

**YEARLY MEETING  
OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS) IN BRITAIN**

**AT THE YEARLY MEETING  
HELD IN EXETER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF EXETER  
28 JULY – 4 AUGUST 2001**

*Saturday 28 July 2001*

**Minute 1: Clerks**

The Yearly Meeting Committee on Clerks nominates the following Friends to serve as clerk and assistant clerks for Yearly Meeting 2001:

Clerk:	Helen Rowlands
Assistant Clerks:	Michael D Phipps Martin Ward

These names being acceptable, we appoint the Friends named accordingly.

**Minute 2: Permission to non-members to attend**

Permission has been given for the attendance of 117 adult non-members, and we welcome them to this Yearly Meeting.

**Minute 3: Report of Yearly Meeting Nominations Committee (Yearly Meeting 2000 – Yearly Meeting 2001)**

Further to minute 6 of Yearly Meeting 2000, the Nominations Committee appointed at Yearly Meeting 2000 brings forward the following nominations:

Arrangements Committee

One or two Friends to serve with the three Yearly Meeting clerks and the following Agenda Committee members: G Emily Dale (Hardshaw East MM), Mike Perks (South East Scotland MM) and Chris Skidmore (Reading MM) as an Arrangements Committee during this Yearly Meeting.

Nomination: Sylvia Hilken (East Devon MM)

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee

Three Friends to serve until Yearly Meeting 2004:

Renomination:

Jennifer Fishpool (Luton & Leighton MM)

Two names to come.

Yearly Meeting Special Needs Group

One Friend to serve from Yearly Meeting 2001 until the end of Yearly Meeting 2004:

Name to come.

Yearly Meeting Elders

To serve as Elders during this Yearly Meeting:

Nominations:

Michael S. Booth (Westminster MM)  
Howard Gregg (Kingston & Wandsworth MM)  
Rosemary Moore (Worcester & Shropshire MM)  
Rachel Muers (Cambridge & Peterborough MM)  
Chas Raws (Wirral & Chester MM) – to act as convener  
David Saunders (Worcester & Shropshire MM)  
Susan Sawtell (Northampton & Wellingborough MM)  
Fran Woolgrove (South East Scotland MM)

Epistle Drafting Committee

To serve as members of Epistle Drafting Committee during this Yearly Meeting:

Gerard Benson (Brighouse MM)  
David Irwin (Ratcliff & Barking MM)  
Diana Lampen (Warwickshire MM)  
Mary Lou Leavitt (Hampstead MM) - to act as convener  
Anna Sharman (Purley & Sutton MM)  
Peter Speirs (North Wales MM)  
Martina Weitsch (Hampstead MM)

These names being acceptable, we appoint the Friends accordingly.

**Minute 4: Yearly Meeting Summer Gathering 2003**

On the recommendation of Yearly Meeting Committee on Clerks, we appoint C. Ethel Livermore (Purley & Sutton MM) and David Saunders (Worcester & Shropshire MM) to serve as Clerks of the Yearly Meeting Summer Gathering 2003, and of its Planning Committee.

On the recommendations indicated below, we appoint the following Friends to serve on the Yearly Meeting Summer Gathering Planning Committee from Yearly Meeting 2001 until the end of 2003:

From Leicester MM:	From Notts & Derbys MM:
Ann Gimpel	Gwen Schaffer
Anthony Gimpel	Bernice Taylor
Julia Richardson	

From Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee:

Robert Card (Warwickshire MM)  
David Lewis (Southampton & Portsmouth MM)  
Alastair Reid (South East Scotland MM)

From Yearly Meeting Nominations Committee:

Simon Gray (Warwickshire MM)  
Judith Penaluna (Settle MM)

Other names to come.

In the event of a vacancy occurring during the life of this committee, we ask that the relevant nominating body find a Friend to serve in the interim; the appointment to be confirmed at the ensuing Yearly Meeting.

**Minute 5: Nominations Committee (Yearly Meeting 2001 – Yearly Meeting 2002)**

By minute 34 of Yearly Meeting 2000 John Sheldon (Warwickshire MM) was appointed to serve as clerk of Nominations Committee 2001-2002.

The following additional Friends are appointed to serve on the Yearly Meeting Nominations Committee during this yearly meeting and until Yearly Meeting 2002:

David Blamires	(Hardshaw East MM)
Moira Fitt	(Cornwall MM)
Margaret Gravely	(York MM)
Stephen Kemp	(Hereford & Mid Wales MM)
David Robson	(Brighouse MM)
Susan Sawtell	(Northampton & Wellingborough MM)

The appointed Nominations Committee is asked to nominate to a later session:

a clerk of Nominations Committee to serve from Yearly Meeting 2002 - Yearly Meeting 2003;

two more Friends to serve on Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee from Yearly Meeting 2001 until Yearly Meeting 2004;

one Friend to serve on Yearly Meeting Special Needs Group from Yearly Meeting 2001 until the end of Yearly Meeting 2004

and to nominate to Yearly Meeting 2002:

Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee: one or two Friends, to serve with the three Yearly Meeting clerks and the three other members from YM Agenda Committee;

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee: three Friends to serve until Yearly Meeting 2005;

Yearly Meeting Special Needs Group: one Friend to serve from Yearly Meeting 2002 to and including Yearly Meeting 2005;

Elders for Yearly Meeting 2002: six to ten Friends, including one to serve as convener;

Epistle Drafting Committee 2002: 5 to 7 Friends to serve at YM 2002, including one to act as convener.

**Minute 6: Committee to examine minutes**

We appoint the following Friends to arrange by rota for two of their number to examine the minutes of this Yearly Meeting at the close of each session, and to correct any slight inaccuracies:

Catherine Brewer	(Warwickshire MM)
Peter Eccles	(Cheshire MM)
Ken Hutchinson	(Hereford & Mid-Wales MM)
John Lampen	(Warwickshire MM)
Roy Payne	(Hereford & Mid-Wales MM)
Krishna Ramamurthy	(Devonshire House & Tottenham MM)
Susan Rooke-Matthews	(Bristol & Frenchay MM)
Margaret Slee	(Thaxted MM)

If any substantive alterations appear to be required, they are to be proposed at the next session prior to further business.

