

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

**AT THE YEARLY MEETING
HELD IN LONDON AT FRIENDS HOUSE
28 May - 31 May 2004**

Friday 28 May 2004

Evening

Minute 1: Clerks

The Yearly Meeting Committee on Clerks nominates the following Friends to serve as clerk and assistant clerks for Yearly Meeting 2004:

Clerk:	Peter Eccles
Assistant Clerks:	Janet Quilley Richard Ogden

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

Minute 2: Permission for non-members to attend

Permission has been given for the attendance of 71 non-members, and we welcome them to this Yearly Meeting.

Minute 3: Matters Arising

a) Most of the matters from Yearly Meeting 2003 that required follow-up action are referred to in section 7 of the Report of Meeting for Sufferings for 2003 (See *Quaker work in 2003*, pages 12 and 13).

b) Extension of experimental appointment of Yearly Meeting Overseers' Nominations to Yearly Meeting 2004.

The appointment of overseers to serve during the time of Yearly Meeting was agreed as an experiment to be reviewed after Yearly Meeting 2003 (minute 6 of Yearly Meeting held 3-6 May 2002). Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee held 10 January 2004 forwards the following minute to Yearly Meeting:

Minute 04/15: Overseers at Yearly Meeting

We have not yet fully reviewed the experiment of appointing Yearly Meeting Overseers. We would like to extend the experiment in the use of overseers for a further two years and recommend this to Yearly Meeting. We ask Yearly Meeting Overseers to report back to Agenda Committee after Yearly Meeting to enable us properly to evaluate the process.

Janet Quilley, clerk

Additionally, the Planning Group for residential Yearly Meeting 2005 has made the suggestion that the convener of Overseers for Yearly Meeting 2005 should be appointed at Yearly Meeting 2004, so the Friend is available for forward planning on pastoral care.

We agree to these proposals and add the request for appointment of convener of Yearly Meeting Overseers 2005 to the list of nominations sought from the Yearly Meeting Nominations Committee during this Yearly Meeting.

Yearly Meeting Overseers

To serve during this Yearly Meeting

Nominated

Barbara Adshead	Northumbria MM
Julia Aspden	North Wales MM
Rachel Frith	Balby MM
Dot Hull	Worcs & Shropshire MM
Douglas Rennie	Northumbria MM (nominated convener)
Maretta Stark	Witney MM
Peter Ullathorne	Warwickshire MM

Yearly Meeting Accessibility & Support Group

To serve from Yearly Meeting 2004 until Yearly Meeting 2007:

Brian Odell Westminster MM

These names being acceptable to the meeting, the Friends named are appointed.

Minute 5: Nominations Committee (Yearly Meeting 2004 – Yearly Meeting 2005)

By minute 30 of Yearly Meeting held 2 – 5 May 2003 Tina Helfrich (Warwickshire MM) was appointed to serve as clerk of Nominations Committee 2004 – 2005.

The following additional Friends are appointed to serve on the Yearly Meeting Nominations Committee during this yearly meeting and until Yearly Meeting 2005:

Anne Adams (Hereford and Mid Wales MM)

Anne Bettys (Brighouse MM)

Michael Eccles (Warwickshire MM)

Chris Lawson (West Somerset MM)

Margaret Mortimer (South East Scotland)

Pat Saunders (Settle MM)

Bill Schaeffer (Dorking and Horsham MM)

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

- a clerk of Nominations Committee to serve from Yearly Meeting 2005 to Yearly Meeting 2006;
- Yearly Meeting Overseers: one Friend to serve as convener of Yearly Meeting Overseers at Yearly Meeting 2005;
- Yearly Meeting Publications Group for *Quaker faith & practice*: three Friends to serve until Yearly Meeting 2007, including one to serve as convener.

The Committee is asked to bring the following nominations to Yearly Meeting 2005:

- Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee: three Friends to serve until Yearly Meeting 2008;
- Yearly Meeting Arrangements Committee: one or two Friends, to serve with the three Yearly Meeting clerks and three Agenda Committee members;
- Yearly Meeting Epistle Drafting Committee: 5 to 7 Friends to serve at Yearly Meeting 2005, including one to act as convener;

- Yearly Meeting Accessibility & Support Group: one Friend to serve from Yearly Meeting 2005 to Yearly Meeting 2008;
- Yearly Meeting Elders: 6 to 10 Friends to serve at Yearly Meeting 2005, including one to serve as convener;
- Yearly Meeting Overseers: 7 to 9 Friends to serve as Yearly Meeting Overseers at Yearly Meeting 2005, in addition to the Convener to be appointed at this Yearly Meeting;
- Committee on Clerks: 12 Friends to serve until Yearly Meeting 2008 with a clerk nominated by the Committee on Clerks.

