked for 23 years in the Hertfordshire Probation Service; the last 10 years of which as a Senior Probation Officer. When at Watford, David pioneered Offending Behaviour Groups.

After a secondment to Aylesbury Prison, where conditions in the 1980s were very difficult, David wanted to spend as much time as possible working with and in prisons. He was later seconded as Senior Probation Officer to The Mount near Hemel Hempstead.

This was a new prison for young offenders; there David was involved in developing an enlightened regime. This work was very challenging, but hugely satisfying and David felt it was a privilege to be given the opportunity to make a difference.

In 1996 David was seconded to the Prison Service, joining a combined Prison Probation project which developed a revised system of sentence management and planning for prisoners. He then toured the country training prison and probation staff in the new system. Having retired from the Probation Service he worked on a free-lance basis for the Home Office and the Prison Service. His work included interviewing prisoners to validate a new offender assessment system (OASys) and subsequently training criminal justice staff. David also made a significant contribution to the handbook which supported OASys.

David's work colleagues remember him as calm, thoughtful, always interested in new practice developments. He was highly respected, seen as professional and reliable, and in possession of sound judgement. His witty sense of humour was always present and he was very committed to his work and team and always had time for people. He retired from paid work in 2004, opening the way for Quaker service.

Family has always been at the centre of David's life. He has two children from his first marriage and two stepsons from his second marriage and ten grandchildren. David and Kate were married in 1984 in Hemel Hempstead Quaker Meeting House and lived in Tring, Hertfordshire for 19 years before moving to Presteigne, Powys in 2001. Their deep, loving marriage and sharing of their Quaker faith gave David the strength and support to develop his career, his creative talents and to put so much energy into his Quaker life.

David had so many interests. He loved words, wrote poetry, was a good linguist and spoke

fluent French, Norwegian (self-taught) and some Welsh. Alongside these intellectual interests David also had a practical side; he reached a good standard in the world of rallying, then built his own Davarian racing car in 1970s and was a fan of Formula 1. He was a keen Watford FC supporter from 1952 on and enjoyed playing cricket, running and cycling when younger. But his greatest love was music.

David sang, conducted choirs and wrote music: choruses for Greek plays at Kings, a church opera 'Moses Mastermind', many songs, a Latin mass based on Beatles' songs and a work for soprano soloist, choir and organ in Norwegian. This work was inspired by a visit to a small church in a remote fjord whilst visiting his daughter who lives in Narvik. Here he found the names of four Jews of the Fischer family on the war memorial who were sent to Auschwitz in 1943. David was so moved by this that he wrote 'Et in Arcadia Ego' setting Psalms 120 and 121 in Norwegian alongside part of the Latin mass. Eventually he met the only living survivor of this family, Abel, (whose parents, two brothers, two uncles and cousin all died in the holocaust) and in 1996 together they arranged for a performance in the tiny church, which was a very moving occasion. David met Abel's daughter some time later who told him that the concert had made a real difference, because for the first time people in the village had started to talk about what had happened in the war.

Someone in the village had betrayed the Fischers to the Germans and could have still been living there. The family presented David with a certificate showing that they had honoured him by planting 10 trees in Norway's forest in the Negev, Israel. All his life David was very moved by this gesture and by what it had meant for the new generations of the Fischer family, who told him, that 'the spirit of our family will stay alive through the music you composed'.

Early music was a huge inspiration to David and he owned and made many renaissance instruments including recorders, crumhorns, bagpipes and a harpsichord. For many years he ran early music groups in Stanmore, Tring and Presteigne. He was a very supportive and

enthusiastic supporter of the Presteigne Festival and arts life of the town.

David's journey into the Society of Friends began in sadness, during the breakup of his first marriage. He had been an active Methodist, having been brought up in a strict Methodist home and had for several years been a local preacher. This was a time of inner turmoil and questioning and he began searching for a different kind of spirituality. He valued the Quaker silence and ministry, which was so different from what he had experienced before. He had the feeling of 'coming home' when he started attending Edgware Meeting in 1979 and in 1984 he became a member of Luton and Leighton Area Meeting. David became active in Hemel Hempstead Meeting, helping with children's meeting and serving as an elder, overseer and as convenor of Area Meeting Camp Committee. David, Kate and his stepsons all belonged to Hemel Hempstead Meeting and attended many Quaker camps.

After David died, Kate found some notes that David had written about one of his favourite poems, 'The Hound of Heaven', by Francis Thompson. David examined what relevance the poem had for him with its description of the relentless pursuit of a lost soul by a loving God. He wrote 'it was partly my obsession with repetition, chaconnes, passacaglias, etc. What am I fleeing from, what is pursuing me? I don't regard myself as a lost soul and have always had a sense of the numinous. The turning point in my life was Woodbrooke-on-the-Road's 'Rooted in Christianity, Open to New Light'. This gave me the confidence to distance myself from my very Christo-centric heritage and to regard Christ and most of the bible stories as more or less helpful myths. But now I have a nagging feeling that I might have gone too far and thrown the baby out with the bathwater. Maybe it's the baby which is hounding me. Maybe I need to reassess how much of the past I can retain.'

In 2001 David transferred his membership to Hereford and Mid-Wales Area Meeting after moving to Presteigne and soon became involved with the local meeting of Almeley Wootton and with the area meeting. At Almeley David

served as an Elder, as Friend responsible for the burial ground and as local meeting clerk. David helped to bring in child protection procedures into the area meeting and was the first Child Protection Co-ordinator. He supported Kate at the teenage Area Meeting Link Group weekends, often sleeping on meeting house floors. He held the posts of assistant clerk, then clerk, to area meeting.

As clerk, David managed the division of the area meeting into two new areas: Mid-Wales and The Southern Marches; he was a keen supporter of Meeting of Friends in Wales. He steered the area meeting through the ramifications of the Charity Commission and the setting up of trustees. He supported the establishment of a Quaker minister at Usk prison. At the same time, he was a trustee at Woodbrooke for six years. Being Area Meeting Clerk and a Woodbrooke trustee were both exciting, challenging and rewarding for David.

He was also on Central Nominations Committee and finally the Convenor of Area Meeting Trustees, but he had to relinquish both these responsibilities as his health deteriorated. He was a faithful member of Quakers in Criminal Justice for over 30 years, and supported Hlekweni training centre and Samathonga primary school in Zimbabwe. David gave of his time willingly and wanted to serve the Society of Friends for as long as he was able, always grateful to have found his true spiritual home.

As a child David had felt nervous and he remained a shy person underneath. However, in his profession and work for the Society of Friends he was able to lead, and remain calm and unruffled, even in difficult circumstances. Friends remember David for 'his patient and ordered clerking', 'his measured responses and wisdom and, when required his wit and forbearance', 'his quiet strength and calmness which carried area meeting through tricky discernment, his gentle waiting after each contribution', and 'his true sense of the spiritual energy that grounds our faith'. Another Friend wrote 'I will always remember David with great respect, not only for his deep knowledge of what it is to be Quaker, but the way he

practised Quakerism in his life, both spiritually and practically'. He let his life speak and always looked for that of God in everyone. David was greatly loved and was fully aware of 'the pearl of great price within him'. Matthew Chapter 13 verses 45 & 46 had been special for David and Kate from the time of their marriage.

Throughout his life David thought of himself as someone who was always late. Late for school, late for lectures, late to find the love of his life, late to find his spiritual home; one of his mottoes was 'sero sed serio' (late but in earnest), which he even found iced on the top of his 50th birthday cake; this appealed to his keen sense of humour.

David enriched our lives with his gentle and caring ways and by always putting others first. He often ministered about the joy of living in the moment, and his faith was true to the end. This gave him the strength and peace to face his final illnesses (Parkinson's disease and Progressive Supranuclear Palsy) over a period of six years with dignity and courage. A Friend wrote of him 'he lived from a place of integrity and his inner self shone through'.

Signed in and on behalf of Southern Marches Area Meeting, held at Hereford on 12 November 2017

Jeff Beatty, Clerk

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## Wilfrid Mullins Bolton

3.ii.1919 – 21.iii.2015

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## Phyllis Bolton, nee Ormston,

27.viii.1918 – 21.xii.2014

Bill & Phyllis Bolton were two very different individuals. They were also an effective team for over seventy years of married life together, from 1942 until their deaths within a few months of each other, both at the age of 96. Throughout this time their often complementary skills were put to the service of others in many ways, always driven by compassion and concern.

Neither was born into a Quaker family. It was in the mid 1950's that Bill became an attender at Hull Meeting after an incidental meeting with a Quaker and some subsequent reading. Phyllis soon followed, and with their two daughters the Bolton family "found a real spiritual home in what at this time was a very vibrant meeting – an intellectually and spiritually stimulating place to be".

Phyllis was born in Hull into a Baptist family of Scottish ancestry. A superbly practical person, she trained as a seamstress, and during the war she worked on various East Riding farms as a Land Girl. Much later in life her artistic side blossomed when she took a City & Guilds qualification in textiles, and later still when in her eighties she was involved in the Quaker Tapestry. Her feeling for the natural world led her to experiment with vegetable dyes for her spinning and weaving. She was a keen gardener and cook, "an inveterate Oxfam shopper" and an enthusiastic and thrifty home-maker.

Her warm, gentle and thoughtful manner endeared her to many, and she developed strong friendships especially amongst the disadvantaged and those on the margins of society. With other Quakers between 1965 and 1972 she was convenor of the "house committee" establishing and running Hillcrest House, which for the first time in the Hull area provided a safe and

supportive home for unmarried mothers. She worked with handicapped children in Beverley. When invited by the local authority to help improve the education of the children of Travellers, she set up a pioneering roadside playgroup in a minibus. Her good rapport with the families led to some lasting friendships. She was also involved in the peace movement and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, attending the women's demonstrations at Greenham Common.

Bill had a difficult early life, enduring childhood poverty, losing his father at a young age and being brought up by various relatives. As a child he suffered from Bell's palsy and rickets, and as a young man he experienced bouts of depression. As an adult he suffered from stomach ulcers and stress, and in his final years he showed stoicism in living with ever-present pain, and the isolating effect of advanced deafness, which must have been very hard indeed for such a communicative person. Despite this, his twinkly-eyed humour was never far from the surface.

In World War Two he was a conscientious objector, having been strongly influenced to this position by a Methodist minister in his youth. He served in the Royal Medical Corps with an ambulance unit in North Africa, until he was discharged due to ill-health. He trained as a teacher, teaching art and physical education and serving for nineteen years as a peripatetic headmaster. Bill was in his fifties before he took his B.Ed. Degree. He became Head of Swinemoor County Primary School in Beverley. As an education adviser he helped young teachers and took on the challenge of getting children from Traveller families into school. Their interest in the welfare of the young led both Bill and Phyllis to get involved with the Yorkshire Friends' Holiday School, where Bill's inventiveness and a certain air of irresponsibility resulted in the "potted sports" that continue to be enjoyed by holiday-schoolers.

He had many interests: butterfly swimming, painting, gardening, amateur acting, and singing in a male-voice choir. He loved his bee-keeping, and with a keen sense of the absurd he loved to tell people about the green-coloured



“peppermint honey” his bees produced after discovering waste from the nearby Needlers sweet factory where peppermint creams were made. He was “always dapper – but only thanks to Phyllis” and had “a grip-your-eye way of telling a story”. His monologues and sketches, in which his arched eyebrow suggested we were all in on the joke, were a favourite at meeting house socials. He was also a wise and passionate man, “an avid reader of *Advices & Queries*” whose ministry could be powerfully moving, and whose battered copy of *Quaker Faith & Practice* was ever-present in meeting for worship.

Phyllis and Bill met in 1939 on a young people’s Christian holiday in Whitby, two weeks before the outbreak of war. Despite the distance between Bill’s home in West Yorkshire and Phyllis’ in the East Riding, Bill would cycle to visit her even during the wartime blackout. They were married at a Baptist church in Hull in 1942, and by 1946 had two daughters, Janet and Sheila.

Family holidays were spent walking and camping, often with their close friends Theo and Alice Tulley and their four children. The children remember both the fun and the serious conversations about topics like pacifism and vegetarianism, in which “there was always an enquiring element”. Bill and Phyllis “always impressed the importance of truth, perseverance, strength of character, kindness, love and to respect all living things”.

However, it was “a marriage made on Earth, not in Heaven”: Phyllis’ and Bill’s strong and differing opinions made it difficult at times, perhaps most so later when keenly missing their daughters, both of whom had moved abroad. However, their firm view that marriage was for life won through. “Each was a help to the other, following the ebb and flow of want and need”, and in lighter moments they could be very much a “double-act”.

In the 1960’s they gravitated towards the newly-established meeting in Beverley, where a new meeting house had been built. Bill became treasurer, Phyllis served as an overseer and on hospitality, and they hosted many “at homes”.

They were “very much the power behind the social things” that helped to knit the meeting together. They continued to serve the meeting faithfully until the age of 80, when they both felt it was right to step back from formal service.

Both Bill and Phyllis were very practical people who were prompted by loving concern to use their skills to help others, particularly the young and disadvantaged. There were many examples from relatives and Friends of how a Quaker ethos ran through their lives. They “always had time for you”, and were valued enormously by all who knew them.

Signed in and on behalf of Pickering & Hull Area Meeting, held at Beverley on 13 January 2018

Heather Woolley, Co-clerk

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## Sue Bowers

13.vii.1933 – 27.iv.2016

To the very end, Sue retained a vigour and a smile which characterised her whole approach – to people, to opportunities, and to the mediation and peace work which she pioneered.

She was at the forefront of bringing conflict resolution work into UK schools in the 1980s, supported by Kingston on Thames Friends, where she and her husband John first came into membership in 1975. This was something of an impromptu second career; Sue had trained as a nurse in the 1950s, giving this up after marriage to John, a shipping executive then based in Liverpool, with whom she had a son and a daughter.

Sue was one of the founders and leaders of Kingston Friends Workshop Group (KFWG), the outcome of her concern about bullying in schools. KFWG introduced to the UK a wide range of tools to help prevent and manage bullying in schools, and the use of mediation for conflict resolution in the school environment. At the time, what could be described as peace education was often regarded with suspicion, especially in a rather right-wing council, where the first initiatives were taken. However, both an imaginative educational inspector and a committee member with a child in a local school gave strong and effective support, and within a year, the group was giving workshops to train teachers in conflict resolution techniques. The broad approach was summarised as ‘communication, affirmation, cooperation and problem-solving’, based on four key questions: What happened? How do you feel about it? What would you like to do? And what can we actually do?

The methods which the group pioneered have become widely known and disseminated, and live on in common practice in schools, though their origins are probably not widely known or celebrated. Sue would not have cared about this. Modest, loving and deeply convinced, she shared her insights with a sense of joint exploration. She was passionate that peace was not about avoiding conflict, but about confronting and working through differences. She carried this approach into every enterprise undertaken with Friends and others.

John’s second retirement in 1990 brought a move to Dorset, where for thirteen years they held between them most of the posts within the area meeting and contributed greatly to it. Sue’s kindness and compassion showed through in all she did; and her energy and enthusiasm were such that sometimes it seemed as if only John’s gentle direction of it prevented Sue from self-destructing!

The legacy left to Dorset of Mediation Dorset that was set up by Sue has been immense. It was ahead of its time, and right – every solicitor and court now offers ‘mediation’ but the quality and impartiality that was integral to Mediation Dorset was invaluable to its clients and a flagship for Quakers.

Sue went on to teach conflict resolution with Marian Liebmann in Woodbrooke Quaker Studies Centre and Queen’s College, Birmingham, work which was greatly valued by Quakers and theologians in training alike.

Life was also for living – Sue and John’s shared interests in music and sailing, and the embedding of a musical creativity in the family, nourished them and their friends. A move to the Cotswolds to be nearer their children brought their energies first to Charlbury meeting, and then to Witney meeting. Here they once again made themselves part of the heart of both meetings.

In 2004, following the Iraq war, Sue and John became prime movers in what eventually became Peaceroots, an independent charity formed to support people in war-torn areas attempting to find non-violent solutions to conflict, to bring reconciliation and to build sustainable peace. It also aimed to raise the public profile of such work, and to demonstrate its benefits through dialogue with governments and decision-makers. This work ran alongside that of the family trust set up by Sue and John which provided support for 40-50 charities a year. One example was the Olive Tree programme, in which Israeli and Palestinian students at London universities were enabled to meet each other as equals and friends, rather than strangers and enemies.

Finding a home which was more accessible as age and health became more pressing concerns had a particular influence in the re-establishment of Witney meeting, which had been laid down

some decades earlier. Sue and John, retiring to the town from Charlbury, initiated the home group which has now become a thriving local meeting in its own right. Sue was always keen to take on fresh ideas, and to keep those working with her in training, as it were, and part of her commitment to the young meeting was to create opportunities to learn together. She helped ensure that the Quaker experience was explained and explored through the provision of study groups for both enquirers and longer-standing Friends and she planned for members of the meeting to get to know one another better in away days and shared lunches. There were outreach events, when distinguished lecturers were invited to share their expertise, and she and John offered hospitality and challenge with love and enthusiasm. Her ministry in meeting was always rooted in practical experience, given with strength and wisdom. Though we knew that sometimes Sue's organisational expectations could outrun the time available, we all welcomed her practicality and enthusiasm.