**Minute 7: Under-19 Programme**

Jane Dawson has informed us of the programmes being run for Yearly Meeting participants aged under 19. This year seven different groups are being run for 194 younger Friends. We send greetings to all those participating; we look forward to meeting and worshipping with them at various times during the week, and receiving their minutes on Friday.

**Minute 8: Friends in the South West of England**

We have been welcomed to Exeter and told something of the history and activities of Friends in the South West of England.

We have heard a little of the life of the three monthly meetings in Devon and Cornwall General Meeting. Although meetings are widely spread, and many members retired, there is much vibrant activity being undertaken by Friends, including a strong focus on outreach.

We have been reminded that the earliest Friends in this area (as elsewhere) were easily recognized by the actions which followed rapidly upon their conviction – they actively worshipped, witnessed and suffered together. Do we, today, want Truth to break forth again in the life of the communities in which we live?

**Minute 9: Matters Arising**

We note that most of the matters from Yearly Meeting 2000 that required follow-up action are referred to in section 5 of the Report of Meeting for Sufferings for 2000 (*Quaker work in 2000* page 6 and also under agenda item 17 in *Documents in advance* pages 27-28). Other matters arising follow:

Further to minute 18 (proposed new central committees), we note that Meeting for Sufferings by minute 5 of 2-3 September 2000 adopted the names of ‘Quaker Life’ and ‘Quaker Peace & Social Witness’ for the new central committees. Meeting for Sufferings on 7 July 2001 approved terms of reference for a Representative Councils Review Group, and plans to report back on the results of the review to Yearly Meeting 2004.

Further to minute 20 (God in all Creation) and 22 (What does it mean to be a Quaker in Britain Yearly Meeting?), Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee has arranged for matters arising from these considerations to be brought back to Yearly Meeting this year under the titles “Witnessing to God in all creation” and “Membership: process and commitment”.

Further to minute 29 (Amendments to *Quaker faith & practice*), clerks of monthly and preparative meetings have been sent copies of church government amendments made by Yearly Meeting since 1999.

**Minute 10: Annual Report of Meeting for Sufferings 2000, and Report & Accounts of the Yearly Meeting Funds**

The Annual Report of Meeting for Sufferings and its committees for the year ended 31 December 2000, as printed in *Quaker work in 2000*, and the *Quaker financial report and accounts* of the Yearly Meeting Funds, have been received and laid before us.

**Minute 11: Epistle from Ireland Yearly Meeting**

The Epistle from the Yearly Meeting of Friends in Ireland, as sent by Ireland Yearly Meeting's Committee held in Dublin on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2001, has been read as follows:

TO FRIENDS EVERYWHERE

We send loving greetings from Ireland Yearly Meeting's Committee met in Dublin on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2001.

*"In the rush and noise of life, as you have intervals, step home within yourselves, and be still. Wait upon God to feel his presence. This will carry you evenly through your day's business."*  
(Quotation from William Penn on the front of Ireland Yearly Meeting Programme 2001)

We wonder if this year was a chosen year for us to be "still at home" rather than in a "gathered" series of sessions for Yearly Meeting. Concern about the epidemic of Foot and Mouth disease amongst farm animals in Britain and the widespread fear of possible spread of the disease in Ireland, North and South, brought about the decision of Yearly Meeting's Committee to cancel Yearly Meeting this year. We were advised that in the interests of the wider community, travel should be reduced as much as possible in order to combat the spread of infection. We are now delighted that restrictions have been lifted and people are once again being encouraged to visit and enjoy our beautiful country.

It was a surprise how easily, at least for one year, the business of Yearly Meeting could be attended to in other ways. More difficult to accept was the loss of shared worship and fellowship with Friends from throughout the Yearly Meeting and beyond. Our lives are the poorer as a consequence. We look forward to meeting together for Yearly Meeting 2002 and meanwhile seek other opportunities for sharing together. Messages of support and comfort have been much appreciated.

During the year the Irish Quaker Faith in Action drafted a document entitled "Welcoming the Stranger - Our Response to the Immigration Issue". IQFA's concern is "grounded in the central tenet of our faith, that there is that of God in everyone. Everyone, no matter what their legal status or their ethnic origin, deserves to be treated with the dignity and respect due to them, as a son or daughter of God." The concern was also expressed that "immigrants should be granted the right to work while their applications for refugee status are being considered. When a person is deprived of the right to work, they are being deprived of their dignity as a useful member of society." This document was sent to members of the Oireachtas (members of the elected government and opposition in Dublin) and to the media in the Republic of Ireland.

Much thought and prayer has continued this year in relation to caring for the elderly. We held a Special Yearly Meeting in November to further consideration of the proposed development of a whole new complex to replace Bloomfield and Swanbrook House. Bloomfield Hospital, established by Irish Friends over 190 years ago, has been providing psychiatric care, a nursing home and

sheltered accommodation for the elderly. Swanbrook House has been our Yearly Meeting Headquarters for the last number of years. Plans for this new development are in hand and we trust that, as the project unfolds, we shall continue to seek and utilise the wisdom that God offers to us all.

Members of Ireland Yearly Meeting attended the Friends World Committee for Consultation Triennial held in New Hampshire, U.S.A. Quoting from one member's response to this triennial: "It was most profitable and enjoyable, yet no amount of preparation could have been adequate for the challenges I was faced with, to my notions and ideas of spirituality, of being a Quaker and of life in general." We look forward very much to welcoming Friends from around the world to the FWCC Triennial, due to be held in Ireland in 2007.