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:

Jane Chattell (Kendal and Sedbergh MM)
 Robin Davis (West Scotland MM)
 Jennifer Kavanagh (Westminster MM)
 Stevie Krayner (South Wales MM)
 Ann Lewis (Norwich and Lynn MM)
 Marion McNaughton (Warwickshire M)
 David Pulford (Warwickshire MM)
 Alan Quilley (Wensleydale and Swaledale MM)
 Gillian Robertson (Luton and Leighton MM)
 Barabara Windle (York MM)

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

Minute 7: Annual Report of Meeting for Sufferings 2003, and the Trustees' Report and Accounts 2003

The Annual Report of Meeting for Sufferings and its committees for the year ended 31 December 2003, as printed in *Quaker work in 2003*, the *Trustees' report and accounts* of the Yearly Meeting Funds and the Tabular Statement for the year 2003 have been received and laid before us.

Minute 8: Summer Gathering 2003 at Loughborough

The closing minute of Summer Gathering held 26 July – 2 August 2003 at Loughborough University has been read as follows:

‘Light Fantastic’

Summer Gathering, held at Loughborough from 26th July to 2nd August, has been attended by 720 participants of all ages. Refreshed in mind, body and spirit, we have learned that being open to new light can be uncomfortable, disturbing, even painful. Are we ready to be ‘more than we thought we were’? Dare we become radiant in the Light? In sessions, worship and option groups we have been awakened to new ideas and the new life that can re-invigorate the familiar.

We give thanks for a week of fellowship, encounter, challenge and celebration. We have given and received blessings. We say 'hallelujah' for the Light that reveals, and the Light that heals. There is a power to be found. May the Light that shone on us, and in us and through us, here in Loughborough, continue to shine in our lives, radiating out to the world.

Signed

Ethel Livermore

David L Saunders

Co-Clerks, Summer Gathering Planning Committee

Minute 9: Epistle from Junior Yearly Meeting

The Epistle of Junior Yearly Meeting held 14 - 18 April at the Royal Russell School, Croydon, has been read as follows:

To all Friends everywhere,

Junior Yearly Meeting brought together 143 young Friends in Croydon to address the theme 'It's not fair! Exploring justice in our daily lives and the wider world. What's happening? What can we do? Do we care?'

The closeness of the Arrangements Committee, who first met as a team in September 2003, gave strong roots from which a team of 36 could bond and help create the inclusive and close community that JYM became.

In small base groups we found opportunities to share our inner being freely and in a safe environment. This safety was developed through playing games and singing silly songs, which removed our inhibitions. The base groups became pockets of energy, which exploded together in evenings of music, fun and dancing. The shared joy intensified the powerful and compelling silence of the epilogues that followed.

The quantity and quality of ministry reflected the atmosphere of the event and the trust that developed between us. We were given the space for spiritual growth and were inspired to further explore our personal relationships with the sense of God within us. Thought provoking contributions led to discussion about the Inner Light and the need to turn for help when our own light falters.

Our eyes were opened to the experience of refugees through role play. This brought a distant idea uncomfortably close to home and reminded us of the sacrifices they are forced to make to gain the things that we take for granted. This simulation exercise made us more aware of the privileges we enjoy simply by living in Western Europe and having the right to express our opinions freely.

We found justice to be a complex notion based on conflicting moral, legal, and ethical values which cause people to have different reactions to the same situations. We examined the diverse responses and feel better equipped to make careful choices in our lives. We feel a resounding sense of responsibility to make the right choice and recognise that it is often not the easiest one. We hope we have the courage to take action against the injustices that surround us and are challenged not to be disheartened when change is not immediate. Although breaking the law should never be taken lightly, our primary concern should be to follow the calling of the Spirit. 'For evil to triumph it is only necessary for good men to do nothing' (Edmund Burke).