It was characteristic of Sue that she and John both responded in good time to the advice to plan well for one's funeral and death. The guidance to the funeral advisors for Witney in 2012 was full of love and realism: organ donation (her body was accepted for medical research), green burials, flowers and catering were spoken of alongside the family needs, the trust in Quaker processes and the foundation of Quaker experience. Sue lived out her precepts to the end. Her own severe illness in 2013, and the onset of John's dementia, meant careful planning about where and how to live out the last few years. They had hoped to move to a new retirement village in Witney, but had to accept that by late 2015, it would be necessary to go to a similar community in Letcombe Regis. It was still near enough for Witney Friends to remain in touch, and to help prepare the memorial meeting in summer 2016. At this, music from her family and friends soared over the sadness and gratitude of the hundred or more who gathered to give thanks for the grace of God in this life of committed and creative service.

Signed in and on behalf of Oxford & Swindon Area Meeting, held at Burford on 13 May 2017

Alan Pearmain, Clerk

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## Mary Burnet

23. ii.1922 – 19.ii. 2016

Mary was born in India in 1922 where her father was an Army chaplain; this early experience of a culture and view of faith was to enrich her later understanding of spiritual matters in ways that she communicated to the great help of others. At Frankfurt University, where she spent some months in 1938, she cut her stay short following Kristallnacht, and other evidences of Nazi brutality all completely antipathetic to the kindly and concerned attitudes in her own character as a teacher and, later, an educational psychologist. Mary first came to Kendal Meeting, with her Aunt Molly, in the early 1940's, while convalescing from a broken rib and pleurisy. Attending meeting went towards completing her sense of unity and love for all around.

While teaching children with special needs in Kendal, the Director of Education in Westmoreland asked Mary to come out to Germany with him to help him in his new role, as director of the British Families' Education Forces. Mary had some reservations about putting on a uniform, but saw this as an opportunity for peace-making, "a bit of love shown to both sides" and she hoped her teaching could instil the idea that we don't have to hate our enemies. However, as a registered conscientious objector and a Quaker, she was told she was ineligible to go. With support from her local meeting and from Quaker MPs, permission was finally given and in January 1947 Mary left for Germany where she taught for two years.

While the teachers were not allowed to fraternise with the Germans, Mary insisted on employing Germans with families in the school and on sharing rations with them. This came to the ears of the Commandant who came in several times to demand they stop and once threatened to send Mary home for insubordination. She was adamant, however, and they eventually reached an agreement that if the school was going to be inspected, he'd send a runner round to warn them so that the appearance of aloofness could be maintained. Racism remained anathema to her throughout her life – whether based on

nationality, race, or creed – and she had no truck with anyone who tried to tell her otherwise.

After the war, and studying then practising child psychology, Mary met and later married Robert Parker, deputy director of Education at West Sussex County Council. Their child, Caroline, was born a year later, to Mary's great joy.

Mary was a member of Chichester Meeting for most of the 1960s and 70s. Though family life reduced the times she could attend meeting, when she came with Caroline, they met a number of young children there, whose combined presence and activities were to encourage all members of Chichester Meeting in seeking an improved meeting house. This led to the redevelopment of the site and the new building in 1967.

A Friend, who was in her early twenties at that time, remembers her fondly as warm and vibrant. Her background as a psychologist made her startling to some – she would actually mention the word "sex". She brought humour and wise experience to things. She felt strong and steady and a merry person.

Following divorce, Mary met and then and married John Burnet, a Friend from Kendal, but soon after marriage John suffered a stroke which left him in a wheelchair. After John's death, Mary in 1981 moved to Swaffham, Norfolk, where she took an active part in the life of King's Lynn Meeting (Norfolk & Waveney Area Meeting), in the setting up of a local Home Hospice and with the local branch of the mental health charity MIND.

Mary pursued a lifelong search for spiritual connection and meaning. Some of the ways she did this included extensive reading; her 30-year membership of the Quaker Open Letter Movement which started in 1975 to promote a deepening of worship; 40 years of painting; and primarily through making connections with other people. In life and especially at her art exhibitions, she actively sought conversations with people about life, faith, and spirituality, encouraging exploration, acceptance of difference and shared experiences

In 2001 Mary returned to the Chichester area to live in a small bungalow in Westergate. She initially attended Bognor Meeting where she

served as Clerk from June 2007 to December 2008.

Mary came back from Bognor Quaker Meeting to Chichester Quaker Meeting for meeting for worship in the last few years of her life. She continued to attend area meeting and meeting for worship for business when she could and contributed to matters arising with interest. She was not afraid to speak her mind and was heard to say, "That name does not occur to me" on one occasion. What followed was a sensitive and deep sharing amongst Friends resulting in a solution that all Friends present were able to accept; an example of true discernment.

She was often helped to come to meeting for worship by the kindness of local attenders and although her own health was failing, she was consistent in sympathetic and profound ministry during meeting. When confined to the house and later to a Nursing Home, she welcomed many informal visitors to her room, where she would share some of her thoughts in ways like those to be found in a meeting for worship. Mary's membership of the meeting was a most deep and meaningful matter for her, and we have been blessed to have shared this with her.

Mary was well known to be a dog lover and her own little dog would accompany her to meeting for worship and sit quietly beside her sensing the silence. Mary ministered frequently. Her ministry was very accessible and spoke to many Friends. She also often expressed her spirituality in her art work and enjoyed sharing the spiritual meaning of her paintings with Friends and others who enjoyed her exhibitions from time to time.

Her Quakerism was expressed in many ways and it is a privilege to have known her.

Signed in and on behalf of Sussex West Area Meeting, held at Ditchling on 8 July 2017

Kathryn Pearce and Neil Macdonald, Co-clerks

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## Pamela Crump

3.xii.1929 – 4.vii.2017

Pamela came from Hathersage to Bakewell in the late 70's after her mother died and set out in life on her own with her 5 children. It must have been in about 1978 that the then Vicar of Bakewell, Rev. Edmund Urquhart, suggested to this member of his congregation that she should go and see what happened at the Quaker meeting. She always maintained that he just wanted to get rid of her because she was 'a troublesome woman'. That was typical of her humour, but in the event he was right. She slotted into the meeting like a round peg into a round hole, and she and the vicar retained their joshing relationship until he retired many years later.

Pam was an active member of the Friends community. She became clerk of meeting only a couple of years after being accepted into membership and served as an Elder for several triennia. She watched and contributed as the Meeting grew from a regular Sunday group of about 12 to well over 35. She rarely missed a meeting and often ministered fluently and carefully, bringing together previous contributions with profound insight. She ran and encouraged study and discussion groups with a radical grasp of both theology and practice which challenged old hands and excited new ones, and worked hard to inspire the children of the meeting with her own fertile imagination. Further afield she was enthused by the Quaker Appleseed movement and actively engaged with area meeting, especially with the annual weekends.

She was proof that good things come in small packages. Her five foot nothing frame personified a feisty approach to service, as many who joined with her on innumerable committees would testify. She was Mayor of Bakewell twice: she served on both the town and district councils, and as a local representative on the Peak District National Park Authority committee. She contributed as treasurer to the Youth theatre where her children played many parts on and off stage, and was an active member of the groups which set up both the

still functioning Derwent Rural Counselling Service and the Bakewell and Eyam Community Transport. Pam loved the local Historical society, was a hard working member of the Association of Bakewell Christians (ABC), being instrumental in starting their "Good News" magazine delivered to every house in the town. She wrote fluently and punchily and her monthly contributions to the magazine were valued by many: they were always pertinent and to the point.

Pamela was passionate about injustice. She believed that labelling people created problems, "we need to see the person not the label". She fought for people and local causes and had strong environmental concerns. She worked as a nursing assistant at the local Newholme Hospital for a while, and then at St Anselm's school as a teaching assistant. Her last and longest standing job was as an assistant in the corner book shop where, as the then owner said, "she was an asset and we had lots of fun". The shop became a hub for her wide circle of contacts. She loved our language and wrote some powerful verses on her own account.

The last months of her life were spent in Gernon Manor residential home. Pam was a stoic, even when her eye sight failed and her mind wandered, she continued to show her good humour: the food was good – she liked her room – she was warm – the staff were kind. These positives she always emphasised. She did however miss conversation.

Pamela leaves 3 surviving children and 11 grandchildren plus one great grandchild. She died at 87 years old and the meeting for remembrance' at Bakewell Friends Meeting House that followed her cremation was a full house with over 100 people, many of whom ministered. It was a memorable occasion with both tears and clapping.

At that meeting, one friend remembered her with these words: "Pam was a heart person. She spoke with sincerity and passion, she was a wordsmith and wrote so eloquently. She would often minister at our meeting and seemed to have a knack of bringing things together.

“Pam spoke of love and respect for others and living simply. Her life wasn't easy. She taught me to never assume anything and to give people the opportunity to tell their story, good or bad. I often told Pam she was 'my wise woman' and with the twinkle in her eye and 'that look', she would laugh and say “What, me?”

“Although Pam was not well off financially, she was one of the most generous people I have met and would always give what she had in her purse. She was witty and loved to be naughty and say things she thought would shock people:if you've ever been 'Crumped' you will know what I mean. I have been fortunate enough to have carried on seeing Pam as her health declined. We still laughed and Pam was always so gracious.”

Signed in and on behalf of Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire Area Meeting, held at Mansfield on 14 January 2018

Paul Nicholas, Correspondence Clerk

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# Geoffrey Cundall

14 x 1924 – 18 ii 2015

“Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one” (George Fox, 1656).

Geoffrey Cundall took up George Fox’s challenge. All aspects of his life were guided by his understanding of Quaker belief and practice, not least as a businessman. Geoffrey was central to the life of Newcastle Meeting and of area meeting and he is remembered for his warmth and friendship, his wit and wisdom and his enriching and deeply spiritual ministry that was so grounded and accessible; he is also remembered by many for his ministry towards the end of meeting to the children. Geoffrey was well versed in Quaker ‘ways’ and kept himself well-informed about progressive theology, exemplifying a Quakerism rooted in Christianity but open to new light.

Geoffrey was born into an Anglican family and whilst his parents were of modest means, they valued education and on the recommendation of his teachers entered him for a scholarship to an independent school in York, which he won. His parents chose to send him to Bootham, this was Geoffrey’s first contact with Quakers.

At Bootham Geoffrey quickly absorbed the Quaker ethos and began to develop a spiritual and questioning mind. Under the lasting influence of Headmaster Donald Gray, Geoffrey thrived at Bootham, both in his academic work and in extra-curricular activities, many of which became lifelong interests and which included astronomy, debating, philosophy, swimming and photography.

While at school, Geoffrey’s best friend Michael Horner, invited him to his Quaker home in Settle and it was here that he met Michael’s younger sister Rachel whom he married in Settle Friends meeting house in June 1950. They were together for 65 years, throughout which time

they loved and supported each other, and created a close-knit and loving family.

Geoffrey and Rachel had three daughters, Ruth, Heather and Joanna, all of whom acknowledge the very significant influence, through example, that he had upon their own development. The achievements and developing personalities and beliefs of their ten grandchildren were a continuing source of joy and interest to them both.

On leaving Bootham, Geoffrey was awarded a State Bursary to study Engineering at Leeds University, during which time he attended Quaker meetings in Leeds and York. A Graduate apprenticeship with British Insulated Callender Cables (BICC) led to employment with this firm in many parts of the country before being directed to the Newcastle office in 1948. Geoffrey and Rachel began to attend Newcastle Meeting where they formed many life long and valuable friendships and during this period Geoffrey became a member of the Religious Society of Friends.

During Geoffrey’s membership of over sixty years he served faithfully in many capacities, always supported and complemented by Rachel. Local and area meetings benefitted significantly from Geoffrey’s commitment and competence, his clarity of thought and conscientious rigour, his attention to detail, his concern for ‘right ordering’ and his ability to discern and give expression to the ‘feeling of the meeting’. Geoffrey had an undeniable presence and this was evident in the way he conducted Quaker weddings and funerals; he graced them with eloquence and a finely tuned sense of occasion. Geoffrey also served at national level – on Meeting for Sufferings and, for six years, as Clerk to the Quaker International Centre (QIC) in London, the subsequent closure of which caused him distress.

Geoffrey’s experience of professional work as a Consulting Engineer in Newcastle and as a lecturer in Building Science at both Manchester and Sheffield Universities challenged his beliefs and in 1976, in his fifties, he became dissatisfied with what he saw of business practice and



determined to start a firm according to the values he lived his life by. It was a brave and, in the sense of *Advices & Queries* 27, adventurous move. Through very hard work and with the support of four much younger partners, the venture succeeded with the establishment of the firm Cundall, Johnston and Partners (CJP), in Newcastle. The founding partners shared a common vision that the practice should become a leading multi-disciplinary engineering consultancy built on sound, ethical principles. Central to this vision too was the nurturing and mentoring of colleagues, in particular younger colleagues at the beginning of their career.

In 2003 the firm was renamed Cundall and since then has evolved from a UK based multi-disciplinary practice of consulting engineers with offices in Newcastle and Edinburgh to a worldwide organisation with offices in 24 countries on four continents offering world-leading sustainability design and advice. The firm has taken on very prestigious work and has won many national and international awards but as part of its mission, Cundall has also taken on a number of community projects around the world, including the provision of structural engineering input to the building of an amphitheatre in a remote South African community, the installation of panels of photovoltaic cells on a school building on Vanuatu Island in the South Pacific, and the renovation of a community centre in Newcastle upon Tyne.

In the obituary posted on Cundall's website, tribute is paid to Geoffrey's original vision for the firm, identifying the source of inspiration behind it: "Geoffrey was a Quaker, one of his main motivations to establish a new practice was for it to reflect his own values of honesty, integrity, commitment, supportiveness and responsibility. These are values that are still at the heart of Cundall."

Geoffrey had many interests and activities beyond his professional life, all conforming to and informed by, his Quaker way of life. He became chair of the Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service (NCVS) where he set a standard of calm and careful enquiry into the

needs of the organisation and its staff, giving them his support and helping them to search for the right solutions. Geoffrey's determination to ensure NCVS carry out its commitments to the coordination of community care and the development of its services is his legacy to the voluntary sector in Newcastle.

In retirement Geoffrey and Rachel trekked in the Himalayas on five different occasions and on the sixth, at over seventy, he climbed to the summit of Kala Patthar at over 18,000 feet in order to view Mount Everest from base camp to summit. Geoffrey was an outstanding photographer and through giving slide shows of his experiences in the Himalayas, he not only raised considerable sums of money for education and reforestation in Nepal, but also inspired others with his physical, mental, spiritual and creative energy.

Geoffrey's life was a response to the challenge of *Advices & Queries* 2: "Bring the whole of your life under the ordering of the spirit of Christ. Are you open to the healing power of God's love? Cherish that of God within you, so that this love may grow in you and guide you. Let your worship and your daily life enrich each other. Treasure your experience of God, however it comes to you. Remember that Christianity is not a notion but a way."

Signed in and on behalf of Northumbria Area Meeting, held at Newcastle on 11 June 2017

Susan Bennett, Clerk

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# Malcolm Edmunds

24.vii.1938 – 24.i.2017

Malcolm Edmunds was born in Harlow, Essex, into a Quaker family and was a birthright Friend. He was educated at Harlow College, Leighton Park School and Queen's College Oxford. In 1957, without consulting anyone, he registered as a Conscientious Objector, as he knew in his heart it was wrong to kill anyone.

In 1963 he married Janet Holmes and they had two daughters, Julia and Helen. The family lived for ten years in Ghana where they were active members of the Quaker community, and also briefly in Tanzania.

In 1974 Malcolm became a lecturer at Preston Polytechnic – the start of 30 years contributing to its rapid change and expansion as it became the University of Central Lancashire. Malcolm came to be widely respected as a voice of integrity, calm and reason. He was never shy about expressing his opinion, and when he did, it was from a position of principle, and was carefully considered. He contributed to the university's growing research reputation and to a robust ethical perspective on experiments with animals. He chaired the university ethics committee.

Malcolm published over a hundred academic papers on biological topics. He also wrote many articles for *The Friend* and in his last few months he published a collection of short pieces entitled *Our wonderful world and what we can learn from it* (2016), in which he explored animal behaviour and its ethical lessons.

In the 1980s Malcolm joined Scientists for Global Responsibility and the Peace Tax Campaign and tried to withhold tax from the money he earned privately, but the magistrate threw out the case and he paid his tax

Malcolm was a pillar of Preston Quaker meeting and of Quakers in the area. He was clerk of monthly meeting for twenty years and then managed its merger with the neighbouring area. The merger process was managed with consultation, consideration, careful attention to detail, and a thorough knowledge of the Society. He also served as a prison chaplain and clerk of area meeting trustees. He was on Britain Yearly

Meeting's Sharing World Resources committee and he represented Britain Yearly Meeting at the Fifth World Conference of Friends in Kenya.