Signed on behalf of Ireland Yearly Meeting,

Rachael M. Bewley-Bateman,  
Clerk of Ireland Yearly Meeting

C. Rosemary H. Castagner,  
Clerk of Ireland Yearly Meeting's Committee

*Sunday 29 July 2001*

**Minute 12: Epistle**

Part of the epistle received from New England Yearly Meeting (pages 11-12 of *Epistles & testimonies*) has been read.

**Minute 13: Busy-ness**

We have heard an introduction to the subject of Busy-ness, which has raised questions which will we hope remain with us throughout this week.

Many Friends have been expressing concern at the over-fullness of our lives. Conflicting calls upon our time can result in stress and not doing anything well. We are called to "life in all its fullness", but are our lives too full? For some of us, however, there are hard lessons when our capacities become diminished and we have to watch others being busy.

The way forward may not lie in our ability to juggle commitments or balance out our time, but in our ability to live a life that is centred. When we "take heed of getting into a form without the power" we will be protected from "coldness and weariness and faintings."

As we seek the right balance between involving ourselves and trusting others to do their tasks, we may know joy through our undertakings rather than strain.

We pray that we may celebrate the gift of time spent in community this week, savouring the experience of being centred in the Spirit, and taking that experience back to our home meetings.

**Minute 14: Me and my neighbour: whose Britain?**

We have had laid before us the painful experiences suffered by ethnic minority people in facing continued racism in many areas of life in Britain. To speak of these experiences can, we know, be costly.

We have been reminded of how successive reports have highlighted the problems, and yet in many respects the situation has become worse. Institutional racism has become more covert and difficult to deal with.

Much has been done by Friends and others, at an individual level and collectively, to help counter racism, to welcome diversity, and to achieve dialogue between faiths and cultures. But we have

much more to do. The challenge for us as Friends is to understand what we are called to do towards the building of a just and equal society.

Multiculturalism should be more than an awareness and tolerance from a distance; we need to get to know people as individuals. Many of us recognise the limitations of our own experience. If we are to act both as prophets and reconcilers, our relationships need also to include the perpetrators of injustice. It is important that we make our voice heard in the institutions of power.

We hope to explore these issues further in session in smaller groups this afternoon.

*Monday 30 July 2001*

**Minute 15: Epistle**

Part of the epistle from Norway Yearly Meeting (pages 27-28 in *Epistles & testimonies*) was read in our Sunday afternoon session, held in groups.

**Minute 16: Me and my neighbour: whose Britain? - II**

Further to minute 14, on Sunday afternoon, 29 July, we met in three parallel topic groups to allow us to focus on different aspects of the question "Whose Britain?". The groups held were on Racial Justice, Interfaith Issues and Asylum Issues.

**Minute 17: Inter-faith ecumenical worship**

We were pleased to have opportunity as members of this Yearly Meeting to meet in worship on Sunday evening in the Great Hall with members of Exeter churches and other bodies of faith.

**Minute 18: Testimony**

Part of the Testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of Clifford du Feu (pages 48-49 of *Epistles and testimonies*) has been read.

**Minute 19: Membership: process and commitment**

Further to minute 22 of Yearly Meeting 26-29 May 2000, we carry forward our consideration of membership this year through an extended process during the week. In our introduction today we have been presented with a wide range of questions, which extend those which were printed on pages 24-25 of *Documents in advance*.

Why do we have membership?

What does commitment mean to us?

Why might people be tending not to make commitments to the Society?

What of the position of younger and geographically mobile Friends?

Why do we find it so difficult to speak of our inner transforming experiences?

Are our membership processes realistic in the present day?

We have been reminded that we are not here to work out what is right for us as individuals but for the yearly meeting. Can we let go of any resistances and fear of change and be open to God's spirit working among us?

We anticipate returning to these issues later in our yearly meeting.

**Minute 20: *QuakerCamp2001***

We send our loving greetings to Friends of the European and Middle East Section of Friends World Committee for Consultation as they gather for the QuakerCamp2001 being held in Mauloff, Germany, from 3-10 August.

**Minute 21: *Amendments to Quaker faith & practice***

We receive minute 10 of Meeting for Sufferings held 2 December 2000, forwarding proposed amendments to *Quaker faith & practice* chapters 6, 7 and 8, as printed, with accompanying report, on pages 40-71 of *Documents in advance*. Proposed consequential amendments to other chapters are printed on pages 72-73.

We also receive a proposed amendment to section 9.07 of *Quaker faith & practice* in consequence to a change in the constitution of the Quaker Council for European Affairs (printed on page 74 of *Documents in advance*).

We approve these amendments, subject to further consideration of references in section 7.11 to the trusteeship role in the employment of staff and to legal disqualification, which we hope to return to at a later session.

We ask Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee to consider how best to clarify for Friends which parts of *Quaker faith & practice* are to be treated as statements of church government for constitutional purposes.

We note that it is proposed to produce a new edition of *Quaker faith & practice* during 2002, together with a supplement to previous editions which will include all changes made since 1994.

*Tuesday 31 July 2001*

**Minute 22: *Epistle***

Part of the epistle received from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (pages 17-18 of *Epistles & testimonies*) has been read.

**Minute 23: *Our Central Work and the Report of Meeting for Sufferings***

In a deeply centred session, we have reflected on the directions taken by Meeting for Sufferings as it has carried forward our work over the last year, and considered future issues.

Friends have expressed gratitude for the work and those carrying it forward in whatever capacity. We have been asked whether the work of paid staff might be supplemented by calling more on the experience and expertise of Friends from across the yearly meeting.

Are we sufficiently engaged with those in public office and national decision makers?

Friends seek reassurance that our new committee arrangements will make it easier for concerns to be heard, tested and supported. Do we use our structures so that they enable, rather than constrain, our response to the leadings of the Spirit and allow our work to be most fruitful?

We ask Meeting for Sufferings to explore how to bring within the current review of forms of charitable status in England and Wales a consideration of its wider implications for the Religious Society of Friends. We hope to consider our charitable status at our next yearly meeting.