We leave with a greater faith in people and fond memories of our time together. We take with us an increased Quaker understanding and a new sense of the workings of the Spirit.

Signed in and on behalf of Junior Yearly Meeting 2004

Sarah Holtam and Pete Slade, Clerks

Minute 10: Epistle from Ireland Yearly Meeting

The Epistle from the Yearly Meeting of Friends in Ireland, held at Newtown School, Waterford from 13 to 18 April 2004, has been read as follows:

To Friends Everywhere,

We send warm greetings from Ireland Yearly Meeting gathered in Newtown School, Waterford from 13th-18th April 2004.

It is 350 years since the first Quaker settlement in Ireland. William Edmondson held the first Quaker meeting in his home in Lurgan in 1654. The importance of our origins was highlighted by Martin Lynn, from South Belfast Meeting, in his public lecture 'Children of Light'. The light within comes from God and, as expressed by William Edmondson, is 'God's witness in our hearts'. The desire to encounter God was at the heart of the Quaker spiritual experience 350 years ago and this is still true today. God can be experienced in every second of our lives. We have been blessed by a large number of visitors from Britain, Germany, The Netherlands and North America, including the Friendly Folk Dancers. The Quaker youth theatre group, The Leaveners, worked with our young people to tell the story of William Edmondson's life. An innovative performance was given in a public theatre, which was previously Waterford's Quaker Meeting House.

We have been inspired to hear about the Friends World Committee for Consultation Triennial held in New Zealand and look forward to hosting the next triennial in 2007. Liz Scurfield, a Quaker Council for European Affairs representative, spoke encouragingly about their work. The readiness of the men and women working in the institutions of the European Union to listen to the Quaker voice is very encouraging. We have been upheld by letters of greeting received from Friends around the world.

At a civic ceremony in Waterford City Hall the mayor presented an illuminated scroll to the Yearly Meeting in recognition of Quakers' contribution to life in Ireland and especially in Waterford.

In this 350th year our Young Friends intend to complete 350 hours of voluntary service. There has been great demand for the colourful booklet 'The Friendly Guide to Quakerism' which was produced by Young Friends in Ireland last year. Ten thousand more copies will be printed this year.

In a session on Ministry and Oversight David Brindle, of Wilmington Yearly Meeting, reminded us that God's gifts are not for ourselves, but for the community. We should have an expectation of God's presence among us both in our lives and in our meetings for worship. Miriam Logan, of Cork Meeting, spoke on the subject 'Fear of Difference is at the Core of Conflict'. We learn more from our differences than our similarities and it is important that we stay with our differences on our spiritual journeys.

Friends in Ireland have been greatly challenged while working to revise our book of Christian Experience. We have come to accept that there are differing theological perspectives within our membership. We have not yet discerned whether the Yearly Meeting wishes these different experiences and perspectives to be reflected within a book of Christian Experience. It is hoped that Friends can discuss their ideals and deeply held beliefs in a way which will help, encourage and challenge others. *'Always, my dear Friends, dwell in the life and love and power, and wisdom of God, in unity with one another, and with God.'*

Signed in and on behalf of Ireland Yearly Meeting,

T. David Kingston, Clerk

Minute 11: Friends World Committee for Consultation Triennial Meeting Reflections

The Twenty-first Triennial Meeting of the Friends World Committee for Consultation was held in Auckland, Aotearoa/New Zealand during January 2004. Two of our representatives at the gathering have offered us their reflections on it. We give thanks for the diverse witness to which Friends around the world are called by the leadings of the Spirit. We pray that Friends will continue to stand alongside one another, co-operating in God's loving purposes for us all.

Saturday 29 May 2004

Morning

Minute 12: Under-19 Programme

Jane Dawson has informed us of the programmes being run for Yearly Meeting participants aged under 19 complementing the agenda which is before adult Friends. We send greetings to all those participating; we look forward to meeting and worshipping with them at various times during the weekend, and to receiving their minutes on Monday.

Minute 13: A prayerful life: experiencing the inward teacher

'You will say, Christ saith this, and the apostles say this; but what canst thou say? Art thou a child of light and hast walked in the light, and what thou speakest is it inwardly from God?'

Within the gathered stillness of an extended period of worship we have shared our experience of living, or trying to live, a prayerful life, a life in which we collaborate with God's love and can experience the presence of God at any time and place. Prayer is the way we face the world. Prayer is how we are with other human beings, an act of love which can turn the world upside down.