In his last few years Malcolm had progressive cancer. He accepted his condition for what it was and went on with his life, tidying his affairs. After one of his eyes was removed he wrote an inspiring piece about the things that the eye had seen over his long and eventful life.

As we remember Malcolm, what will most remain with those who knew him are his clarity of thought, his consideration for other people, his calm and quiet manner, and his lucid expression of well-considered opinions. Having listened attentively to others he could summarise a position concisely and see a way ahead that would gain the consent of all concerned. When he spoke in a Quaker meeting for worship, it was often from a recognition of similarities between animal and human behaviour and the lessons that we humans could draw from how animals relate to each other and to their environment. One could not ask for a better example than Malcolm of the virtues of integrity, equality, and a simple, peaceable life – the virtues to which Quakers aspire.

## Epilogue from Ilkley Friends

In November 2013 Malcolm and Janet moved to Otley to be near their daughters in Leeds. At Ilkley Meeting we were fortunate to welcome them as Members, whilst they also attended Otley Meeting each month. We greatly valued Malcolm and his personal contribution to our meeting. He had agreed to serve as an elder, but, sadly he had to lay down his service when the cancer which had previously affected him returned. Although he grew increasingly ill, he remained a regular attender at meeting for worship for as long as he was able. He contributed greatly to our spiritual life, not only by his dignity and courage in severe illness, but also by his unique insight into the natural world and the ministry which he drew from it.

We have been inspired by Malcolm, his life and his ministry; he was such a nice man. We miss him.

Signed in and on behalf of Leeds Area Meeting, held at Gildersome on 9 July 2017

Veronica O'Mara, Clerk

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## Donald Gill

11 ix 1919 – 13 v 2016

Donald was a wise gentle Friend who delivered ministry in a voice that was ‘quietly authoritative’. He was a man of deep faith, believing in the love of God, peace, and the power of prayer.

Donald’s forebears had been Quakers since the mid 18th century. However his grandfather and father left Friends after the Manchester Conference at the end of the 19th century to join the Plymouth Brethren. As a child his experience was of the Brethren, tempered by his father’s knowledge of Quakers. In adulthood he became increasingly uncomfortable with the Plymouth Brethren which led him to explore the Quakerism of his forebears. Whilst living in Ireland he was accepted into membership of Lisburn Monthly Meeting in 1967 and later served as an Elder.

Donald began a combined medical and dental course at Guy’s Hospital in London in 1937, but changed to a medical course when war-time regulations recognised that there would be a great need for doctors. He qualified in 1942, and after call-up, became a member of the Royal Army Medical Corps. He served in the Reichwald Forest, the Seine, the Maas and the lower Rhine, seeing heavy fighting everywhere including Arnhem. He never talked of his experience of war but the suffering that he witnessed was bound to have been a great influence on the rest of his life. He became a supporter of The United Nations and joined the local United Nations Association.

After the war he met his future wife, Sylvia, a Queen Alexandra’s nurse, and when she was posted to Singapore, he was able to secure the same posting so they could be together and marry. In 1958 they returned to England when Donald was posted first to the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary and later to the Cambridge Military Hospital. It was here Donald qualified as a specialist in dermatology. His final posting was as a specialist advisor in Dermatology to the War Office until he left the RAMC as a Colonel in 1963. As a civilian he secured a post in Northern Ireland followed by a post in Middlesbrough when he came to live near Great Ayton where his children Simon and Sarah were attending the Friends School.

Within Ayton Meeting he offered much service. Donald was very widely read, and having so many interests in his life, so much learning, and such a wide range of experiences his knowledge and faith were highly

valued by the meeting. He served as clerk of Guisborough Monthly Meeting: his minutes being well crafted.

He was always pleased to talk to children’s meeting and one week he brought his very old family bible along, a mid-16th century ‘Treachle Bible’ and another time told them about his life and how he became a Quaker. Donald had a wry sense of humour that helped people to feel comfortable in his presence.

His hobbies in the middle part of his life were vintage cars and creating early stringed instruments. He made 31 instruments including superb lutes, citterns and four-course guitars which are now housed at the National Lute Society in London where they are on display and available for musicians to play.

In later years as the strength in his hands diminished, he became fascinated by early Quaker writing and thought. Donald was a regular contributor to the *Friend* and *Friends Quarterly*. His words were erudite, succinct and meticulously researched. His article ‘Where have we come from’ is a particular example of his faith and abilities. He explored pre-Christian and Christian history. He firmly believed in the insights of early Friends and that their inward deeply mystical element is what speaks to the modern condition.

He encouraged us to bring Jesus back into our meetings; not the Christ of the Roman Empire, but Jesus the man, and the thinking and teaching which is remembered in the New Testament. Donald was also interested in the concept of the Eternal Gospel and the concept of the Spirit of God since the beginning of time.

He said latterly, “I have come to love Jesus”. Donald could equate with the pre-Easter Jesus while accepting those who were more attached to the Post Easter Christ. He was willing to listen to other people’s point of view.

Donald is remembered as a kind Friend, who was able to give valuable considered advice as an Elder. His life was one of service; service to his family, to his country during and after the war, to his various communities, and to the Society of Friends.

In the latter years of his life he regularly invited Friends to join him at home for discussion and worship. On these stimulating occasions Donald was not afraid to talk about his faith and bring new light to the meaning of words in the books discussed. His ministry will long be valued and remembered.

Signed in and on behalf of Teesdale & Cleveland Area Meeting, held at Great Ayton on 18 March 2017

Mary Wilkinson, Clerk

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# Joan Hilda Harvey

01.x.1922 – 12.ix.2015

Joan Harvey would have scorned a description of herself as a weighty Quaker, but she was the epitome of the term. She read widely and synthesised the spiritual essence of her deep reflection into spoken ministry, which led High Flatts Meeting to depths it might not otherwise have reached. When Friends sought her counsel (which she did not give without being asked), her advice was wise and sound. She mentored those coming newly into meeting. She was very independent and could be formidable, but she was never unapproachable. She cared and thought deeply. Her knowledge of Friends and Quakerism and her wide range of experience in education gave her a wisdom and authority which was widely accepted and cherished by those she knew and worked with.

Joan was born in Paddington in 1922. Her father had been a combatant in the First World War and had lost a leg as a result of wounds received. Joan grew up in Loughton in Essex where she attended the local girls' high school. On completion of her high school studies she determined to train as a teacher in a local college. With the onset of the Blitz the course transferred to Doncaster and there she lived in digs with a local family. She enjoyed telling a story of how one winter evening during the blackout she returned by mistake to the house next door and found herself and a friend, both attractive young women, in the midst of a group of soldiers who 'must have thought that Christmas had come early!'

Joan taught English all of her working life, in a range of institutions. She began her teaching career in a Barking school with a class of 52 children. She married her first husband, Leslie, before moving to South Woodford, later to Buckhurst Hill, where they had four children, Madeleine, Linda, Vivien and Roger. After Leslie became blind as a result of chronic diabetes, they moved to a thatched house in the village of Ford End, Essex. Joan had a hard time of it first nursing Leslie (he died in 1958) and then as a young widow, teaching full-time at a school in

Dunmow, whilst at the same time tending the chickens, vegetables, flowers and fruit trees on their five-acre smallholding and bringing up four children on her own. Not long after this, the family moved to Cambridge where Joan taught English at Saffron Walden Secondary Modern School, with the 40-mile daily return journey undertaken on her trusty moped, often at what seemed like breakneck speeds for this particular form of transport. Joan's Head of Department at Saffron Walden was Cyril Harvey, whom she was later to marry. Joan went on to teach English at Bassingbourn Village College, a concept unique to Cambridgeshire that was designed to provide an educational and social hub for the local rural community.

Joan and Cyril moved to Yorkshire in 1968, living at first in Wakefield, with Joan teaching at the primary school in the former mining village of Crigglestone, and moving soon after to Ackworth. In 1970 Joan took up a post teaching English at Ackworth School, beginning an association with the school that lasted till her retirement and beyond. It was at Ackworth that Joan and Cyril's interest in Quakerism was aroused and they both became members.

In 1977 Cyril was appointed Head of Brummana Quaker High School in Lebanon, with Joan later joining him there as a member of the English staff at a time of considerable unrest in the region. Joan's experiences from that period of her life informed much of her thinking about spiritual matters and helped nurture her growth in all things Quaker.

On return to the UK in 1982 Joan spent three years as Deputy Head at Friends School Great Ayton, but then returned to finish her teaching career at Ackworth, where she primarily took on the role of housemistress and hence acted in loco parentis for some of the boarders. One example of Joan's practical, caring and thoughtful nature was that, as housemistress there, she persuaded the bursar to install a washing machine in the house, which was more suitable for her teenage charges' needs than the school laundry.

Four years after Joan's retirement and their move to Clayton West near Huddersfield, Cyril

died and, finding it difficult to reach Ackworth for meeting, Joan became a worshipper at High Flatts Meeting. She served Friends in most capacities: as local and area meeting clerk; as elder; on Area Meeting Nominations Committee; as representative to Meeting for Sufferings where she worked on the MSC, the Sufferings Committee which did much of the work now undertaken by BYM Trustees. She made a major contribution to her local Churches Together group and rejoiced in bringing periods of silence to ecumenical services and offering a Quaker interpretation of the major Christian festivals. She was for many years a regular member of the Quaker Theology seminar at Woodbrooke where she took part in reflections on Quaker faith and offered discussion papers on topics such as eldership and discernment. She attended Britain Yearly Meeting regularly, where she would offer service as doorkeeper, even in her later years.

She delighted in her visits to her family in London, Birmingham and Denmark, and would relish the visits of her grandchildren to Yorkshire, with whom she had exciting adventures and where all enjoyed fun and games away with Gran, in a spirit of freedom that may not have been completely acceptable back home.

At her local meeting she is remembered warmly for the depth and insight of her spoken ministry which reflected a mature grasp of the Quaker way and a deep conviction of the need to live our testimonies. An advocate of liberal, inclusive theology, Joan regularly gave spoken ministry in meeting for worship: she could find a way to enrich gatherings with thoughts of great beauty and depth, but also with realism and challenge. Shortly after the appalling abuse and murder of Victoria Climbié came to light, in ministry Joan identified that one of the worst aspects was that the child was not heard as she spoke only French.

Someone challenged Joan once as to whether she had ever faced death and the following Sunday she ministered on a moment at Brummana during a time of extreme community unrest when a member of the militia came to school armed and threatened her. Her instinctive but

high risk response was to order him sharply to put the gun down, which (recognising her authority) shamefacedly he did.

Joan never seemed to be at peace: rather she seemed always to be seeking. It was helpful to Friends to learn that someone with the range of Joan's experience could still raise questions (for example, of God's immanence or transcendence, following the God the Trickster course at Woodbrooke).

In her final years she was frightened by the onset of dementia, which acutely affected her memory. It became increasingly difficult for her to live on her own, even with a formal care package in place, and, while her family tried to arrange a residential place, she accepted Friends' daily visits and support with grace, as her fierce independence, notwithstanding her confusion, relaxed into trust. She finally moved nearer her family to a care home in Birmingham, where, surrounded by her familiar furniture and family photographs, she spent her last days in a comfortable, caring atmosphere.

Signed in and on behalf of Central Yorkshire Area Meeting, held at Pontefract on 13 March 2017

Ruth McTighe, Clerk

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# Christopher John Holdsworth

29.i.1931 to 1.iv.2017

Christopher retired as Professor of Medieval History and Head of Department at Exeter University in 1989 but his academic career had begun four decades earlier with his undergraduate studies at Clare College, Cambridge, and his doctorate at Oriel College, Oxford. His first academic post was at University College, London, and when he moved to Exeter in 1977 to become professor he was already highly regarded in academic circles not only in Britain but in universities across the globe.

It is impossible to separate Christopher's professional life from his spiritual life. He was brought up in a deeply religious family. On a daily basis he was read to from the Bible and took part in family prayers. His mother worshipped with Anglicans and his father with Quakers and Christopher and his brother were free to choose where to go each Sunday. This gave him from an early age an awareness that the Quaker way of attending to God was not the only way and that people used different language to express their faith. As a boy at Bootham School and as a student at Cambridge and Oxford, Christopher explored many varieties of Christian worship. He was deeply rooted in his Quaker faith but was also able to be open to other paths. His work on medieval monasticism was not simply an academic study but enriched his own spiritual life as he movingly described in his Swarthmore lecture 'Steps in a Large Room', given in 1985. In this lecture, Christopher asserted that "we, like Benedict's monks, need to let the whole of ourselves become irradiated with the spirit so that in George Fox's memorable phrase, our lives preach".

Certainly in the experience and lives of the many friends, ex-students and colleagues, who have contributed to this testimony, Christopher's life "preached" to them. This was not in the sense of judging – he was utterly non-judgemental and aware of his own shortcomings – but in allowing his spiritual beliefs expression in words and action. His students loved him for his clarity and the insightfulness which came from deep learning. He was recognised for his kindness, his compassion, his sense of fairness and a keen

thoughtfulness towards others. He offered friendship and support, financial, pastoral and academic, often in his own home. He was always generous with his time and money. Christopher's son, Robert, has spoken of being "stunned by the outpouring of admiration from former colleagues".

Christopher lived and breathed family – his father, mother, brother, aunts, uncles, cousins, son, daughter-in-law and grandsons. He was an inveterate collector of family details and memorabilia and played a big role in tracing the Holdsworth family tree back over hundreds of years. Family holidays were a big part of his life, from early adventures and picnics with cousins in the Dales, to more recent trips with his brother James to the Scilly Isles, and a series of memorable holidays in Spain and Italy with his son and family. He was immensely proud of his son, his daughter-in-law and his four grandsons.

Christopher was a consummate musician. He had a fine voice and played the cello well. With his cousin Robin Midgley he played in the earliest incarnation of the National Youth Orchestra and it was in part through his love of music that he met his wife, Juliet. This love of music lasted throughout his life and he played with both chamber music groups and orchestras.

The 1970s brought great turmoil into his life. He separated from his wife in 1975 and left London to take a new job and to make a new life in Exeter. The constants in his life at this time were the support of family members and friends, his love of music, and his deep faith and sense of the presence of God. The 1970s also brought great joy as in 1977 he met his partner, Keith Yon, known to everyone as Yon, with whom he shared his life in Exeter until Yon's death in 2002.

Christopher was a wonderful host, warm and generous, with an inexhaustible stock of stories very often about his extended family. Many began with "I have a cousin" and they were told with a clear perception of human foibles and frailties, always with humour and never with malice. His students, fellow lecturers and musicians, neighbours and Quakers of all ages, found a ready welcome in the glorious chaos of his home. He enjoyed a fine wine and good "craic" (pronounced "crack").

Above all he was a man of prayer, deep reflection and spiritual sensitivity. Friends in Exeter Meeting

remember his ministry, mostly given towards the end of a meeting, which drew on the richness and depth of his own experience and spiritual life. Often it brought into wholeness the disparate ministry that came before. He prayed in meeting for worship, leading the meeting towards greater stillness and deeper silence. He arrived early at meeting for worship, settled into worship and watched people as they entered the room so that he could see who might be in need of his prayers on that occasion. Kindly action often followed. He had a special affinity with the children in the meeting and they loved him. He understood the power of prayer, of holding people in the Light and often spoke with deep gratitude of the rope of prayer that he had felt sustaining him when in 2002 he was on St Helena for several months during the final illness and death of his partner, Yon.

Christopher had a great gift for forging easy relationships with people and for friendship. Many of these lasted a lifetime. He had a way of listening, of giving his full attention. He didn't offer advice or answers but gently guided people to find their own way. He had an outstanding ability to show people the importance of their contribution and his encouragement helped many to develop their gifts. His centred calm brought comfort to people struggling with the pain of the death of a young son or of a father. Wherever he went he took his ability to reach out to people in very different circumstances from his own privileged background. Whether talking to government ministers or residents on run-down housing estates he was the same with everybody, living out the testimony to equality. This ability served him well in many of the tasks he undertook, most notably in his time as a trustee of the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust.

He joined the trustee board of the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust in 1957 and served for over 40 years, 14 as chairman. This was an exceptional length of service. In this role he was loved and respected for his unfailing politeness but also unshakeable determination in difficult situations in South Africa and in Northern Ireland. He made many trips to Northern Ireland, giving generously of his time. His work for peacebuilding there took precedence over the writing of the definitive book on Bernard of Clairvaux, on whom he was a world authority. He had the ability to handle complex data, including a grasp of finances perhaps

unexpected in a professor of mediaeval history. He had exceptional skills as a chairman. His fellow trustees were encouraged to devote to each item of the agenda whatever time they thought necessary. With unobtrusive patience and skill he led them to make good decisions within the available time. His rigorous analysis of applications to the Trust was coupled with gentleness of manner and this helped people to accept his amendments or rejections of their applications for funding. The same approach to editorial work while serving on the Friends House Library Committee made people accept his judgement and led to publications that were mutually satisfying.