**Minute 24: Witnessing to God in all Creation - I**

In preparation for Tuesday afternoon's session, we met in groups on Monday afternoon to begin our consideration of witnessing to God in all creation.

**Minute 25: Epistle**

Part of the Epistle received from Australia Yearly Meeting (pages 23-24 of *Epistles & testimonies*) has been read in most of the groups on Monday afternoon.

**Minute 26: Nominations**

We receive minute 2 of Yearly Meeting Nominations Committee held 30 July 2001. We will return to this matter in a later session.

**Minute 27: Junior Yearly Meeting Epistle**

The epistle of Junior Yearly Meeting, held at the Royal Russell School, Croydon, 18-22 April 2001, has been read as follows:

*To all Friends everywhere,*

Junior Yearly Meeting brought together 125 young Friends to explore the theme 'Looking Inwards, Acting Outwards.'

Worshipping collectively, the foundation of our Quaker community, has nurtured in us a receptivity to new experiences and new dimensions of worship. We have explored how to use the silence, an integral part of our Quaker heritage.

There is a corporate discipline within the practices of Friends. Our central testimonies of equality, simplicity and peace rooted and grounded in integrity and truth were approached in a new light and given a relevance to the life journeys of young Friends.

The application of our spiritual search is about reconciling conflicts both within ourselves and in the wider world. The diversity and interconnectedness, not only of people but also of beliefs, led to challenge, affirmation and the raising of new perspectives.

Through our personal search for, and the fostering of, spiritual wholeness we are led into outward action and equally through acting outwards we begin to find answers to our spiritual seeking.

At JYM we were all valued as precious and unique individuals with a part to play in the world, ranging from direct political action to the ministry of the smile. The vibrant energy of the gathering has made us mindful of our place within the wider Society, giving us a strong sense of belonging. We leave JYM feeling revitalised by the positive atmosphere we shared.

The spiritual awareness unifying the event was also reflected in the joy that we found together in singing, dancing, laughing and simply being.

Struggling with the implications of living faithfully today and not finding immediate answers can be frustrating, but we develop an awareness that spirituality is not a goal but a seeking. We need to be content with living the questions and enjoy our search. This was made easier in the loving and supportive community forged at JYM.

We emerge with a new confidence to find words to express our spiritual needs and the courage to live these convictions openly and honestly.

*Signed in and on behalf of Junior Yearly Meeting*  
Bridget Rennie and Edward Mackay, clerks

**Minute 28: Witnessing to God in all Creation - II**

Further to minute 20 of Yearly Meeting 26-29 May 2000, and to minute 24 of this meeting, we have received minute 5 (The earth: our creative responsibility) of Meeting for Sufferings held 7 July 2001 (printed in the *Supplement to Documents in advance*) and have continued our consideration of “Witnessing to God in all creation”.

Our plenary session opened in song: ‘Were you there when they crucified my Lord?’ We see Christ crucified in the despoliation of the planet. Sometimes we fall into despair. We fear for the future and the legacy we will leave. Can we then express even the smallest flicker of resistance?

At other times we experience sheer joy in creation. We also know the amazing power of Friends gathered. We have been urged to carry it out into the world to show our reverence for creation.

Action is urgent and vital, even if our actions are sometimes only small ones. We have been reminded that the distinction between outward action and inner work is a false one. Our call is to do both together, with all our being: acting through our hands, our minds and our hearts.

Our Quaker contribution is to go on working at our relationship to the earth and creation in the context of our worshipping communities – our witness is not only as individuals but as meetings. Can we engage with others in nurturing and articulating the spiritual dimension of the environmental movement? We must allow the winds of the Spirit to blow us into uncomfortable places, and engage with political and economic powers.

We have been offered a statement resulting from the first part of our exercise at this yearly meeting. We ask our clerks, consulting as they see fit, to work further on this draft and bring it back to a later session.

We urge Friends to continue the inward and outward work encouraged by yearly meetings 2000 and 2001. We look forward to hearing at a future yearly meeting of the action being taken by local meetings.

*Thursday 2 August 2001*

**Minute 29: Testimony**

Part of the Testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of Joseph Pickvance (pages 63 - 65 of *Epistles & testimonies*) has been read.

**Minute 30: Membership: process and commitment**

Further to minute 19, we have had laid before us some of the fruits of the consideration Friends have been giving to the matter of “Membership: Process and Commitment” since last yearly meeting and during this yearly meeting.

We affirm that formal membership is still appropriate to our yearly meeting, whilst recognising that it is not the only form of commitment possible. True commitment, in whatever form, may be costly.

We unite with the following proposals for change:

- a) that we explore the processes for acquiring and transferring membership, which should be made as simple and undaunting as possible.
- b) that it might be made possible for membership, once acquired, to be held in a way that is not specific to a geographic meeting, provided satisfactory arrangements can be made for the

maintenance of an appropriate list and the oversight of those on it.

- c) that membership should, so far as practicable, be treated in the same way for all age groups, in particular enabling children and young people to enter into membership when the time is right for them.

We ask the Recording Clerk and Meeting for Sufferings to establish a mechanism for producing detailed proposals in these areas. This should be done through a process of consultation involving Quaker Life Central Committee and other appropriate bodies as well as local meetings. We look forward to receiving at a future yearly meeting their proposals, together with any amendments to *Quaker faith & practice* which may be required.

Meanwhile, we ask all Monthly Meetings to consider carefully at an early date whether their existing membership procedures are in line with *Quaker faith & practice*. We see it as essential that the membership application takes place within a context of care, nurture, education and support of attenders and members. We encourage Monthly Meetings, where they see fit, to experiment with the application process within the spirit of Quaker faith & practice, allowing rather more freedom than the current wording about exceptional circumstances (section 11.21 in particular) allows. We encourage meetings considering experimentation to approach the Recording Clerk for advice or if they have questions about their proposed plan. Experimentation should be planned to cover a specific period of time and then carefully reviewed.

We ask meetings to report to the Recording Clerk on their experience as soon as they feel able so that good practice may be widely shared among Friends.