'Breathe in us, breath of God,
Fill us with life anew.'

Afternoon

Minute 14: Epistle

Part of the Epistle received from New England Yearly Meeting (pages 22-23 of *Epistles & testimonies*) has been read.

Minute 15: The state of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain today

'What is the state of your meeting? Is there any growth in the truth? And doth any convincement appear since last year? And is Love and Unity preserved amongst you?'

We have considered our response to this 1742 query in the context of falling membership and more smaller meetings. We have recognised our fears: the fear of death, a fear that the Religious Society of Friends might cease to exist; the fear of change, of doing things differently; and the fear of life, of where a true following of God's leading might take us.

It is important to acknowledge these fears. At the same time it is important to acknowledge the strength of many of our meetings and how much we have to offer to the world. We rejoice at the richness, energy and joy we experience in our larger gatherings such as Junior Yearly Meeting. Let us be confident and proclaim the joy we find in our meetings.

We need to affirm each other so that we can share our truths, not judging but accepting the riches we have to offer one another in love. Some of us are grieving for things dying whilst others see the hope of renewal. We are in a time of change. A deep sharing of our faith

involves taking risks, making use of new opportunities such as the ‘Hearts and Minds Prepared’ material.

Let us not be fearful. Whatever happens, God will still be God and Truth will still be Truth.

Sunday 30 May 2003

Morning

Minute 16: Testimony

Part of the Testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of Frederick Albright Holmes (pages 75-76 of *Epistles & testimonies*) has been read.

Minute 17: Testing concerns

Concerns can arise in the hearts of any one of us and be about any aspect of life; we have a sense that something beyond us is calling us to some action. Actions we are called to may be small and for us alone to deal with; proper discernment is no less important for these. Other actions may be taken to our meeting so that the concern can be tested.

We all have to play our part in testing a concern brought to our meeting. To test a concern well, we need to be a real religious community, willing to commit ourselves to the process and whatever comes of it, giving as much time and care as it takes. We need to reach into our own spiritual depths, and reach out to the depths in one another. Discernment is challenging, for the individual and for the meeting. The individual may have to let go of the concern for it to be transformed by the meeting. The meeting has to be ready to provide appropriate support. Each one of us involved has to open ourselves up to be challenged in our faithfulness, to be ready to ask good questions drawing out the essence and to listen – to listen to each other and to listen to the leadings of the Spirit. If we are faithful, we will be given the strength and guidance we need.

Minute 18: Quaker Council for European Affairs

We have heard something of the work of the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) in its 25th anniversary year. We celebrate this work and give thanks for all that has been done and all that is being done through the work of QCEA. We commend this work to Friends and local meetings.

Afternoon

Minute 19: The Report of Meeting for Sufferings and our Central Work – 1: the work of Quaker Life Children & Young People’s Committee

We have heard a full report on the work of the Quaker Life Children and Young People’s Committee in supporting the work that takes place in local meetings and in working in partnership with the adults who support the children and young people of our meetings. We have been offered models for spiritual and faith development showing a developing awareness and sensitivity to ‘that of God’ in ourselves, in others and the world we live in. This awareness grows as we grow and are nurtured in our faith community.

Many young people find their place in the Society through geographically scattered groups of young people. These links are valuable but above all young people are a vital part of our worshipping communities today.

Friends have testified to the changes in the relations between young and old in their meetings. However, we recognise that we can do much more to enhance the quality of the encounter between individual Friends of all ages so that we can build a true all-age religious community in the meeting. We have so much to learn from each other. Older Friends should be ready to be

open about their faith with the young people in the meeting and be ready to be involved with them in opportunities for learning and spiritual growth.

The acquisition of membership by children has been raised. We note that this is part of the brief of the group set up as a result of Minute 30 of Yearly Meeting in 2001.

We are aware of the difficult choices which lie ahead for the Children and Young People's Committee as the work of the Children and Young People's Section is reviewed and pray that they will be rightly led. We uphold the members of the Committee and the staff of the section at this time. We are deeply thankful for the work they do on our behalf, which we know has been costly for some. This work has led to a rich growth in the life of our meetings.

Minute 20: Epistle

The Epistle received from Cuba Yearly Meeting (page 10 of *Epistles & testimonies*) has been read.