His leadership qualities were apparent from an early age. His fellow Young Friends at Cambridge gave him the title My Lord High Bishop which not only reflected his physical but also his spiritual stature as well as the deep affection in which he was held. He is remembered as an able clerk to Young Friends Central Committee by those who served with him. He was part of the organising team for Young Friends World Conference in Reading in 1952. As clerk to Friends International Committee he oversaw the complete refurbishment in 1968 of Courtauld House. He was clerk of Exeter Local Meeting and provided an excellent role model as servant leader for the inexperienced Friend who served as his assistant clerk and who later took over the role of clerk from him. His minutes were models of clarity, concise but with sufficient detail to make them understandable for those not present at the meeting.

After his move into a care home in Yarm in 2015 to be nearer to his son, he was greatly missed by Exeter Friends. They were heartened to hear that although his illness brought increasing confusion and some eccentric behaviour, his sense of humour and his capacity to give and to inspire love were undiminished.

Many words are needed to do justice to his long and faithful life as he was a man of great talent, with a wide range of gifts. He was also a man of deep humility who acted justly, loved mercy and walked humbly with his God. (Micah 6 v.8) One word could sum up his life and character and that is love.

Signed in and on behalf of Devon Area Meeting, held at Exeter on 13 January 2018

Juliet Morton, Clerk

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# Katharine Hurford

11.vi.1923 – 8.iii.2017

Katharine Hurford, who was a lively, stalwart, much-loved member of Stansted Meeting for 35 years, died on 8th March 2017 at the age of 93. Katharine was a very capable person and her former Head Girl qualities remained with her for the rest of her life. She was unfailingly kind, a listening ear for people with problems, and quietly helped in a practical way where she saw fit. She had a dry sense of humour and was fun to be with. She was a devoted wife, mother and grandmother. She enjoyed acting, and the fruits of her accomplished artistic achievements can be seen on the walls of the Quaker meeting house. It is no surprise Katharine had many friends, who cherished her loyalty, kindness and, right to the end, her sense of fun.

When the war started, she joined the Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS). She was a life-long cryptic crossword devotee, and she readily responded when volunteers were asked for "to do something secret"; this was to be trained in code-breaking at Bletchley Park. She then willingly volunteered to go abroad, and continued the code-breaking work in Ceylon on the Bombes (which decoded Enigma messages) and became an officer. She was deeply affected there by receiving former prisoners of war in a parlous condition, released from Japanese camps when the war finished. She made lifelong friends there.

Having been discharged, she went to London and joined the BBC, working for various departments, then as a senior personal assistant, latterly for the Director General. Her experience with this difficult man led to an interest in counselling and she trained in marriage guidance.

Katharine met Michael, her future husband, when she visited her sister in Kent where he played cricket. They married in 1952 and had two children. They moved to Bishop's Stortford where they lived for the next 60 years. It was a long and happy marriage and they were equally committed to serving the community.

She gave up work when she had children but continued to be involved in many voluntary organisations including the Citizens' Advice Bureau and Oxfam. She was always wanting to help and support others. She had many interests. She loved travelling especially to Africa, where she supported children at a school in Kenya. She also loved Italy and learnt Italian to A level standard. She discovered a natural ability for painting and produced many pictures for sale and exhibitions. She often went on painting courses at Flatford with her great friend Maisie Brigden. She loved acting and was a member of the Townswomen's Guild, performing in many plays.

Like her great friend Mary Rice and both their husbands, Katharine had been a devoted member of the Church of England. Problems within the Church drove Mary to seek another form of worship, and she came to Stansted Quaker Meeting. Very soon after, Katharine followed her to Stansted Quakers, and both of them soon became members, Katharine on 11th September 1982.

She was clerk of the local meeting for a short while, an Elder for many years, and became an enthusiastic member of Churches Together in Stansted (CTS), strongly committed to ecumenism. She became the Quaker member on the local Fraternal, where the ordained clerics were very appreciative of her input. She was Minute Secretary of CTS until 2012 and also Secretary for many years of the esteemed Stansted village magazine, *The Link*.

She found in the Quakers a way of thinking in tune with her own. The Stansted Meeting became a vital part of her life and she felt they were part of her family. Those of us in meeting benefited enormously from her vocal ministry and articles she wrote for *The Link*. Some of these can still be read in the Stansted Meeting Booklet, *Inspiration, Faith and Practice* and continue to give food for thought to Quakers and others who are interested. Many of these are about faith. She always said she felt at one with God when beside water.

Although she initially opposed the massive undertaking of rebuilding the meeting house at



Stansted, she eventually realised it was the right thing to do. Here we can see her lack of personal pride and readiness to admit that she could have been mistaken, a very Quakerly trait. (Advices and Queries 17: Think it possible you may be mistaken.)

Living in Mountfitchet House towards the end of her life, and no longer able to get to Quaker meetings, she happily attended the local vicar's monthly services in the home. She had many visitors, and Friends found her still to be interested in the world, wanting to dress well and she still had beautifully manicured pink nails! Her wicked sense of humour was still evident, but she was honest in expressing frustration at her limitations. She was kept occupied by a stream of thrillers brought by her many visitors. She will be greatly missed.

Signed in and on behalf of Thaxted Area Meeting, held at Great Bardfield on 10 September 2017

Gill Parker, Clerk

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## Ellen Gray Jarvis

8.iii.1922 – 17.xii.2015

Ellen Gray Lunnon, known as Nell, was born into a Quaker family in 1922. As a birthright Friend, she absorbed spirituality and a sense of right ordering of Quaker ways from both her parents, who met doing relief work in Holland during World War 1. Nell and her older brother Chris enjoyed a simple lifestyle and a family life rooted in faith and service as they watched their mother and father living their faith from day to day.

Central to Nell's life was worship, with regular attendance at meeting for worship first at Newcastle-Upon-Tyne then at Stocksfield and eventually, after her father's death when she was eight, at Torquay Meeting in South Devon. Lasting Friendships were made at the Quaker school at Sidcot where she was inspired by several staff members and then later at Somerville College, University of Oxford, where she studied modern languages. From here, realising she wanted to work directly with people, Nell trained as an almoner and found that she was able to cut through complex issues and see clearly what needed to be done before patients were discharged from hospital.

In 1946, after World War 2, Nell's concern for those in need took her out to Germany for two years with the Friends Relief Service to offer encouragement, love, psychological and practical support to German families who were feeling demoralised, hopeless and exhausted. She helped set up kindergartens, sewing rooms, feeding stations for children and older people and a cobbler's shop. Her ability to empathise and her common sense enabled her to connect with people's suffering. It was much later that this work was acknowledged for its humanitarian approach with the comment that 'You came, and you gave us hope'.

It was through Friends Relief Service that Nell met her future husband Roy Jarvis. They married in 1949 and settled in a flat in Highgate in London. Here Betsy, Roger and Richard were born. Nell was a loving and supportive mother and a dedicated homemaker. She lived an ordered and orderly life, without fuss, complaint

or personal ambition. She had a degree of 'unreliance on material possessions' and made sure her home was a place of welcome and loving friendship, where all might find the peace of God's presence and feel refreshed and cared for.

As her children grew up, Nell chose to work part time as a primary school teacher. Being aware that not all young people flourished within the school setting, she took some children out on trips to continue their learning in museums and open spaces such as London Zoo, which was quite a novel idea at the time.

It should not be assumed, however, that Nell entirely abandoned her sharp intellect for a life of calm domesticity and the insightful development of children. She was an avid reader and a keen observer of others. Whilst openly acknowledging her own human shortcomings, there were times when she could not resist applying her quick mind to the quirks of others. In later life, this resulted in witty tableaux at Quaker parties, where 'innocent volunteers' found themselves acting out characters without prior knowledge of the script in Nell's head! Many children's stories, coming straight from her imagination, were told at bedtime at Quaker camp, which were invariably attended by adult Friends enjoying the tales with an added perspective.

Having many practical skills, Nell happily offered service in the community as well. It was in London that Nell and Roy became founder members of a small recognised meeting in Highgate and together became the meeting's 'backbone', taking on a number of roles of responsibility and invariably inviting Friends back to lunch after meeting for worship. Nell's ministry is well remembered by Friends. She often spoke about the importance of prayer and her words appeared to emanate from deep inner strength. Her presence in the meeting was grounding for many and continued to be so wherever she worshipped in later life.

Guided by the Light within her, her faithfulness to the Quaker testimonies was unwavering. She travelled her own spiritual journey, no matter what was happening around her and cherished

that of God within herself and in those around her. Nell was able to let worship and her daily life enrich each other, seeing the spirit of God at work in ordinary everyday tasks and activities. In difficult times of grieving, she inevitably struggled and then internalised and accepted what life threw at her, strengthened by her steadfast faith.

After 40 years in London, when she was in her late 60s, Nell, Roy and Roger moved to Hitchin. Here they made their spiritual home at Hitchin Meeting where Nell became involved with inter-faith and church groups. While staying strong to the Quaker Way, she sought out and was comfortable with all faiths and maintained openness to other forms of spirituality. Feeling liberated from other tasks, she participated in peace activities including peace marches in London.

Throughout her life, Nell remained thankful for what she had and never lost her childlike sense of wonder, often ministering on this in meeting for worship as she grew older. She showed ingenuity and courage in adapting to the physical limitations of older age and continued to be creative, making cards and sewing her own clothes. Her enjoyment in literature, the natural world, reading and writing never left her and letters to f/Friends, sometimes in German, continued into her final years. At Sloe Hill Care Home near Hitchin, she took an interest in and cared about the other residents and staff members until her death in December 2015.

During her long life Nell lived as George Fox encouraged all Friends:

“Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone”.

George Fox 1656 *Quaker faith & practice* 19.32

Signed in and on behalf of Hertford & Hitchin Area Meeting, held at Stevenage on 20 January 2018

David Hindle, Clerk

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## Eleanor Littleboy

6.viii.1925 – 4.vi.2016

Eleanor was born on 6th August, 1925 into a generation of Quakers. Her father Gerald Littleboy and her mother Gwendolen were both teachers and Eleanor spent her early years as a pupil in the Junior department of Friends School Saffron Walden, where her father was head teacher. Her mother had also taught at Ayton Friends School before she married Gerald. After graduating from Somerville College in History Eleanor went on to become a teacher of history and religious studies. She attended Oxford Quaker Meeting and Kingston and Esher Meetings whilst teaching. Eleanor was a true birthright Friend and her Quakerism was rooted firmly in Christianity.

Eleanor and her friend Elisabeth Mount shared a house in Shepperton. Her home was always warm and welcoming and both she and Elisabeth took pleasure in entertaining Friends for tea and welcoming relatives from America where her sister had settled with her family. Eleanor took much interest in the lives of her nieces and nephews. She also enjoyed visiting her sister in America and her cousin in New Zealand. Her travels did not end there. She and Elisabeth regularly travelled to countries of historical interest chaperoning students on educational cruises. They often gave talks to Quakers and other groups about their travels and more recently she talked to Chichester Friends on “The Journeys of St. Paul” based on her earlier travels. She had sound biblical knowledge and had no difficulty in relating the Bible to her own Quaker faith.

Eleanor completed her career as deputy head teacher in Chertsey, in the 1980s. On retirement, Eleanor & Elisabeth moved to Bognor to be nearer Eleanor’s mother who was now also living in Bognor. Eleanor joined her mother to worship at Chichester Meeting. Eleanor and Elisabeth continued to entertain Friends to tea and delighted in giving away plants from their well-stocked garden to see them flourish more widely. Eleanor shared her Quaker spirituality in much the same way.

Though quite a shy person, she was very “giving” and always had time for others. She often helped Friends who might be going through some doubts about their own faith. She also took the trouble to write in long-hand interesting and encouraging letters to those who couldn’t always get to meeting, so that they were not forgotten.

In meeting for worship quite often she would enter first, sit, listen and be still. She showed by example and often advocated that meeting for worship begins as soon as the first person enters the room. She reminded us from time to time to speak quietly in the foyer so that Friends who had begun their worship were not disturbed. Eleanor’s ministry was very much from the heart and she spoke with authority often quoting appropriate phrases from the Bible or other spiritual writing. A new attender, hearing her minister from behind for the first time, commented that it was “as though the spirit of George Fox himself was amongst us.”

Friends spoke of her good grace and wisdom. Her ministry was clear and thought provoking. On numerous occasions towards the end of meeting for worship she would minister in a manner that was concise and confident but always modest and respectful. She had an exceptional gift for summing up the essence of previous ministry followed by her own relevant perspective. Some of Eleanor’s ministry touched Friends deeply and memorably. One Friend said: ‘What I sensed in Eleanor was a conviction that all will be right with the world. This was grounded in a deep and secure faith. So that whatever issue arose in Ministry, Eleanor would be able to find the words of hope we needed to give us the strength and sense of purpose to try to carry on living in the Light’. A quotation from Deuteronomy 33.27 – ‘The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms’ – once gave comfort to a Friend in meeting for worship when she needed it most.

She shared her love of books and reading with Friends in her service as Librarian for many years doing much to encourage Friends to talk about books they had enjoyed. She had many other interests besides reading. Her love of the garden and the birds kept her determined to

stay in her house for as long as she could. Even when too frail to tend to her flowers she would discuss her flowers and shrubs with her gardener and continued to take great interest in their care. She enjoyed music and attended art history classes well into retirement. As many members of her family were in America and Australia she sometimes spoke of Quakers as her extended family.

Eleanor also served as a thoughtful and conscientious convenor of Elders. She wrote regular reports of meeting activities for the area meeting's newsletter and remained a governor of Saffron Walden Friends' School for a number of years during her retirement.

Not all Friends in the meeting shared her Christocentric faith but she was always respectful of others' beliefs and invariably was open to new light from whatever source it might come. She was committed to peace, to equality and to justice. As a long standing supporter of the work of Quaker Social Action, she brought its work to the attention of Friends in the meeting every year to encourage our giving for a special collection.

Even at the age of ninety and physically frail, Eleanor tried never to let her age stop her taking part in meeting activities. It was often the manner in which Eleanor spoke her words during ministry that seems to have stayed with Friends rather than the words themselves. Eleanor truly lived out her faith in action. When Eleanor was visited by her sister from the United States each year their joint presence was a real spiritual link for Friends into a family of life-long Friends that gave depth to the meeting and a gift of spirit that we hope continues. Eleanor bore her physical limitations of the last year or so with fortitude, telling us how she took courage from the words she had attached to her mirror: 'My grace is sufficient for you.' She would return to meeting for worship after periods of hospitalisation, despite her frailty. She was a much valued member of the local and area meeting.

Much of Advice 29 sums up Eleanor's last few years. "Approach old age with courage and

hope ... Although old age may bring increasing disability and loneliness, it can also bring serenity, detachment and wisdom. Pray that in your final years you may be enabled to find new ways of receiving and reflecting God's love."

We shall long remember with gratitude, her prayerful presence among us.

Signed in and on behalf of Sussex West Area Meeting, held at Worthing on 19 March 2017

Kathryn Pearce, Clerk

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# Nancy Lloyd

8.ix.1921 – 12.iv.2015

Nancy Doreen Lloyd, nee Wild and formerly Plesch, worshipped at Uxbridge Meeting for about the last 30 years where she undertook many roles including Pastoral Clerk and Elder and was very much part of the meeting.

She was born in Cheshire, the third of four children, all daughters, of George and Martha Wild. George was a successful builder and the family grew up in a substantial house with cars and a chauffeur. She went to boarding school in Buxton in the Peak District where she made life difficult for the catholic convent school nuns. Her father, not having a son, had dressed her as a boy and called her Billy, a name that stuck until she reverted to Nancy in the 1990s.

In her youth she suffered from rheumatic fever and quinsy but she survived and won a place at Reading University to study Botany. And while there World War II began and she was a land girl and an aircraft inspector of Hurricane and Typhoon fighter bombers. She survived living in London during the blitz and felt Hitler had stolen her best years but that only stimulated her to enjoy as much as she could afterwards.

It was during the war she met and married Peter Plesch in 1945, a young scientist and refugee from Nazi Germany, who went on to help establish the new Keele university where they lived and had three children. By the late 1950s the relationship had soured and in 1958 they separated and she left with the three children, a difficult position for a woman at that time.

She fell in love with a family friend, Michael Lloyd but within a few years he was struck down with a heart condition, living much of his life in a wheelchair until his early death in 1980. They moved to Sussex where she looked after him uncomplainingly, keeping him alive in the face of all medical expectation due to a strict no salt diet and she eventually wrote a book of salt free recipes. Alongside caring for Michael and her youngest child, Dan, she found time for freelance journalism which was published. With Michael gone and the children grown she returned to London, settling in Northwood, making new friends, getting back to her great joys: ballet and art.