**Minute 31: Testimony**

Part of the Testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of Olive Burton (pages 38-39 of *Epistles & testimonies*) has been read.

**Minute 32: Draft Epistle**

The Epistle Drafting Committee appointed by minute 3 has circulated the first draft of the General Epistle. We ask that in the light of the comments received on this draft, the committee submit a proposed General Epistle to a later session.

**Minute 33: Witnessing to God in all creation**

Further to minute 28, we have received a revised draft of a text resulting from the exercise in groups on Monday afternoon. A copy is attached to these minutes. We recognise that no expression in words alone is a substitute for committed action in this arena. Nevertheless, we hope that this call to action will be useful to meetings throughout Britain Yearly Meeting as a basis for continuing development of Friends' responses to and work upon this matter. We hope it will also support the work of Quaker Peace & Social Witness', "Earth; our creative responsibility" group.

Text attached to minute 33, Britain Yearly Meeting held 28 July - 4 August 2001:

Led by the Spirit we encounter God in the fragile web of life; in our human relationships and in the beauty and joy of the earth, our home planet. We rejoice and celebrate our oneness with God in creation. Such an encounter leads to a deep respect and humility as we acknowledge we are but one part of this complex web.

We humans do not own the planet but have a responsibility towards present and future generations and towards the earth and all its riches. It is a gift to be treasured and passed on with care. We are shamed by the damage we do to that gift.

We are faced with the choice of abundant life or the systematic destruction of our environment, making it uninhabitable. Creation ‘groans and travails’ under the burden of human exploitation and the idolatry of consumerism, which is sacrificing our future on the altar of greed. We are called to urgent action.

Despair and fear are natural human responses in the face of overwhelming destruction, nevertheless we can be set free in the Spirit to live our lives in radically different ways that challenge consumer culture.

For many this is hard, and can only involve small steps, but even small steps lead to other steps, and to empowerment, overcoming despair.

Friends are not alone on this journey and we wish to join our efforts with the many others already deeply engaged making the links between religious belief, lifestyle, social justice and peace.

There is much vital learning and listening to be done, in order that our actions be well informed.

We are called to engage with political and economic powers challenging those which perpetrate structural violence or corporate greed. We need to use all the channels and resources available to witness truth to power. This may lead us to difficult and testing places, and we must pray for courage and discernment.

Let us commit ourselves to the demanding, costly implications of radically changed lives. Let us do so out of joy, celebration, reverence and a deep love of the God of life. Let us do so with hope.

*Friday 3 August 2001*

**Minute 34: Testimony**

Part of the Testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of Walter Griffin (pages 53-54 of *Epistles & testimonies*) has been read.

**Minute 35: Welcome to overseas visitors**

We have welcomed visitors from other yearly meetings as follows:

Australia YM	Laurence Smitheringale
Australia YM	Karl Williams
Belgium & Luxembourg MM	Mary Benefiel
Belgium & Luxembourg MM	Anita Wuyts
Canadian YM	Alouette Lark
Finland YM	Antti Alhonsaari - Representative
France YM	Alastair (Ali) Reid - Representative
German YM	Elisabeth de Coulon
German YM	Maurice de Coulon – Representative
German YM	Birgit Felleisen
India (Delhi Worship Group)	Hari Khurana
Ireland YM	Bronwen Jess
Ireland YM	Rosalind Haire (Under 19)
Ireland YM	Felicity McCartney - Representative
Netherlands YM	Piet Kruithof
Netherlands YM	Kees Nieuwerth - Representative
New England YM	Roger Marshall

New York YM	Janet Carter
New York YM	Kristen Richardson
Norway YM	Esther Kleve - Representative
Ohio	Issac Fosl-Van Wyke (Under 19)
Philadelphia YM	Nate Blood-Patterson (Under 19)
Philadelphia YM	Margaret Fraser
Philadelphia YM	Doug Gwyn
Southern Africa YM	Peter Thornton
Switzerland YM	Nancy Krieger- Representative
Switzerland YM/ German YM	Christiane Muschter
Switzerland YM	Jackie Leach Scully
Switzerland YM	Catherine Williams

**Minute 36: Yearly Meeting Nominations Committee (Yearly Meeting 2001-Yearly Meeting 2002)**

Further to minutes 5 and 26, the following additional Friends are appointed to serve on the Yearly Meeting Nominations Committee until Yearly Meeting 2002:

Jane Cowling (West Somerset MM)  
Rachel Phillips (Young Friends General Meeting)

**Minute 37: Conscientious objection to payment of tax for military purposes**

We have received minute 7 of Meeting for Sufferings held 3 February 2001.

We have heard of the way in which Meeting for Sufferings is furthering our corporate concern for the right to conscientious objection to payment of tax for military purposes. Friends are exploring with government the full meaning of the right to freedom of religious practice and belief contained in the Human Rights Act.

We have stressed that our concern is for the diversion of taxes to positive peaceful purposes, not simply withholding them.

We uphold and support Meeting for Sufferings as it continues to work on this matter as a corporate issue. Each of us also need to consider prayerfully how we are led.

In our consideration today we have mainly been exploring conscientious objection as a corporate concern. As such it affects us both in our central work and in our local meetings. Advices and Queries number 36 asks:

*“Do you uphold those who are acting under concern, even if their way is not yours? Can you lay aside your own wishes and prejudices while seeking with others to find God’s will for them?”*

We note that information is being made available to Friends and meetings about the furtherance of this concern, including our collaboration with ‘Conscience, the Peace Tax Campaign’.

We are enjoined to be faithful, individually and corporately, to the leadings of the Spirit among us.

**Minute 38: Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee: terms of reference**

We receive minute 6 of Meeting for Sufferings held 7 April 2001, forwarding draft terms of reference for the Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee (pages 32 and 36-39 of *Documents in advance*).

We approve these terms of reference.