Nancy then threw herself into the anti-nuclear weapons campaign of the 1980s. It was a time of huge growth in the campaign from 2,500 members

to over 100,000 in two years. There she worked with Bruce Kent who described her as one of the best volunteers he had, cheerful, funny, kind, hard-working and very intelligent, always on the ball, never flustered and a reliable friend, practical and warm. "I can see her now at the big desk in the outer Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament office stuffing envelopes, undoing parcels, totting up accounts, making tea and telling jokes to all and sundry. If there are gifts from heaven she was one".

It was in the 1980s that Nancy found Quakers, she had friends from Greenham Common (women's camp against nuclear weapons). Being a Quaker gave her much happiness in her later life both because of the spiritual comfort and being part of a community, but also because she liked an intellectual challenge.

She had a talent for making friends and took part in many activities. She was a positive person and was always content and for looking on the bright side of things. Her daughter Benita shared two quotes from Nancy's notebooks: 'Defeat may be victory in disguise'; 'The lowest ebb is the turn of the tide'

She was not a person who took the easy route in life but she was always brave and determined to make the best of things. She was a person who made active choices – hers not to drift along with the flow, with tide. If she didn't like something or disapproved, she would say so, clearly. However, if she did like things, she would also always say so. She was a great encourager and a great compliment-giver.

She was a person who really enjoyed life, she could be a bit sharp but definitely in the way of Saint Augustine, doing her best to change what she thought needed changing and abiding by that which could not be changed. And as time went on she became blessed with the wisdom to know the difference.

Nancy ended her days at 93 in Swarthmore Care Home in Gerrards Cross, where she attended the meeting for worship. The warmth of her personality made her a favourite of the staff, one of whom spoke movingly at her funeral gathering at Jordans Meeting.

Nancy was a great companion and friend, a source of fun and ready wit. A number of Friends at Uxbridge remember her as one who gave them a particular welcome or a memorable word of encouragement or friendship.

Signed in and on behalf of London West Area Meeting, held at Ealing on 18 July 2015

Jennifer Kavanagh, Clerk

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## John Farquhar Marshall

02.vi.1944 – 18.vii.2015

John Farquhar Marshall was born on the 2nd of June 1944 in Barnsley, Yorkshire, almost seven years after his sister Elizabeth. His father, also John, was a papermaker in Crawcrook, Tyneside, and his mother Elizabeth (nee Davidson), who had attended Wigton Friends School for four years in her youth, ran a grocery store for her sister. In his later teenage years his father took up a post lecturing in paper-making in Glenrothes, and the family moved to Scotland, instilling in John a fond patriotism that lasted throughout his life.

He remained in Scotland for university, reading theology at St Andrew's with the intention of becoming a priest, having been raised in the Anglican tradition. However, during his first year of study, he discovered other pleasures such as beer (an affection which also continued throughout his life!), and this, coupled with his desire for a lived, rather than a learned, faith, led to John dropping out of university.

John then spent time working in a paper mill, as well as sitting the civil service exam. His love of traditional music grew around this time; he took to visiting folk clubs in Kirkcaldy and also a secondary school where he and a folk musician gave disaffected teenagers the chance to hear and experience traditional music. He moved to London in 1965, living in a bedsit in South Kensington whilst working for HMRC Customs, and started attending St Mary Abbott's Church in Kensington, which attracted many young worshippers from a diverse range of backgrounds. One of his fellow attendees worked at Imperial College and invited John to do some work with newly evolving computers; the seed was planted for a lifelong passion! He worked on computers that could draw a line, produce the first colour graphics, and had 1MG of memory, thought to be sufficient for the whole of London for the foreseeable future...

During this time, however, John felt slightly lost on his faith journey; he began to attend the Wednesday evening session at Westminster Meeting House, finding that Quakerism suited his temperament and his understanding of the divine. Later, when John was living in Kew, he

found it easier to travel to Hammersmith Meeting House on Sunday mornings, and there he remained a faithful worshipper for almost 50 years.

One Sunday in July 1974, his eyes met those of another young worshipper – Ruth McAfee. They went to lunch that same day, and had a few dates over the course of the following week, even though Ruth was seeing someone else at the time. The next Sunday they met up at Hammersmith Meeting, and after worship they took a trip to the British Museum together. On the steps of the museum, John asked Ruth to marry him. She accepted, and on the 25th of November 1974 they married at Hammersmith Meeting House.

As John was still working at Imperial College, they decided to live on the 65 bus route. In 1977 he and Ruth moved to Northfields, where they stayed for the rest of their lives. They welcomed three foster children, as well as their own children, Andrew (born 1980) and Ellen (born 1981). Ruth and John rarely shared a cross word, and never went to bed without making up.

John soon joined two colleagues from Imperial who had set up a software company, working on hardware/software interfaces. In the early 1990s the firm struggled and ceased trading, leaving John unemployed and with a mortgage to pay; the cheque for the children's summer camp bounced. John and Ruth had never previously been overdrawn nor held credit cards, and so it was an uncomfortable time that influenced a subsequent lifestyle of saving and simple living. The financial prudence that developed was also signified by regularly updated wills.

John was then invited to become a software writer, going on to create 'BankRec', a major accounting software for reconciling cash books to bank statements that was used by Waterstones, NatWest, Manchester United and numerous small businesses. He continued to work on this programme until he died, tailoring the package to meet specific customer needs.

All through his life, meeting for worship played a central role in his being; he attended meeting every week without fail, even when on holiday. He regularly facilitated the children's meeting, sharing stories of ancient Britons and early Quakers with young attenders. He and Ruth also managed all premises matters at Hammersmith

for many years. John was a committed attender of Quaker business meetings, and served as both local and area meeting clerk; his meetings, always held in a spirit of worship, were efficient and well-run. He was less comfortable as an overseer as he tended to forget people's names, and absolutely loathed being treasurer; nonetheless, he faithfully set up spreadsheets to record all items of expenditure in detail. If the ledger was even three pence adrift he would call on other Friends to come and trawl through each transaction and bank statement. He was concerned with "doing the right thing", but could procrastinate when the details were tiresome. He did, however, very much enjoy serving on Meeting for Sufferings, and regularly gave feedback to his local and area meetings on his perceptions of the business. For nine years John served faithfully on the committee set up to discern a way forward for a new meeting house; only two weeks before he died he took a taxi and his oxygen tank to yet another session of the Hammersmith Meeting House Committee.

John didn't define himself as Christian, although he considered both the Bible and Jesus to be great teachers. He believed that Jesus was no more the son of God than any and all of us are children of God. He did not believe in a literal resurrection nor in a literal virgin birth. He described the Bible as a 'Bronze Age text for a Bronze Age civilisation' but sought to glean what meaning he could from it for his own life. John's spoken ministry was down-to-earth, based invariably on his personal experience and not uncommonly passionate! Every decision he made was influenced by his Quaker faith, and he held his life in the Light.

In his later life, John built upon his interest in archaeology and ancient civilisation, attending courses at the Museum of London and then volunteering at Gunnersbury Park Museum, where he - and those around him - learnt far more about grey clay pipes and pots than might ever be expected. He spent many happy hours cataloguing data and devising ways to record it on computers. His fascination with the past was always based on how ordinary people lived, how they were buried, and how they left a trail for future generations. Family holidays, often in the English countryside, but also later to Italy and France, reflected this, with the Marshalls visiting ruins and "real places", including a Dublin council estate!

His love for Morris dancing also never left him. He recalled dancing at the summer solstice and feeling a great sense of connection with the many previous generations who celebrated this festival of light, calling to mind a poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins, whom he greatly admired: "The world is charged with the grandeur of God./... Generations have trod, have trod, have trod".

Once Morris dancing became too difficult for his aching limbs, he took up his violin once again and accompanied the dancers instead; he also taught the dance to newcomers. He took on a fundraising role at events they held, and maintained a strong desire, no doubt due to his love of history, to preserve the heritage of the dance.

John was kind and generous; he loved to share his knowledge, particularly of history and mathematics, notably with his grandsons Adam and Jack. He was also honest, and often shared the tale of when he (temporarily) lost his grandson Jack, mistakenly returning home from the shops without him. He was led by his principles and passion.

He often shared the words of Margaret Fell in 20:31 of the *Quaker Faith & Practice*, when she said that "It is more fit for us, to be covered with God's eternal spirit, and clothed with his eternal light, which leads us and guides us into righteousness. Now I have set before you life and death, and desire you to choose life, and God and his truth." Though the journey through the Anglican Church was not for him, John was clear about his faith in God. He demonstrated daily the priesthood of a believer, using his sincerity, his integrity, and the whole of his life as his ministry.

Signed in and on behalf of London West Area Meeting, held at Uxbridge on 21 February 2016

Caroline Nursey, Clerk



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## Geoffrey Malcolm Morris

8.viii.1933 – 13.v.2017

Geoff was born in Paisley but within a few weeks of his birth his family moved south over the border. His father was a Methodist minister and Geoff's early years involved many changes of address and different schools. Despite this, he thrived and gained a place at Nottingham University to study History. While there, he became involved in the Methodist Society, where he met his first wife. He stayed on and completed an MA in the History of Primitive Methodism. Leaving University, Geoff was required to complete National Service but he had become convinced of the merits of pacifism. This fundamental belief never wavered throughout the rest of his life and, following a demanding official process, resulted in him becoming exempt from National Service as a conscientious objector. He agreed to commit himself to two years of public service, working on a farm and in a hospital.

Geoff taught secondary History in Nottingham and Birmingham, where he and his wife adopted a son. In a short time, (as is so often the case,) their own son was born. A move to a teacher training college at Stoke followed, with a subsequent position at Doncaster teacher training college, from where he eventually retired as Vice Principal.

Geoff's life was turned upside down in 1995 when he lost his wife to cancer, leaving him devastated. He remarried two years later and he and Dorothy moved to Scarborough and joined Westborough Methodists. Methodism had been the bedrock of his life and Geoff had for many years been a lay preacher. His personal loss and subsequent studies and reflection made him question some of his earlier certainties. He was disappointed with Methodism's failure to wholeheartedly embrace Pacifism and became troubled with the church's doctrine of the Trinity. He attended, and sometimes led, services at the Unitarian Church and attended some Quaker meetings. After much soul-searching, Geoff decided Quakerism was the best fit for his new beliefs. His spiritual journey is summarized in the title of a paper he wrote for a Quaker journal – 'Belief, Unbelief and New Belief'. In it he asks many questions about the nature of God. He concludes: 'For me, sufficient to say and believe that God exists through love, loving and the lovely, and in goodness. I am happy to commit

myself to worship true love and true goodness.'

Throughout the rest of his life, Geoff was interested in any new spiritual insight and read voraciously. Many of us benefitted from the wisdom, depth and quality of his ministry. The main themes were taken from the everyday world and often focused on the goodness he encountered in people and situations.

While being a committed member and taking on several positions within the Society, Geoff had a deep respect and interest in all religions. He set up an interfaith group in Scarborough, represented the meeting in the 'Churches Together' group and for a time was involved with the UN, only resigning on the issue of the countenance of armed conflict albeit as a last resort. His interest in politics was a seamless extension of his spiritual views. Perhaps Geoff's active involvement in Amnesty International was influenced by his commitment to peace.

Most of all, Geoff was loved for being a kind and warm loving friend. For people with problems he was a rock, providing calm wisdom and support. He sought out and made welcome new attenders and friends, quietly providing deeply appreciated spiritual guidance.

Geoff continued to support Dorothy by attending social activities and some services at Westborough. He was a family man who enjoyed holidays and sport, particularly supporting Yorkshire Cricket Club. His son wrote: 'He was a pacifist, humanist, internationalist, whose green socialism carried him through his life. A man of integrity, a man of principle, something to aspire to.'

Signed in and on behalf of Pickering & Hull Area Meeting, held at Kirkbymoorside on 8 July 2017

Phyllis Wicks, Co-clerk

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## John Punshon

18.iv.1935 – 10.iii.2017

John Punshon was born in 1935 and raised in the east end of London in a home which was both religious and political. The family attended a house church in Walthamstow before and after the War, run by Reg Sorenson who was a family friend as well as the Member of Parliament for Leyton West and then Leyton. The whole family was politically very active, and his father became Mayor, as well as a Justice of the Peace, and his mother was secretary of the women's section of the Leyton Labour Party. Evacuated to Okehampton, Devon, for the duration of World War II, John returned home to be educated at the local grammar school and then at Brasenose College, Oxford, where he graduated in Politics, Philosophy and Economics. It was at this time he became a convinced Friend.

Earlier, when John was 14 years old, he had contracted polio which had a profound effect on the future direction of his life. He was full of energy, loved sport and was looking forward to some kind of outdoor career such as park ranger but the polio caused complete paralysis and although he made an exceptional recovery, he was left disabled for the rest of his life. Consequently, he had to accommodate himself to a sedentary life and it was at this point he began to think about his faith. Looking back, he described this episode as something which appeared to be a tragedy but was, in fact, an act of providence.

John's first employment was for the Labour party after which he worked for the Trades Union Congress. In 1960, he became a history teacher at Stratford Grammar School, so as to have more time to devote to politics and it was during this time that he twice stood, unsuccessfully, for Parliament. He did, however, serve as a councillor for the London Borough of Leyton (now part of Waltham Forest) from 1958-64.

It was at Stratford Grammar School that he met Veronica, a teacher of English whom he married in 1962. After six years of teaching he entered the legal profession, first as a clerk and then as legal executive, but in 1976 he returned to teaching for

three years before moving to Woodbrooke College as Quaker Studies tutor.

In John's book 'Encounter with silence' he writes of his conversion experience in 1973 following the death of his father "When I got back from the hospital the night he died, I read through the New Testament, and it was as if I had never read it before. It was full of Bonhoeffer's words, what seem to me now to be the great realities of religion – sin, sacrifice, judgment, prayer, providence, salvation, glory, faith, hope, spirit – all those things. The theologians I had been accustomed to read were preoccupied with how to construct a faith out of inadequate and untrustworthy historical records and to remove miraculous events to a symbolic realm in which they exercised great power, but were not, literally, true. It struck me very forcibly that the theologians of the liberal tradition were in exactly the same position as the Puritans whom Fox condemned for seeking Christ in the pages of a book and not as a presence immanent in the world. I came to an experience similar to that of George Fox, "...and when all my hopes in them and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could tell what to do, then, Oh then, I heard a voice which said, There is one, even Christ Jesus that can speak to thy condition', and when I heard it, my heart did leap for joy..."

Following his post as Quaker Tutor at Woodbrooke, 1979–1990, John served as a visiting professor at George Fox University in the USA during the autumn of 1990 and, in the following year, he was recruited to the newly established Geraldine Leatherock Chair in Quaker Studies at Earlham School of Religion, Richmond, Indiana. John was a frequent speaker at yearly meetings, churches/meetings, and colleges/universities in the UK and in North America. John ministered in Kenya and Honduras, and he delivered the Johnson Lecture at Friends United Meeting ('Patterns of Change', 1987), the Swarthmore Lecture in London Yearly Meeting ('Testimony and Tradition', 1990) and the Western Yearly Meeting Quaker Lecture ('Enriching the Open Worship', 1993).

John was widely regarded as an exceptional teacher. He connected with those he was teaching, getting alongside them, often jesting, often provoking, but always with integrity and above all a palpable care for his students and an obvious

delight in his subject. He once described himself as 'not an academic but a high-class journalist'. He wrote well and, through his books, was able to articulate Quaker history in an accessible form, as well as key elements of Quaker theology for a generation on both sides of the Atlantic. Long after he retired, John still remained in contact with past students and colleagues and took a great interest in what they were doing. Teaching was a lifelong vocation for him.

As a writer, John is known throughout the Quaker world and his books are to be found in most meeting house libraries. His book *Portrait in Grey* offers a fine treatment of Quaker history, especially regarding the political and religious situation out of which the Quaker movement emerged. As such, it occupies a key place among the half-dozen leading Quaker histories over the last half century or so. In *Encounter with Silence* John produced what has been described as the best introduction to unprogrammed worship currently in print. It sets people at ease with the surprising shock of "nothing happening" externally in the meeting for worship, allowing "everything happening" spiritually, within.

John Punshon was an evangelical Quaker and on his retirement and return to England in 1998, he remained a member of Indiana Yearly Meeting, never transferring his membership back to Britain Yearly Meeting about whose direction he had many doubts and fears which he never sought to hide. John was a recorded minister in Indiana Yearly Meeting, something of which he was very proud. In his final book, *Reasons for Hope* he focused on evangelical Quakerism as a worldwide movement, noting its vitality as well as commenting on some of its foibles. The book has been described as a 'must-read for Friends of all traditions, as it represents 80% of Friends around the world today'. It constituted the culmination of his life's work. This was the first time that a British Friend of major significance had gone to America to live, teach, and minister across the spectrum of American Quakerism, perhaps since the days of Joseph John Gurney so his perspective was extremely important. John also contributed many essays to *The Friend*, *Friends Journal*, *Quaker Life*, *Evangelical Friend* and *Quaker Religious Thought*, and his Pendle

Hill Pamphlets include *Alternative Christianity* (no.245) and *Letter to a Universalist* (no.285).

John Punshon was an ecumenical Quaker in that he engaged Friends of all backgrounds and traditions). In the United States, where Quakers diverge so widely on matters of theology and culture, John was a rare Friend who not only kept on good terms with all sides but also was able to minister meaningfully to persons on all sides, and of all ages. He deeply cared for people and he had a great pastoral sensibility. He was always a delight to be with. His zest for life, his ready humour, his interest in things American endeared him to so many people. He was able to supplement his enthusiasm for cricket and football (he was a devoted West Ham supporter throughout his life) with an excitement about baseball and the Cincinnati Reds.

But he was also an ecumenical Christian and, on his retirement and return to England in 1998, he became deeply involved with other Christian groups in Milton Keynes.

John was a devoted family man. John and Veronica were married for over 50 years and had two children, Tom and Sophie and four grandchildren, Victoria, James, Tabitha and Esther whom he adored.

Besides his love of sport, he had a life-long passion for the sea, especially sailing ships, and constructed model ships from intricate plans, making all the parts himself; his passion for sea shanties equalled his love of jazz, which was played at his funeral. On that day, many people spoke with obvious love and warmth about John's love of life including several mentions of his passion for ice cream!

John died peacefully at Milton Keynes hospital 10th March 2017. The cremation took place at Crownhill Crematorium on April 7th followed by a meeting for worship. His ashes were interred in Wanstead Burial Ground on 12th August 2017 during a Memorial meeting for worship.

Signed in and on behalf of Luton & Leighton Area Meeting, held at Harpenden on 10 September 2017

Helen Osborn, Clerk

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# Janet Alison Quilley

20.xii.1939 – 19.iv.2016

Janet Alison Quilley, née Arnold, was born into the family of a police officer in Lincolnshire. While still at school she encountered, in the Fellowship of Reconciliation, principles and ideals that were to characterise her own life, helping to develop her thoughtful awareness of social responsibility and of the importance and value of reconciliation and peace building.

In 1958 Janet went up to Cambridge University to read History. Here she started attending the local Quaker meeting and took part in various work camps and Young Friends events, where she first met her future husband, Alan Quilley. Initially on graduating Janet opted to balance the academic with the practical and trained as a nurse. This was not a usual career choice for a Cambridge graduate at the time, but Janet's independent spirit guided her to this course and her commitment and strength of character saw her successfully through the somewhat rigid strictures of the training regime.

In 1963, two years after Janet's graduation, she and Alan married, and certain important aspects of Janet's future Quaker witness were to evolve in tandem with Alan. In 1967 the couple moved with their two young children to Western Kenya for Alan to take up a teaching post at Kamusinga, a Quaker secondary school. Here the family became part of a Quaker community which was to prove fertile and enriching. Janet initially nursed, and later taught at the Teremi Harambee School. The family returned to England in 1971, now with four young children and many more life-long friends.

Back in England the Quilleys settled for a while in Collingham, near Wetherby, where Janet combined night-shift nursing with raising their young family. Then in 1974 the family moved to Gosforth, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Here Janet, having completed a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), turned to education as her main occupation, teaching from 1975 to 1986 at the Northern Counties School for the Deaf. The move to Worsley near Manchester followed Alan's appointment as Senior Assistant Secretary at the

Examinations Board. Janet's involvement with Special Needs education continued from 1986-92 at a special needs school in Oldham,

Everywhere they settled the Quilleys became active in their local Quaker meeting. By now Janet was also involved in national committees. Her presence at Meeting for Sufferings was regarded as invaluable, combining as it did quiet waiting on the Spirit with keen perspicacity in getting to the heart of complex issues.

In 1992 Janet took early retirement to make place for a further period of overtly Quaker witness. Following on from a term at Pendle Hill College, Pennsylvania, in 1987, in 1992 the Quilleys were appointed Friends in Residence for a term at Woodbrooke, followed by six and a half years as Quaker Representatives based at Quaker House, Belfast. Here they hosted an acknowledged place of trust within a deeply divided community during perhaps its most sensitive time. Their work was widely recognised and appreciated by many, including the politicians of the day: Quaker House made contacts and meetings possible which could not otherwise have taken place.

The Quilleys returned to England in 1999 and settled in the Yorkshire Dales. Janet resumed her international involvement as she became part of a conciliation process for the Nagas in northern India. For 14 years Janet attended Leyburn Meeting and was much missed when in 2014, to be closer to family, the couple moved back to Tyneside, where they worshiped at Monkseaton Meeting. All too soon Janet was diagnosed with terminal cancer, but she continued her active Quaker witness to the last, attending meeting for worship whenever pain and fatigue would allow, seeing her letters published in *The Friend*, corresponding with others involved in Nagaland reconciliation right up to her death in April 2016. For those Monkseaton Friends who got to know Janet well only during this final phase of her life and who participated in the meetings for worship held in Janet's bedroom at home, it was a privilege and inspiration to witness Janet's Quaker faith and courage.

Janet will be remembered for what she did: her faithful service at local and area meeting level, her work on national committees and her skills

in peace-building and fostering understanding within Northern Ireland and the international scene. Equally important is the way she was: one witness testifies how, when new to Quakers, she went with some trepidation to visit the 'weighty Friend' Janet Quilley, and came away feeling buoyed up and with an entirely new perception of what 'weighty' might mean among Friends. Any visitor to the Quilley household could expect to be received with cheerful hospitality, with tea and cake. Those who encountered Janet received a lasting impression of her intelligence and sagacity; her quiet energy; her sense of fun; her insight, compassion and sensitivity; and the generous, caring warmth she radiated. It can be truly said of Janet that she followed Fox's exhortation to 'be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one.' (*Quaker faith & practice* 19.32)

Signed in and on behalf of Northumbria Area Meeting, held at Stocksfield on 12 March 2017

Susan Bennett Clerk

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## Helen Steven

19.iii.1942 – 12.iv.2016

‘Faith is not learned by sitting in an armchair, but on the knife-edge between faith and folly [...] when only faith in God remains between you and disaster.’ (Anon, quoted in *Anthology of Hope*, C Steven, ed., 1988)

Helen Steven wrote that she wondered whether Friends truly realise the potential danger of meeting for worship, when, by waiting faithfully in the silence, we offer God a blank cheque of our lives. She was led by the Spirit to recognise and name what was needed and to respond creatively to it, so that her spiritual life had both a practical and a political dimension. She lit a candle which shone with a very bright light. Her life and work manifested God’s kingdom and brought it nearer. She raged at disappointment and experienced despair, but with courage, good humour, integrity and passionate commitment she faced up to that ‘ocean of darkness and death’ which breeds injustice and militarism and fuels the many threats menacing our world today.

Helen was also tremendous fun to be with. She was a Renaissance woman who wrote and lectured, played the piano and the tin whistle, loved celebrating with friends and singing and dancing at ceilidhs, looked after a productive garden, painted in oils and drew with pastels, knitted socks without a pattern and patched duvets with intricate care. She had a great sense of adventure coupled with a reverence and gratitude for the wonder and beauty of creation, which was a source of continuing inspiration and refreshment in her work. She knew and loved every glen, corrie and mountain of her native Scotland, had scaled rock faces and climbed every one of its highest peaks. The title of her history of the Ladies Scottish Climbing Club, *Rising to the Challenge*, could equally have been the headline to her own life story. The fact that something was impractical never seemed to stop her. She and her life-long partner Ellen Moxley shared a life under concern, with little thought to sensible things like job-security, pensions, or a roof over their heads.

Their relationship quietly modelled how a same-sex partnership between deeply spiritual people

could be a powerful source of good in the world. Together they drew each other on to achieve more than either could have done alone: Helen’s love of strategy and Ellen’s unwavering focus, Helen’s creative and training skills and Ellen’s nurturing of every peace activist that she met. They were both dedicated to non-violence, rigorous intellectually and self-reflective; both pulled in the same direction with such charm and humanity that others were attracted to join them. Helen’s clarity of vision was expressed with passion yet infused with care. She had respect for other people as well as a steely determination to get to where she needed to be. She met people where they were, on their own terms, and started the conversation from there. She was animated by a ‘loving gaiety’, to which tiny children and military generals alike responded. One of those generals, an architect of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) nuclear strategy, stated quite sincerely as he shook hands with Helen on leaving a dialogue meeting she had organised on Iona that “only the hand of God could have dumped me into the midst of a bunch of raving peace women”.

Helen fully appreciated what a gift it is to have a partner with whom to share the thin times when progress seems non-existent. She and Ellen upheld one another and found in each other the strength and determination to keep going. There were plenty of clashes of strong wills and convictions – but also huge amounts of fun and a shared sense of the ridiculous. Their love and respect for each other and their sense of shared purpose remained powerful to the end.

The unquenchable spirit of love was the well-spring of all that Helen did. She was tough enough at 70 years old to lead a winter expedition in the Cairngorms to dig and sleep in snow-holes, but too tender-hearted to kill a baby rabbit which had decimated her vegetable garden. It is rare to find passion and compassion, sensitivity, a prophetic voice and a mischievous sense of humour in one individual, but Helen was such a person. She saw that her primary task was to challenge the use of war and weapons and to help others to learn the ways of peace. She was the first to acknowledge that she came from a privileged background, but she used the confidence it gave her in the service of peace.

In 1972 she was teaching history in a girls’ private school in Glasgow and still a committed member

of the Church of Scotland. Prompted by what she described as 'that uncomfortable still, small voice', she abandoned her professional security and all that was familiar to her to travel to Saigon during the Vietnam War. The decision was life-changing. Supported by the Gordon Barclay Vietnam Fund, she worked in four orphanages, two run by Buddhists and two by Catholics. She met Ellen, a Quaker, and encountered the strong synthesis of deep spiritual awareness and practical action in the world that is characteristic of the Society of Friends.

In Vietnam, Helen's adventurous side had full rein. Friends recall the day she went for a beach picnic with some colleagues and lost the keys to their van. Night was falling and since a shoot-on-sight curfew was in force, the party hurried to get off the beach. Climbing into the dunes in the darkness, they realised the sand was very probably mined, so Helen suggested they should simply lie down and sleep where they were. Tip-toeing down after sunrise, she appeared completely unfazed by such precariousness.

Helen had moral courage too. She invited the British Ambassador and his wife to dinner, and entertained them after the meal with a slide show in two parts: first, pictures of the Ladles Scottish Climbing Club's expedition to Greenland (which Helen had led) followed by the very outspoken American Quaker critique of the immorality of the Vietnam War. She was fearless about the political embarrassment (and the Ambassador was very clear about which set of slides he'd preferred!)

It took similar radical thinking to help change the direction of the orphanage project. By the time Helen and Ellen left Vietnam, an excellent training programme was in place which supported working mothers, helping them to give small children the imaginative and innovative care they needed.

Back in Scotland, with toddler Marian, a war orphan whom Ellen had adopted, Helen became a full-time peace and justice worker with the Iona Community, a post she held from 1979 until 1985. One of her responsibilities was to co-ordinate the Community's Glasgow premises, Centrepeace. She was supposed to close the security grille over the entrance at night, but she always left it open so as not to deny to rough sleepers the small amount of shelter the doorway afforded.

Campaigning against nuclear weapons, and Trident in particular, became a priority. Helen

and Ellen founded the Gareloch Horticulturists, a women's nonviolent peace action group, which continues to this day. By now, Helen's commitment to nonviolence was not just a theoretical one, but a lived reality. In 1985, she and Ellen set up Peace House in Greenloaning, near their meeting in Dunblane. Their clear vision was to create a residential centre where activists could meet to plan, discuss, or explore Issues. It was definitely not going to be a Retreat. As she insisted, 'I don't want to retreat – we must advance!' With the confidence that came from knowing they were responding to a deeply-grounded concern, they formed a community with a few friends and bought a house on terms which enabled them to run the project for twelve months. They made an encouraging start, but by the end of the year the community had dissolved and the money had run out. Quaker Peace and Service stepped in and bought the property as an investment. They paid Helen and Ellen's salaries, met their overheads and provided a management committee to guide and oversee their work.

Peace House was a remarkable and probably unique experiment in peace education and the fomenting of non-violent solutions to the world's problems. During the twelve years it ran, 10,000 people stayed there to grapple with many aspects of peace and justice. Characteristics of these gatherings were delicious food and warm fires, argument, attentive listening, deep conversations with like-minded people, maybe a nip of whisky, certainly singing and plenty of laughter. It also became a base for some innovative campaigning such as the Gulf Watch project, a daily bulletin of news and Information about the first Gulf War. Well before the days of instant internet access Information was collected via fax messages from GreenNet (an early example of such networks) and from one telephone contact Inside Iraq. It was then mailed to church and peace groups, photocopied and redistributed to many thousands of people all over the world, becoming an alternative news service of global value.

Hands-on activism continued alongside the work of Peace House. Helen spent hundreds of hours outside the naval base at Faslane on the Clyde, watching, waiting, praying, speaking to military personnel, supporting the peace camp there, and on occasion, locking on to, climbing over or cutting

through the fence. She was arrested twice and, on being convicted, spent brief periods in Cornton Vale prison for refusing to pay her fine. This was a difficult boundary for someone of her background to cross, but she understood that it was sometimes necessary to break the law in order to demonstrate that ‘their power comes from our obedience.’

The arrival in the Gareloch of HMS Vanguard, the first of the UK’s nuclear-armed Trident submarines, was greeted in a symbolic act of defiance by dozens of peace activists in a flotilla of little boats, one of them being Helen in her canoe. Somehow she became separated from the others but, undaunted, she went on alone, paddling out into the loch towards the submarine’s looming bulk, moving forward into real physical danger. A squad of marines in a powerboat dashed up and grabbed the canoe, spinning it around so that it was not run down by the submarine. Helen described this as one of the lowest and most despairing moments of her life, but this modern version of the David-versus-Goliath story surely represents an act of ultimate obedience to what Martin Luther King has described as “the beat of a more distant drum”.

In 1999 Helen developed and widened the work which had begun in Peace House by setting up the Scottish Centre for Nonviolence in Dunblane, a particularly appropriate place for such a venture. The project had a strong emphasis on conflict-resolution and peace-building. She designed and delivered training for international peace teams in Palestine and Israel and forged close links with the Centre for Human Ecology at Edinburgh University.

Helen retired in 2002 and moved with Ellen to Stoer, near Lochinver in the North-West Highlands of Scotland. They arrived at a time when the recently-established Assynt Community was about to achieve the landmark buy-out of two huge estates covering 44,400 acres of wild beauty. They immediately entered wholeheartedly into the life of the Community, and Helen served for a time as Chair of the Assynt Foundation.

In the tranquillity of Stoer, Helen wrote the 2005 Swarthmore Lecture which she delivered at Yearly Meeting in York. It drew on a lifetime of committed activism nourished by her deep spirituality. Quoting the US poet Adrienne Rich, she gave it the title ‘No Extraordinary Power: Prayer, Stillness and Activism’. The lecture explored how ordinary people can

become extraordinary when, faced with something they believe must be changed, they find within themselves the power to ‘reconstitute the world’. Helen’s view of the revolutionary power of non-violence was that it offers creative, imaginative ways to overthrow tyranny and oppression, without the liberators becoming oppressors in the process. Non-violence works, she believed, because it widens options, offering routes out of conflict which maintain the dignity of the protagonists.

She could have chosen her own comfort and security over the risks of action but she never took the easy way. Yet there was never any hint of sacrifice in the choices she made: she did not pay the price, she gave it. Her brother Kenneth wrote of Helen driving cars that were held together by the hope of a better tomorrow, and hope seemed to be part of her DNA. She wrote that the important part is the doing, the stepping out in faith, the trusting that our actions are not in vain: ‘Doing our utmost, to the very limit of our being, and then being free to let go of the result; not to be bound by success, but to hold on to the confidence that the outcome will be taken up by others and the flame will continue to burn [...] This for me is the point of resurrection. [...] Somewhere in the secret workings of God, a change is taking place. Because the evidence of history is that change does happen – indeed, that is what history is.’

Quakers visiting the far north-west of Scotland might pause at the village burial-ground in Stoer where a tall rock stands at Helen’s grave, there to remember not just what our Friend did, but how she did it. She fully owned the principle that there is no way to peace, because peace is the way. She was passionate for peace because she had a passionate zest for life. At her funeral, these words of Norman McCaig’s were read, which serve well to end this Testimony:

*There will be nothing deathly in your death  
For your love always was the laughing sort  
That quickened life and would not die with death.  
And when you’d gone, I would not want to weep -  
That loving gaiety would still be there  
Filling with its own peace the quickened air.*

Signed in and on behalf of North Scotland Area Meeting, held at Aberdeen on 11 November 2017

Phyllida Sales, Clerk



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## Patrick Willoughby Ward – Perkins

12 xii 1952 – 1 iii 2016

“Be still and know”

During the early part of his life, Patrick – often known as Paddy – was not known for either stillness or spirituality: one of his school friends summed him up as “spontaneous fire and fun” and a member of his family remembered “a feisty and fiery small boy who got into fights and was very competitive.”