**Minute 39: Amendments to *Quaker faith & practice***

Further to minute 21, we have received a revised draft of the proposed amendments to section 7.11. We approve it with further minor amendment as follows:

Members of Meeting for Sufferings, appointed under 7.04a,b,c,d and e, by virtue of their appointment constitute the managing trustees (15.03) of the central work of Britain Yearly Meeting including of all its central funds and properties (14.12-14.15).

They perform in relation to the Yearly Meeting the same function as do managing trustees in relation to monthly meetings (15.03-15.05) and are similarly accountable (6.26).

In making nominations for service on Meeting for Sufferings, Monthly Meetings should ensure that the Friends approached are aware of the above responsibilities and of the legal position on eligibility (see 15.04).

Trustees are answerable at law for the conduct of their trust (14.26). Briefings on the Quaker understanding of trusteeship and the legal responsibilities of trustees are given to new members of Meeting for Sufferings upon appointment. General guidance on the legal position of trustees will be found in leaflets available from the Charity Commission for England and Wales, or in Scotland the Inland Revenue, and specific advice may be obtained from the Recording Clerk.

**Minute 40: Testimony**

Part of the Testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of Albert Roads (page 68 of *Epistles & testimonies*) has been read.

**Minute 41: Me and my neighbour: whose Britain? – follow up**

Further to minutes 14 and 16, we note that concerns in the fields of racial justice, asylum seeking and interfaith work are being carried forward in a variety of ways. In our session held in groups, Friends shared with one another examples of work being undertaken in various parts of the country, and we can continue to communicate good practice. A special issue of *Quakers and race* is to be produced containing some of the introductory material from our sessions and summaries of discussion.

The Committee for Racial Equality will continue to develop their work in the light of the exercise of this yearly meeting. It may prove possible to organise a database to aid communication between Friends concerned for issues of asylum.

We encourage Friends to continue to engage with these issues in their meetings and localities. We ask our clerks to make representations to the government on our behalf, urging that the current review of provision for asylum seekers should lead to substantial improvement on the present voucher system. We encourage our meetings to make similar representations locally.

**Minute 42: Annual Report of Meeting for Sufferings 2000, and Financial Report & Accounts of the Yearly Meeting Funds**

The Annual Report of Meeting for Sufferings and its committees (printed in *Quaker Work 2000* pages 4-89 and 92-96), and the Financial Report and Accounts of the Yearly Meeting Funds have been considered and are now accepted.

The report of Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee (pages 90-91) and the Tabular Statement (pages 100-104 and Supplement) have also been considered and accepted.

**Minute 43: Yearly Meeting Nominations Committee**

The Friends appointed by minute 5 bring in the name of David Blamires (Hardshaw East MM) to serve as clerk of Nominations Committee for Yearly Meeting 2002-2003. This name being acceptable, we appoint him accordingly.

**Minute 44: Nominations**

The Friends appointed by minute 5 bring in the following names:

- (a) to serve on Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee from Yearly Meeting 2001 until Yearly Meeting 2004:  
Richard Ogden (York MM)  
Jane Harries (South Wales MM)
- (b) to serve on the Yearly Meeting Special Needs Group from Yearly Meeting 2001 until the end of Yearly Meeting 2004:  
Sarah Nightingale (Hereford & Mid-Wales MM)

These names being acceptable, we appoint these Friends accordingly.

**Minute 45: Nominations: Yearly Meeting Summer Gathering 2003 Planning Committee**

Further to minute 4, our Nominations Committee brings in the following additional names to serve on the Yearly Meeting Summer Gathering 2003 Planning Committee:

Justin Barnard (Hampstead MM)  
Becky Calcraft (Notts & Derbys MM)

Two further vacancies remain to be filled through the agreed procedure.

We appoint the Friends named accordingly.

**Minute 46: Meeting for Sufferings - Interim membership changes since last Yearly Meeting**

Further to minute 13 of Yearly Meeting 2000, the following changes to the membership of Meeting for Sufferings have occurred since Yearly Meeting 2000:

<u>Added</u>	<u>Released</u>	<u>Nominating body</u>
Jack Burfoot		Colchester & Coggeshall MM
Jenny Kay		Colchester & Coggeshall MM
David Wilmot		Notts & Derbys MM
Janet Dodsworth		Thaxted MM
Angela Schultz		Woodbridge MM
Dunkin Schultz		Woodbridge MM
	John Green	Bristol & Frenchay MM
Pam Cox		Gloucester & Nailsworth MM
David Simmons		Worcester & Shropshire MM
Tony Manasseh		Cornwall MM
	Gillian Waddilove	MSC remaining as Warwickshire MM Representative
	Bill Edgar	East of Scotland MM
	Sylvia Stagg	Bournemouth & Swanage MM
	Jonathan Silvey	Notts & Derbys MM
Pamela Chadbourne		Bournemouth & Swanage MM
Bernice Taylor		Notts & Derbys MM

Peter Kennedy		East of Scotland MM
	Chas Raws	QCCIR
Lee Kellgren-Hayes		Bristol & Frenchay MM
Janet Scott		QCCIR
Noel Hustler		Southwark, Lewisham and Bromley MM
	Rory Duff	Banbury & Evesham MM
Janice Johnson		Banbury & Evesham MM
Richard Waldmeyer		Quaker World Relations Committee
	Patricia Dannahy	Witney MM
Tony Buckland		Banbury & Evesham MM
Matt Foreman		Quaker Life CC
Deborah Rowlands		Quaker Life CC
Patricia Roberts		Quaker Peace & Social Witness CC
Caroline Nursey		Quaker Peace & Social Witness CC
	Bill Schaeffer	West Kent MM
Ian Metcalfe		West Kent MM
Muriel Aplin		Witney MM
	Marian Dawson	West Somerset MM
	Rachel Frith	Quaker Communications CC
Anita Thistlewaite		Quaker Communications CC
	Catherine Butler-Ricketts	Southampton & Portsmouth MM
	Tom Burt	Balby MM
David Heathfield		Southampton & Portsmouth MM
Lyn Wilson		West Somerset MM
	David Pulford	Leeds MM
Joanna Dales		Leeds MM
Joyce Trotter		Guisborough MM

**Minute 47: Epistles from other Yearly Meetings**

We have received Epistles from 28 Yearly Meetings (pages 4-28 in *Epistles & testimonies*), extracts from 4 of which were read in our sessions.

**Minute 48: Testimonies**

The following Testimonies to the Grace of God as shown in the life of deceased Friends, in addition to those from which extracts have been read in our sessions, have been received.

John Adams	p. 30
Anne Anton-Smith	p. 31
Rothwell Bishop	p. 31
James Frederick Gill Bland	p. 32
Jack Bowker	p. 33
Tom Brown	p. 35
Phyllis Buckwell	p. 36
Edward Paul Cadbury	p. 39
Winifred Chaplin	p. 40
Leslie Cross	p. 42
Frank Edmead	p. 43
Ruth Mary Fawell	p. 46
Arthur Frost	p. 50
Edith G Gillies	p. 51
Lucy Gorman	p. 52

Emily (Millie) Havercroft	p. 55
Elizabeth Faithfull Heywood	p. 55
Gladys Hindmarsh	p. 57
Douglas Lee	p. 58
Frances Margaret McCallum	p. 60
Diana McClelland	p. 62
Colin Prior	p. 65
Merthys Reiss	p. 67
Eleanor Rugman	p. 69
Beatrice Salter	p. 69
Eric Sly	p. 70
Philip Joseph Stoy	p. 71
John Strachan	p. 72
Rose Tebbutt	p. 73
Margot Tennyson	p. 75
Margaret Torrie	p. 77

**Minute 49: Dates of Yearly Meeting 2002 and 2003**

We have been informed by Meeting for Sufferings in its minute 3 of 3 March 2001 that it has appointed Yearly Meeting 2002 to be held in London from 3 to 6 May, and Yearly Meeting 2003 to be held in London from 2 to 5 May.

**Minute 50: Yearly Meeting Epistle**

In response to minute 32, we have received the draft of the General Epistle from the Epistle Drafting Committee. After consideration and minor amendment, it is approved to be read and signed in our concluding session.

**Minute 51: Under-19 Programme**

We have received minutes from the groups of the Under-19 Programme of this Yearly Meeting as follows:

Minute from the Foxcubs (0-5s)

These are the children's words;

"We've done such a lot of different things. We liked playing, painting and dressing up. We sat so still: the Spirit of life is here"

Minutes from the 6 and 7s 'Tiggywinkles' Group

We have played with the parachute. We helped each other. We decided on our boundaries, and made them into Advices:

"Try to be kind. Try to play with others and don't leave them out."

We made things out of clay, made bags and had a lovely day. Our Meeting for Worship was quiet, still and relaxing. We gave ministry and thought of God.

We went for a mini-beast hunt and found some bugs. In Meeting for Worship we had a candle and we had ministry about people that had passed away.

We made a Tiggywinkle Tree of Life from rolls of newspaper. It started small, and grew wider and taller as more branches were added.

Chris came in and we talked about God. Some of us thought God was a cloud, has a really long nose, is a spirit, made the world, looks after us, was Jesus on the cross, and is power.

### Exeter Eagles Minute (8-10s)

During the week 39 Exeter Eagles (8-10 year olds) have had sessions of drama, art, games, music, discussions and reading – both inside and outside.

We have welcomed visitors who have helped us to understand the themes of yearly meeting.

All of us thought about religions, war, peace, our planet, other people and how we can help them.

One afternoon, most of us went to see the play, 'Elizabeth of Newgate'. It made us think about prisons and what some Quaker have done to improve them – and how some people live.

We have tried to follow the themes of yearly meeting like the over 19s. Our group has tried to work together as a team.

### The Shooting Stars (10-12s)

When some of us arrived we were worried that we wouldn't fit in but we've made lots of friends and will be sorry to leave.

Many of us have especially appreciated getting to know other Quakers of our own age because we are the only Quaker in our school or belong to Meetings with very few children.

In our sessions we have looked in various ways at issues about being individuals and belonging to groups, and thinking about how we connect with other people around the world.

We have heard a bit about the production of tobacco and clothes in other countries and were shocked to hear about the conditions in which people work, and the pressures put on them.

We have also learnt about asylum seekers and realised how lucky we are, having homes and friends and families.

One of the highlights of our week was working together to make an island out of rubbish. We were proud of what we achieved and surprised at how it brought out issues of co-operation that happen in real communities.

We have also enjoyed lots of swimming, sports and crafts, during our sessions and during the evening programme, Hooters.

### Minute of the Brills (13-14s)

Nelson Mandela asks us, "Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually who are you not to be?"

34 of us aged 13 and 14 have been together this week. Between us we have had a broken nose, a hurt arm, a hurt eye, a slit elbow and concussion. Nevertheless, we have had good fun.

We have enjoyed willow sculptures, painting, yoga and more. Playing with the earth ball was enjoyable but dangerous. 'Elizabeth of Newgate' fascinated but puzzled us.

We liked getting to know new people but wish we had mixed more widely with older ages, especially in the evenings.

Looking back we have recognised unintended racism. Light hearted jokes can hurt.

This poem speaks for us.

Today

*Today is the first day of the rest of your life*

*Take time to sort out any trouble and strife*

*Clear out the corners of your mind*

*Clarify,*

*Rectify,*

*Sanctify.*

*Along the way some will ask*

*“What canst thou say?”*

*But hey, today is just the first day.*

All in all it's been a unique week.

Mardon Munsters (15-16s)

We have met at Exeter University as part of Britain Yearly Meeting 2001, twenty-nine 15 and 16 year olds.

Throughout the week we felt part of a strong community ranging from the relationships built up in small groups, through our programme, the wider group of young people and Britain Yearly Meeting as a whole.