Patrick was born into a close-knit academic family in Oxford – the third of five children: at the Dragon School and later at Winchester he was a boy who loved sport and drama, made lifelong friends and generally enjoyed himself without working too hard. Scraping into St Peter’s college to read History, later switching to Law, he continued to enjoy life to the full.

Fortunately, in time, Patrick did develop a taste for application and hard work and after Oxford moved to London where he was called to the Bar in 1978. By the age of twenty six it must have seemed that his future was assured, but in a short period he suffered two brain haemorrhages, the second whilst he was in court, and his potentially brilliant career was in ruins, for the pioneering surgery which saved his life also brought permanent side effects, including epilepsy. With enormous courage and determination he slowly rebuilt his health: he was always able to see the positives in life and he said later that this devastating experience had made him a kinder man, others believed it allowed his gentler qualities to come to the fore.

Patrick developed his gifts for relating to people by volunteering – with St Martin in the Fields homeless unit, with the Citizens Advice Bureau, with a local day centre for people with physical disabilities, running swimming sessions for disabled people and many others. In doing this he gave of himself but also gained inspiration and energy from seeing how others with extreme disabilities coped with life. He also swam (particularly loving river-swimming – including the Thames), ran and cycled huge distances – for Patrick physical exercise was also a spiritual experience and in this he was encouraged by Thich Nhat Hanh’s teachings on mindfulness in everyday life, ‘Be Still and Know’ and by the balance he

began to find in practising yoga and meditation – neither of which came naturally to him at first.

It was also at this time, in early 1987, that he found Westminster Meeting House and began worshipping with Friends: very quickly meeting became central to his life just as he became central to the life of the meeting – bringing ideas, energy and enthusiasm as well as a keen sense of humour. His love of people and practical kindness led him to offer support in very practical ways, including Friends and others in wheelchairs who would otherwise be unable to leave their homes, to shopping, giving people messages of support and encouragement, outings to the seaside as well as simply sitting and being a friend. As one Friend said, Patrick was an overseer long before he was appointed to the task. He worked hard and happily in supporting the meeting, on Premises, Overseers and later as an Elder. He developed Wednesday evening meeting for worship and supported the wardens in the practical running of the meeting house.

It was at meeting that Patrick met Gail in 1989 and formed the strong and loving partnership which would sustain them both. At their wedding at Westminster Meeting House in November 1991, Patrick ministered at his sadness that friends in same-sex relationships were denied the joy which he and Gail felt on that day so it was a satisfaction to many that he lived to see Friends able to practise true equality in marriage.

Patrick then found another focus for his energy and his gift for caring by setting out on a career in nursing at St. Thomas’ Hospital, at the same time training as a counsellor. He found that patients with long-term chronic health conditions could be helped by relaxation/ yoga and mindfulness sessions, which he set up for patients. In February 1997, Patrick was felled by another haemorrhage, shortly after his first meeting as Clerk of Elders. He survived and recovered against all odds, thanks to his fitness, his determination, his optimism and his indefatigable stubborn streak, as well as the excellent care of the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery and the loving support of family and friends. He spent almost a year in hospital and rehab. He never showed any frustration at new limitations on his speech and mobility. He dragged a standing frame onto the hospital patio, so he could work

for hours every day to regain the ability to walk with the aid of a stick. Although using a wheelchair, he continued to 'walk cheerfully over the Earth, answering that of God in everyone' and new happiness and pride came into his life as a father, with the birth of Matthew in 1999.

For many Friends at Westminster Meeting, Paddy was a strong largely wordless presence in the meeting, which he attended usually twice a week, arriving in a wheelchair but walking with a stick into meeting for worship. There he would take his place in a corner and remain standing throughout, providing a still, continuing and palpable ministry. A newcomer to the meeting, who had only known Paddy for the last year of his life said, "the loss of Patrick is a spiritual loss for me."

Paddy's life was celebrated at the two Quaker places that meant most to him. His funeral and burial at Jordans took place on 17 March 2016, St. Patrick's Day, appropriate for his Irish family connections, with his love of the countryside around his mother's home in County Meath, of swimming in the River Boyne, and of Mayo, which he visited with family for the last time in summer 2015. Paddy and Gail had proposed to each other in the garden at Jordans nearly 25 years before. In a moving meeting for worship, including hymns which Paddy loved, a recording was played of Paddy leading a session on mindfulness, especially moving for those present, in hearing his voice as it was before his illness. Paddy's memorial meeting was held on 4th April at Westminster Meeting House, which Paddy had loved and been an integral part of for so many years.

Paddy's courage, stoicism and cheerfulness were inspiring, an example, as one Friend put it, of "Paddy power". Another said: "One can only speculate as to the tremendous reserves of personality and mental resolution, and religious faith which lay behind this." Friends commented on the expressiveness of his smile and the fierce intelligence which shone from his eyes; he was always engaged in what was going on. "Yes," he would say, and "Cheers", which he would repeat with emphasis to affirm his agreement or pleasure and his enjoyment of life. "Cheers."

Signed in and on behalf of London West Area Meeting, held at Westminster on 22 September 2016

Caroline Nursey, Clerk

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## Malcolm Whalan

18.iv.1945 – 08.ix.2016

"Hold yourself and others in the Light, knowing that all are cherished by God." (Advice 3)

"As you learn from others, can you in turn give freely from what you have gained." (Advice 5)

Malcolm's service to the Religious Society of Friends is encapsulated in his tenacious adherence to these Advices. Many Friends, in their recent tributes in Facebook and other places, remember him offering to 'hold them in the Light' and recall that ministry he had given still speaks to them.

A Yorkshire conference which Malcolm supported on the creation of Testimonies to the grace of God in the lives of deceased Friends recognised how Friends' lives often finish in places where they are not well known. This was eventually true of Malcolm. He had been a member in three Yorkshire monthly or area meetings, then moved to Quaker accommodation in Welwyn Garden City and died among the care of Friends in Devon. Memorial meetings were held in Devon and Hertford & Hitchin Area Meetings where the creation of a testimony to the grace of God in Malcolm's life was asked for. But each group which had known Malcolm felt that they only knew a little about him. This testimony has now been completed in Leeds Area Meeting with contributions from across Britain Yearly Meeting.

Malcolm had a difficult start in life. Apart from a broken family life, early on he suffered a brain injury after a fall from a horse which left him dyspraxic and with a tendency to get words the wrong way round. Among friends he was quick to see the funny side of that. His early experiences led him into a career as a social worker with brain injured people. Fairness and doing the right thing were prime values that he lived by. He was not afraid to stand up to bureaucratic and organisational nonsense wherever he found it. In his work he fought to secure the rights of his clients, making sure that they got the best chance they could.

Malcolm was always interested in exploring spirituality and, early on, was drawn to the

mystical and Eastern traditions. He began to practice Transcendental Meditation (TM), a practice he continued throughout his life. Even in the hospice he continued it, saying that he could still manage one of the TM stages. This was typical of Malcolm, focussing on the positive.

His journey into Quakers was a natural progression combining as it does the primacy of inner experience of the divine with service in the outer world.

Malcolm came into formal membership in 1991 around the beginning of the new meeting at Hebden Bridge. He was always keen to serve Friends in business responsibilities in monthly meeting or as a trustee locally or centrally in a wide variety of Quaker organisations. In most of this service he was a stickler for Quaker procedure and 'right ordering' and would research things thoroughly; this made him unpopular with some already settled Friends.

At times in a meeting community he felt like 'the grit in the oyster'. But he also enjoyed a welcoming and helpful role as resident Friend at Gildersome Meeting and Woodbrooke; and sharing laughter and inspiration with young people in Yorkshire and at Britain Yearly Meeting.

Malcolm was always 'a powerful advocate for the inclusion of young people in our Society'. One of his first suggestions after he came into membership was to set up a Yorkshire Link Group (12 to 18 year olds), which ran successfully for several years. He was very much a guiding light for many young Friends, both in this group and later with the Yearly Meeting Young People's programme. He recognised and spoke to a spiritual hunger among young Friends. The residential Yorkshire Link group that he suggested and co-facilitated on 'ways of accessing the inner light' had a waiting list, which was unknown for any other Link group event. 'His love and support will endure way beyond the passing of his 'material' form' said one young Friend.

His close friends knew him to have a lack of confidence in his own worth. He was always offering to help, and it was typical that Malcolm, after helping friends out, made it seem that they were doing him a service! With most adult

Friends he did not socialise easily or talk about his personal life; he sometimes came across as reserved and remote. After his death a Friend was surprised to discover on his bookshelf pictures of him as a playful happy father with his children; she had been totally unaware of this part of his life.

Malcolm was a practical Quaker with a wicked sense of humour and had the gift of 'speaking simply and humbly about his faith'. One friend with whom he shared meals, walked through the bluebell woods and talked about pain and illness treasured a quote from Pierre Lacout which Malcolm had given him

"We must accept ourselves as we are, seizing the passing moment with its glory or its wretchedness, live with what we are and what we have, in loving self-giving'.

The loving self-giving was still seen in the difficult last days of Malcolm's life, when 'in no way did cancer and the nearness of death diminish him... in some way he became more and more himself'.

Prepared by Susan Robson, with the assistance of Ruth Hustler of Devon AM (formerly of Brighouse AM), with contributions from Friends in Brighouse, Leeds, and Hertford and Hitchin AMs.

Signed in and on behalf of Leeds Area Meeting, held at Gildersome on 9 July 2017

Veronica O'Mara, Clerk

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## Clare Whitehead

4.iv.1940 – 27.ix.2014

Clare led an ‘examined life’. She brought all aspects of her living into the light of her faith, combining careful thought with action, to create a wholeness of being. She let her life speak. Her gentle nature belied considerable inner strength of character and an inspiring, indomitable spirit that enabled her to serve, support and initiate, when a need was discerned.

At the heart of her life was family and home. She and her husband, John, created a long, strong marriage. On later holidays, they rode a tandem, a powerful emblem of being lovingly together and supporting each other. They shared a clarity of vision, which they pursued with steadfastness of purpose and practical good sense. Around them grew a precious, extended family of two daughters, in-laws, grandchildren, cousins, nieces and godchildren.

The idea of family, for her however, was broader than this, encompassing friends and their children. She took a genuine interest in their welfare. Often a birth was welcomed with a knitted gift for the child and a picture book for the grandparents. Some of her family and friends were scattered across countries and continents – Scotland, Denmark, Kenya and the United States of America. She sustained and fostered these relationships by phone calls, emails, letters and visits. Clare readily connected with people from all the different spheres of her life and is recalled as a warm, sincere and beloved friend. It was rare to hear an unkind word from her, and if asked, would give a truthful opinion, on what she considered right or wrong.

Clare and John created a comfortable and quietly stylish home, which reflected their values of simplicity, sustainability and the handmade – a combination of Quaker testimony and William Morris’ dictum ‘Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful.’ This small farmhouse, sensitively restored at the beginning of their marriage, was in Delph, a Pennine village, which was also Clare’s birthplace. She considered herself ‘hefted

to Delph’, having lived in this same valley all her life, although she regarded Oldham, where her family had lived and worked, as her home town. She generously shared her love of the surrounding landscape and its birds and flowers, together with their home, giving many invitations to meals, walks and visits. Clare and John belonged to a directory of travelling Friends, which enabled Quaker travellers from all over the world, to share their home too. The house was also the final destination of their meticulously organised, legendary Boxing Day walks, which helped foster a sense of community within Manchester Meeting, giving an opportunity to gather and get to know each other better. The meetings for worship and study groups that were hosted there, enabled a deeper sharing and ‘to know one another better in things that are eternal.’

She embraced village life as an active member of civic, film, music and local history societies and as a co-founder of Saddleworth Arts Festival and Rag Rug Group. Her love of the arts led her to encourage others in their artistic endeavours, buying their work and sometimes commissioning.

Clare trained and qualified as a nurse at Great Ormond Street, London. She was founder member and the first, paid worker of Saddleworth Playgroup for children with special needs. This experience was invaluable when she went to work as a nurse, at Foxdenton, a school for children with profound, physical disability. She was a consistent, supportive and reliable presence, during her seventeen years there. She was described as ‘a prime mover’ in setting a high standard of nursing care, playing a major role in raising the skills and status of nursery nurses and childcare staff, and developing and sustaining good links with parents and guardians. “She lit up our school. She was cheerful, positive, adventurous and purposeful”.

It was in the early 1970’s that Clare’s life in the Religious Society of Friends began, when she, with John, Anni and Martha came to worship at Mount Street Meeting House. Over the next four decades, Clare demonstrated a deep understanding, commitment and faithfulness

to the structures of the Society. She served local and area meetings as member, overseer, elder and clerk. She was a good listener, was well prepared, methodical and thoughtful, with a sound knowledge and experience of right ordering. This enabled her to contribute to or run courses locally. Her prayerful approach set the tone, particularly at Woodbrooke, where she was asked to co-tutor courses on clerkship.

In 1995, Clare and John were invited to Pendle Hill, Philadelphia, to be Friends in Residence, to share their experiences as British Friends and of their own growing peace activism. She was convenor of Area Meeting Peace Group and was often part of small mediating groups and meetings for clearness. Her calm, deeply considered approach was valued in difficult situations, as demonstrated by her heartfelt contribution at the area meeting discernment, in 1986, when she united with the concern about the lack of equality between gay and straight couples, in regard to religious marriage.

Clare lived her belief that peace is the way and not the end. She began with herself. She and John made their commitment clear to all callers at their home, with a Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) sign overlooking the road and peace symbols at the door. As a family, in 1981, they visited the Soviet Union, with other Quakers, to meet peace groups in Moscow and Leningrad. In the same year, John and Clare founded the Saddleworth Peace Movement. They were the foundation and the core, supporting a handful of stalwarts for over thirty years. Their banner, designed by John, with its images of hills and moors, which Clare helped to sew, was a silent witness, locally at petition signing in the villages, at Holocaust Memorial events, at peace, anti-racist and interfaith vigils in Oldham and Manchester, and nationally, at peace demonstrations in Aldermaston, Barrow, Glasgow, London and at Greenham, when visiting to take supplies to the women's camps there. They were faithful attenders at the monthly meetings for worship at Menwith Hill.

Clare was central to the work of Area Meeting Peace Group. She was instrumental in the organisation of numerous vigils for peace on the

steps of the meeting house, the annual leafleting against war toys on the streets of Manchester, the sale of white poppies at meeting and the commemoration of Conscientious Objectors Day in Manchester Peace Garden.

The work of Northern Friend's Peace Board was upheld and furthered by Clare in a powerful and prayerful way. During the eighties and nineties, she was an active member and, with John, attended many meetings and peace activities. She was particularly involved with the project on arms conversion. In two thousand, she served as the clerk to the executive for four years, taking a key role in developing the work of the Board around the linked concerns of peace, diversity and racial justice. Several conferences were organised to speak out against racism and develop dialogue and cross cultural understanding. As clerk, she brought attentiveness, cheerfulness and clarity. She helped ensure that the work of the Board was both visionary and practical. She was a much treasured friend to other members.

In 1992, during the war in former Yugoslavia, she was asked to be a co-driver of an aid truck. She thought it 'a God given opportunity'. She visited the refugee camps of Ljubljana and Zagreb. Having seen the desperate need, she became a co-founder of 'Women's Aid for Peace'. This first trip had taught her something of positive peace action, a reaching out of the human spirit to those victims of situations not of their own making, a demonstration of compassion and symbolic action to show opposition to war as a means of solving conflict.

Driving through Vukovar for the first time, the three drivers were overwhelmed by the total destruction of every house along the main road. Total silence descended in the cab, but in it, a feeling of togetherness grew. They were gathered, as in meeting. Over nine years, she made many trips, taking humanitarian aid and, later, equipment for self-sufficient projects, in all sectors of Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian communities. Clare was remembered as warm and deeply caring when listening to a harrowing story from a refugee or responding to a severely disabled child in hospital. She was a

calm, unflappable driver, with a quirky sense of humour, even on a snow-laden, unmade road, She worked between trips to raise awareness and to gather donations of money, food and medicine. She was a steadying constant force, through all the trials and tribulations, to the very last days of the group.

Yet often, this faith into action did not come easily or readily. Calm and quiet strength could belie personal struggle and doubt. When first asked to tutor at Woodbrooke and, again, to go to former Yugoslavia, her first response was 'Why me?' There could be apprehension at the clerk's table, trepidation before leading a study group, fear in a tent at Greenham or in a 'white out' on a Croatian road. However, she had courage and the attendant virtues of steadfastness, constancy and endurance. These qualities would stand her in good stead in her last few years, living through John's illnesses and, later, her own. And live she did. Though she had the unwavering support of family and friends, it was mostly from within herself she gathered strength to accept

John's decline and cope with resourcefulness and sensitivity to what he could accomplish. She arranged for meetings for worship in their home, family visits, short trips and walks and a celebration of their Golden Wedding. She cared for him at home until her own health broke down as her ovarian cancer progressed. For the next three years, she faced all this with fortitude and resilience, learning what she could still do and wisely accepting what she could not. She tried to live as normally and fully as possible. The hospitality continued with meals and get-togethers, as did the attendance at the Film Club and the Rag Rug Group. There were short family holidays and two Woodbrooke courses. On one, she helped make an outdoor bread oven. She also managed to travel to the reunion of Women's Aid for Peace, held in Slovenia.

In the last few weeks of her life, she was passing things on for the future, in hope. She collated some archive material for Women's Aid for Peace and attended a meeting of Friends of Manchester Peace Garden, as a Quaker link. One of her last requests was to ask friends to continue a tradition that she had brought back from Croatia

that of sending friends packets of wheat grain to germinate into green shoots for the New Year. To the end, she was fully present in her life, her life of faith and action, inspiring and teaching by example, doing things prayerfully for others, doing them for love.

"There is something inside of me.  
..... It's part of me.  
But it's different.  
It's very aware.  
It can help and guide  
And I can trust it...  
But it is in everyone...  
Continuous.  
Caring for everything...

Martha Whitehead (aged 13) Quaker Monthly  
1978

## An alphabet for peace

In memory of Clare and John Whitehead

*Austerlands! Not for or longer now before  
brown bread greets us, with homemade soup and  
a chocolate cake of glorious rich and peaty texture.  
Delph descends from Denshaw to Dobcross  
in its engagement with peaceful living  
firm furniture, simple chairs and tables,  
a garden of grass and gracefulness, not far  
from Heights, Hospitality honours hope,  
an integrated, honest, faithful life.  
John and Clare belong solidly together,  
their kitchen a focus for countless people,  
The landscape mediates between upland and lowland,  
Moors radiate in every direction,  
Nature is a palace of multiple amazement,  
Oldham too is an organic component,  
The Pennines hide colours in tinkling patches.  
Quakers have queries to keep on their toes,  
Rug rings register homemade solutions,  
Scout Head spreads the high ground sideways,  
Trumpets and brass band mark each birthday,  
Uppermill may have lost its station line,  
valleys and viaduct, but ghostly trains  
watch like wardens in the vigilant night,  
Experienced drivers take cars always,  
Yugoslavia gets aid from British women and a man,  
The zeitgeist for good has become our light.*

David Blamires  
19 January 2016

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## John Whitehead

03. xii.1933 – 06.i.2016

‘Live adventurously. When choices arise, do you take the way that offers the fullest opportunity for the use of your gifts in the service of God and the community?’

John’s life was a rich illustration of this Quaker Advice and Query, not in the sense of taking dramatic decisions without analysing the consequences, but as someone who, as he put it, ‘preferred a slow organic growth’ of his proposed actions. He used his gifts for planning and organisation to think through the possible effects on others, before carefully organising what he would do. He was a man of conviction, who showed that change can be brought about through leading by example, in a quiet, resolute and inspiring way. His careful planning and attention to detail, often freed the time for others to witness to their convictions.

He spoke carefully and thoughtfully; his deeply-held convictions about peace and right livelihood were expressed gently and without the slightest hint of self-righteousness. John was a man who was ready to challenge Friends, not by words, but by his actions. He was slow to criticise, but always quick to praise. He understood the challenges of the different practical and spiritual journeys Friends find themselves on.

His journey to Friends had started over 40 years ago. A journey often recorded in photographs and in his meticulous, often humorous, always well-illustrated travel journals that he kept for most of his life.

After his National Service and working in the textile industry, he chose to become a self-employed designer and maker of furniture, building on his life-long interest of working with wood. His bespoke work ranged from the domestic to the ecclesiastical. Each piece was created with the inspiration, preparedness, thoughtfulness and care that he brought to most things in his life. His work showed that simplicity and beauty are not mutually exclusive.

Central to his life was the love of his wife Clare. They created a long, strong and loving marriage and relationships that made for a close family of daughters, in-laws and grandchildren. This ability extended to a wealth of friends that he made, as his life unfolded. The family’s hospitality was fulsome and their home was always open to all kind of visitors, particularly those from abroad.

He brought his practical skills to building their home, garden and some of the dry stone walling. A carpet of snowdrops, under the garden trees, created over a number of years, attests to his love of his surroundings and his patience. His mid-day meal was often taken in a special, peaceful place up the hill at the back of the house, overlooking the Denshaw valley. Whenever possible, even when he was becoming progressively immobile, he shared his love and knowledge of the countryside with others.

John and Clare made their commitment to peace clear to all callers at their home, with a Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) sign overlooking the road and peace symbols at the door. Their house was also the final destination of their well organised, legendary Boxing Day walks, which helped strengthen the bonds between Friends, particularly those at Central Manchester Meeting, giving an opportunity to gather and get to know each other better. The meetings for worship and study groups, that were hosted there, enabled a deeper sharing and a chance to ‘get to know one another better in things that are eternal’.

He was fully involved in the life of their home village Delph, including being a member of groups that ensured the village’s actual fabric – roads, library, bridge, and memorial garden – was maintained. He and Clare were also involved in the social life, including the music and film societies. This sense of community, with friends in Delph, with various peace groups and particularly with Quakers, was central to John’s life. His integrity and purposefulness were respected even by those who might disagree with his thoughts and actions.

When John joined Quakers, he brought his whole self into the worship, work and life of Mount Street.

He served local meeting in many ways including overseer, elder, treasurer and clerk. Again, underlining his service with the practical, he made a table which stood in the centre of the room for meeting for worship for many years.

His knowledge and understanding of Quaker processes enabled him to be an effective witness to the Quaker testimonies, particularly those of peace and social justice. With Clare, he was central, for a number of years, to the work of Area Meeting Peace Group and was an active member of the Northern Friends Peace Board (NFPB) during the 1980’s and early 1990’s when he became involved

in their project work on arms conversion. John and Clare appeared together in the NFPB video produced in 1994 'Visions of Peace', in which they reflected on different aspects of their peace work.

John approached this work of organising and attending numerous vigils, demonstrations, petition signings, letter writing campaigns, with heart and mind prepared and with due consideration for practical details such as maps, sets of instructions and often the banners and placards to be carried.

This witness was based on well thought out and considered principles of peace, justice and equality and a strong determination to live by them. When he did speak out, it was with eloquence and with words that had been weighed carefully.

His concern for peace took him from the Soviet Union, during the Cold War period, to almost every military base in Britain – particularly to Aldermaston, Burtonwood, Menwith Hill and Molesworth. His determined witness was demonstrated closer to home by his involvement in the establishment and hosting of Saddleworth Peace Movement and its public witnessing to peace in the area, not least, the annual Hiroshima Day walk and the Holocaust Day Vigil. There was also his very personal witness. Following a meeting for clearness, he refused, as part of the Peace Tax Campaign, to pay that part of his tax spent on war and preparation for war. He was prepared to stand up and suffer, even lose the tools of his trade, for his strong conviction that a peaceful world was possible. He sought to be led to do the right thing, regardless of the chances of success or failure.

He was instrumental, with Clare, in the organisation of numerous vigils for peace on the steps of the Central Manchester Meeting House, the annual leafleting against war toys on the streets of Manchester, the sale of white poppies at meeting and the commemoration of Conscientious Objectors Day in Manchester Peace Garden. In 1995, John and Clare were invited to Pendle Hill, Philadelphia, to be Friends in Residence, to share these experiences as British peace activists.

His practical peacefulness was again shown in his support of Women's Aid for Peace (WAFP), a group of women driving aid trucks to former Yugoslavia, in the aftermath of war. He is remembered as the calm, supportive and comforting presence in the background, who was

the phone contact between the women and their families while they were abroad. He was said to be completely reliable when asked to sort out whatever problems were thrown at him. He wrote 'Remember, God has no other hands than ours'.

The courage, steadfastness and determination that John had shown in his life, so far, continued to stand him in good stead, as his health slowly deteriorated over a number of years. He was able to share in the celebration of his and Clare's Golden Wedding anniversary, family holidays and regular meetings for worship at their home.

John spoke of trying to 'get the best out of the material that he worked with'. His furniture shows that. But his life showed that he had been working on something much larger. This inspired and inspiring, gentle man brought the best out of many of us.

He was a loving Friend, who, in turn, was well loved.

Signed in and on behalf of Manchester & Warrington Area Meeting, held at South Manchester on 11 February 2017

Margaret Calvert, Clerk



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## Hazel Mary Wilson

7.vi.1926 – 27.xi.2016)

Hazel Wilson died peacefully on 27th November 2016 in Stowmarket.

Hazel was born on 7th June 1926 in Sheffield. As a child she suffered from rheumatic fever and was bedridden for nearly a year. She was devastated at not being able to run around and play with her friends. However this gave her a real incentive on recovery to become a talented netball player, javelin thrower and shot-putter and she represented her school and university in athletics competitions.

She had a long medical career. After training at Sheffield University she worked all over the country as a paediatrician in specialist hospitals. Anyone who knew her became aware of her love for Africa. She had three spells of work there, in Gambia and Nigeria, often working in the bush, travelling by boat and land rover to attend to patients in remote areas.

There was a strong influence of the United Reform Church in her family, but she embraced pacifism and Quakerism in the 1940s and 50s, worshipping wherever she was living as she moved around England when she was not in Africa. With her sister Briar she joined in Ban the Bomb marches in the early 1960s. By the end of that decade she had begun to worship with Bury St Edmunds Quakers and helped to re-invigorate the then small group of Friends which included Margaret Kemp, the redoubtable Friend who, almost single handed, had kept the meeting going through the 1950s. She moved permanently to Haughley Green in the 1970s to care for her then widowed mother and became a schools' doctor for West Suffolk and a familiar figure for primary children and their teachers. She was greatly respected for her professional approach when, as a paediatrician, she had to deal with what could sometimes be difficult family situations.

In her retirement she worshipped regularly at Bury St Edmunds Meeting House. She would talk often of her African experiences and remained an energetic supporter of Christian

Aid, delivering envelopes for their annual appeal for as long as she was able. She once memorably gave a demonstration of an African solar oven constructed from a bowl lined with aluminium foil to heat the water for the tea. She is remembered sitting on one of the 17th Century benches wearing green and although she rarely ministered in meeting Hazel was always a strong deep presence upholding our silent worship

Signed in and on behalf of Ipswich & Diss Area Meeting, held at Ipswich on 18 March 2017

Jen Larnar, Clerk

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# Marion Winchester

25.i.1921 – 18.v.2016

Marion Hall was born in Kendal in 1921. Her father was descended from a long line of Quakers though, as her mother was an Anglican, she was baptised in Burneside Church. However, her father was the stronger influence as far as religion was concerned and Marion always described herself as being a Friend from birth.

Marion was the oldest of four children and was very much the big sister easily taking on responsibilities for the younger ones, Priscilla, Chris and John. She spent the first seven years of her life with her parents in Malaya. At the age of eight she returned to the UK and she and her sister attended St. Anne's School in Windermere for two years while her parents and baby brothers returned to Malaya.

She spent her secondary education at Keswick School where she became Head Girl. On leaving school, war had broken out, so she joined up into the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF). She soon became an officer in charge at a number of radar stations, finally being stationed at Hastings. This was an exciting experience for her as she found herself at the forefront of new initiatives.

After the war she took a social work course at Woodbrooke and from there went to the London School of Economics to train as a Psychiatric Social Worker specialising in child guidance. Her first job was at Bristol and it was there that a friend of her sister's introduced her to a forester working in the New Forest called Pat Winchester and they married in 1950.

The marriage was very long and happy and they had three children Angus, Helen and Josephine. Owing to the nature of Pat's work they were obliged to move frequently, living in the New Forest, Herefordshire, Cockermonth, Somerset, Cheshire, and Derbyshire. It was whilst they were staying in Somerset that Marion returned to work. Their longest stay was in Cockermonth where the family enjoyed the proximity to the Lake District. By coincidence it was also the ancestral area of the Hall family. Upon

retirement they made a final move to Burneside from where Marion had started her life.

Wherever they lived Marion attended Quaker meetings and the children had a Quaker upbringing. Pat was not in membership but was contented about this and Friends in Kendal knew him well. It was not until she was living in Burneside that Marion was able to take an active part in meeting life. She was at different times clerk, elder, overseer, preparative meeting treasurer and member of the nominations committee. At that time Kendal meeting house was in a bad state of repair and was put up for sale. However, by good fortune, Marion was introduced to Anne Wynn-Wilson whilst staying with her sister in Bradford on Avon. Anne was looking for a home for the Quaker Tapestry and Kendal provided the ideal solution both for the Tapestry and for the meeting. The Quaker Tapestry took up its permanent home in Kendal in 1994, a project in which Marion had played such an important part.

In Burneside Marion and Pat converted a cottage and former stables into a home for themselves and her elderly mother. They had a large and beautiful garden and Marion took a correspondence course in water colour painting. She was introduced to circle dancing by her brother and then brought it to Kendal Meeting where local Friends had great fun. But most of all she cared for her large family and friends who were always welcome to her house. Many small study groups and meetings were held there as well, where Friends could absorb the quiet, peaceful atmosphere.

Marion will always be remembered for her calm and caring personality. She was also tolerant and possessed a well of common sense. Pat died in 2011 and her last years of life were limited by mobility problems and memory loss but she continued to maintain her gentle and accepting manner as she was always glad to receive visits from family and friends. Marion died in May 2016 in her own home in Burneside.

Signed in and on behalf of Kendal & Sedbergh Area Meeting, held at Brigflatts on 11 March 2017

Jo Jaffray, Clerk

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# Edna Woodhouse

19.ix.1925 – 21.viii.2016

Edna was born in Bradford. She was brought up as an only child, as her sister died in infancy of meningitis. For this reason her mother was very protective towards Edna and discouraged her participation in physical games at school. An old school friend described Edna as an earnest, clever little girl, eager to please, with a precise speaking voice.

She may have inherited her musical gifts from her father who played the clarinet for the silent films. Playing the piano to accompany singers, and attending orchestral concerts were life-long joys to Edna.

After a spell working in an office, she qualified as a teacher, specialising in teaching “deaf and blind children” as they were known at that time. She travelled from Bradford, first to Wakefield, then Sheffield and later to Harrogate to work in special schools. She was eventually persuaded by her colleagues to learn to drive. This shortened her journey times and gave her elderly mother a great deal of pleasure in their visits to the Dales.

Her desire to please and help others seemed to be innate in Edna and it seemed to come naturally to her to put others before herself. While working in Wakefield she travelled to Wakefield Gaol in the evenings teaching some of the inmates how to translate children’s stories into Braille, thus benefitting both parties.

She began to attend Bradford Quaker Meeting in the early 1950s and by 1955 she was a Member of the Society. Bradford Meeting was to become her spiritual home and she threw herself enthusiastically into serving the meeting as clerk, elder, overseer and librarian. She also represented monthly meeting at Meeting for Sufferings. She took all these responsibilities very seriously.

Her love of children meant that she joined the Children’s Class Helpers and became the Convenor for many years. She befriended the young families in meeting, visiting them in their homes and sometimes baby-sitting so that the parents could go out.

Many of Edna’s friendships developed initially from helping people. She visited bereaved Friends beyond Bradford Meeting, and as a result many became lifelong friends, sharing holidays, outings, and especially Afternoon Teas, for which she was famous! One Friend described her as being “selfless in her devotion to duty”. She was a faithful and loving friend.

For several years Edna gave financial support to an African student, quietly paying both his course fees and living expenses. Similarly she became a surrogate grandmother to a Chinese student, helping her with her English and remaining in touch long after her return to China.

Edna was a much valued member of Bradford Meeting. Being denied the family life she would have loved, she dedicated her life to serving others. Always compassionate towards those less fortunate than herself, she founded the Friends Fellowship of Healing group at Bradford Meeting in the 1980s and this met monthly before Sunday meeting until Edna was too frail to attend, though she continued to pray for those in need to the end of her life.

Her prayer life, her Quaker faith and her devotion to Bradford Meeting were central to her life. Whatever Edna did she did with a smile and generosity of spirit.

She was a gentle, benign presence in meeting, always encouraging to others, never critical, and always grateful for any small thing done to help her. All her acts of kindness towards others were done quietly, behind the scenes, often not known of at the time. She was accepting of a broad interpretation of Christianity within the Quaker tradition, and her life spoke in the love she showed everyone. She gave of herself and enriched many lives and she in turn received the love and respect of many.

Signed in and on behalf of Brighthouse West Yorkshire Area Meeting, held at Scholes on 10 September 2017

Catherine Putz, Clerk

Quakers share a way of life, not a set of beliefs. Quaker unity is based on shared understanding and a shared practice of silent worship – a communal stillness.

Quakers seek to experience God directly – internally, in relationships with others, and with the world. Local meetings for worship are open to all who wish to attend.

Quakers try to live with honesty and integrity. This means speaking truth to all, including people in positions of power. The Quaker commitment to peace arises from the conviction that love is at the heart of existence and that all human beings are unique and equal.

This leads Quakers to put faith into action by working locally and globally to change the systems that cause injustice and violent conflict.

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

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