By the end of each day we have been tired but content and grateful for epilogue, a time for reflection. We have maintained a relaxed atmosphere throughout deep and thoughtful, provoking sessions.

Many of our activities have helped us to recognise the importance of seeing things from another person's point of view. We have been moved to think about people usually blocked out, the exploitation of others and the planet, and the significance of justice.

Our awareness of the issues behind political correctness has grown. We have learned the importance of communication, especially of listening. Issues previously seen as straightforward have been viewed in a different light.

What has helped us maintain the relaxed atmosphere has been the fun with group activities and games.

Signed in and on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting 2001, Mardon Munsters  
Helen Sargent and Ed Ullathorne.

#### Movers and Shakers (17-18s)

At Britain Yearly Meeting, held on Exeter University campus, 17 and 18 year olds brought together from all over Britain considered a number of issues taken from the Britain Yearly Meeting agenda. Our common concern for these issues united us, and our unusually small group gave us a comfortable environment in which to share our thoughts and feeling. Having had opportunities to discuss the topics during our days together, they remained in our thoughts as we returned to our respective accommodations all over the campus.

Having meditated in order to centre down and played games to bring us together as a group, we began our first formal session on conscientious choices, led by our guest speaker, Philip Austin. During the session we saw a video about the Greenham Common protests. Despite the fact that the protest took place before the lifetimes of most of our group, nuclear disarmament is something which is still a strong concern for us today.

In order to approach the matter of racial justice, we asked ourselves the question “Me and my neighbour – whose Britain?” We explored this by being divided into groups according to individual characteristics, some of which we had no control over, and some of which were personal choices. We discussed our personal and family backgrounds, and which cultural groups we each felt a part of. In a session in our smaller base groups, we shared our personal experiences of prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination, and how we had and could deal with them.

We found our discussion on membership with Harvey Gillman to be one of personal importance to our age group. For some of us, this event has been our last as young Friends, and we find ourselves considering our future in the Society and whether or not we want to become or remain members.

Perhaps the main issue of the programme was that of Witnessing to God in all Creation. This became a part of the Britain Yearly Meeting agenda as a result of young Friends’ concern about environmental and related issues, and therefore Agenda Committee had asked members of the Under 19 Programme to facilitate groups discussing the issue. The experience of facilitating was new and valuable for many of us, and enabled us to become more actively engaged in the main programme. The statements prepared in our small groups went on to become a part of Helen Steven’s introduction to a session of the main programme which we attended.

After a day of rest or organised excursion, we joined the 15-16 year olds’ group for a role play addressing the arms trade. Our simulation came to an ideal solution for all the parties – something which we realise would not be a likely outcome in reality. However, we felt it emphasised the importance of communication within and between groups, and that we learned about the subject.

We thoroughly enjoyed our programme, including both the sessions which were of a serious nature, and the lighter-hearted atmosphere of our varied evening programmes, which we shared with younger groups.

Signed in and on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting 2001, Movers and Shakers  
Daffyd Harries & Shona Cheesbrough (clerks)

**Minute 52: Thanks**

We warmly thank all those who have made this Yearly Meeting possible, in whatever capacity they have served.

**Minute 53: Yearly Meeting Epistle**

The General Epistle approved by minute 50 has been read and signed by the clerk on behalf of the Meeting.

It reads as follows:

*To Friends everywhere:*

From Britain Yearly Meeting held in Exeter from 28 July to 4 August 2001, we send loving greetings to you all, affirming that of God in you and in all creation.

We have come together in celebration; all over the campus there have been moments of joyful encounter. But our joy has been overshadowed by grief: grief at the misuse of our planet, grief at our inability to love our neighbours, and the grief we have felt at the sudden death of a Friend among us. We have heard in ministry that death can enrich us; even the youngest children expressed this in their worship.

This year, the sense of urgency of the younger Friends at Yearly Meeting, and the anger they expressed, have discomfited the rest of us. We feel overwhelmed by the complexity of the issues before us and frustrated that, despite what has been achieved, there is still so much we need to do. We sense that we are moving rapidly towards deepening crisis. Throughout this meeting, we have heard repeatedly a longing to return to the still centre. We must listen to God and allow the Spirit to move us.

Mourning what human arrogance and greed have done to the Earth, we heard sung ‘Were you there when they crucified my Lord?’ We heard angry and moving accounts of the treatment of black people and asylum seekers in Britain. Turning to our own practice as a Yearly Meeting, we acknowledged that our membership procedures can be daunting and unhelpful to some who are part of our meetings and our work.

We decided to ask Monthly Meetings to experiment with finding encouraging and nurturing ways of helping Attenders to come into membership. We renewed our commitment to further our corporate concern for the right to conscientious objection to the payment of tax for military purposes and for its diversion towards peaceful uses.

Seeking God’s guidance, we must tackle racism and the exploitation of our planet with urgency, courage and understanding. Let us engage directly with the world, and find effective ways to be heard, so that our voices can influence decisions. We must talk and listen to the perpetrators of injustice and discrimination. We must be prepared to work both outside and inside the institutions of power. Members of one body, we are each given a different witness to make; let us encourage, support and rejoice in one another within a Yearly Meeting faithful to God’s leadings.

In whatever steps we take, remember that it is as disciples that we act. In our religious society, membership is a commitment to God. May prayer and worship underpin all our work. God has no hands but ours; let us not sit on them.

*Signed in and on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting*

HELEN ROWLANDS, *clerk*

**Minute 54: Concluding Minute**

In our gathering we have entered together the deep places of the Spirit. We have known the touch of God in our laughter and our tears, our questing and our findings.

We are charged with carrying forward new tasks and have renewed our commitment to existing concerns. May we live creatively out of that divine, still centre that enables us to witness to God with joy.

“Conform no longer to the pattern of this present world, but be transformed by the renewal of your minds. Then you will be able to know what is good, acceptable, and perfect.”

(Romans 12, v.2)

HELEN ROWLANDS, *clerk*