Minute 21: The Report of Meeting for Sufferings and our Central Work - 2

We have received a spoken introduction to the written report of Meeting for Sufferings and our central work. This highlighted:

- the discernment process at the heart of any Quaker business meeting;
- our response to the government's proposals for the recognition of transsexual rights;
- changes in the pension arrangements for the staff of the Yearly Meeting;
- the future of Courtauld House and the decision to close the Quaker International Centre;
- the financial pressures faced by Friends World Committee for Consultation and the appropriate level of support from our Yearly Meeting;
- Junior Yearly Meeting.

We are grateful for this report and for all the work that has been done on our behalf by Meeting for Sufferings, its committees and our staff. A number of questions has been raised about how decisions are made about priorities.

We will return to this matter tomorrow.

Monday 31 May 2004

Morning

Minute 22: Epistle

Part of the Epistle received from Lake Erie Yearly Meeting (pages 19-20 of *Epistles & testimonies*) has been read.

Minute 23: The Report of Meeting for Sufferings and our Central Work - 3

We have considered several of the recent and ongoing difficult decisions which Meeting for Sufferings has been required to make.

Hesitations have been expressed about the decisions about Quaker International Centre and Courtauld House. It is always difficult to lay down long-standing and much valued work. Many Friends have been saddened by these decisions. Some are hurt and angered by the processes which led to them, but others have been affirming of what took place. We must be prepared to acknowledge and work with conflict.

Friends are also disturbed about the pressures on our staff. We know that some are over-stretched and this has contributed to some of our difficulties, such as the difficulty in holding

Junior Yearly Meeting in 2005. We have heard that these questions are being addressed but dealing with them is not easy. It will lead to hard questions and difficult decisions about our work and the management of the work. We need to uphold the Friends who are addressing these questions so that we can move forward effectively. These are exciting times providing a real opportunity for creative change.

Whilst aware of these difficulties, we also rejoice at how much has been achieved over the last year. We need continually to review our processes, both locally and centrally, to ensure that we are not acting on the world's terms, but are rightly led by the Spirit.

Minute 24: World Gathering of Young Friends 2005

A World Gathering of Young Friends is to be held at Lancaster University from 16 to 24 August 2005, and Britain Yearly Meeting will be represented. The last such Gathering was in 1985 at Greensboro, North Carolina, and part of its epistle forms the much read section 29.17 of our Book of Discipline, *Quaker faith & practice*. We endorse minute 3d of Meeting for Sufferings held 1 May 2004 as follows:

Minute 3d: World Gathering of Young Friends 2005

We have received a letter from John Fitzgerald, co-clerk of the Europe-based Planning Committee for the World Gathering of Young Friends 2005. (paper S 04/05 mc iii.a).

We are pleased to hear of the plans for the World Gathering of Young Friends, to be held at Lancaster University from 16 to 24 August 2005. We gladly acknowledge the major contributions that previous world gatherings have made to the life of our Society. We pray for the success of the 2005 world gathering, and uphold the Planning Committee and all those who will be participating.

We forward this minute to the Europe-based Planning Committee for the World Gathering of Young Friends 2005, and to the Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee.

Caroline Nursey, Clerk

We have been excited to hear this morning of the vision which has led to this Gathering with the theme: 'Let us then see what love will do. I am the vine, you are the branches, now what fruit shall we bear?' We too pray for the success of the 2005 World Gathering, and uphold the Planning Committees and all those who will be participating. We encourage Friends and meetings to provide as much support as possible.

Minute 25: Ecumenical and interfaith visitors

We have received a recommendation from the Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations (CIR) that representatives of ecumenical and interfaith organisations of which Britain Yearly Meeting is a member should be invited to attend Yearly Meeting as participants according the following procedures:

1. an invitation to appoint two or three representatives to Yearly Meeting each year, beginning in 2005, be sent by Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee to Churches Together in Britain and Ireland;
2. an invitation to appoint two or three representatives to Yearly Meeting each year, beginning in 2005, be sent by Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee to the Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom;
3. the Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations be asked to arrange for such visitors to be welcomed and supported.

We welcome this proposal and agree to it. We ask Agenda Committee to consider the practical and financial implications of this decision.

Afternoon

Minute 26: Testimony

Part of the Testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of Margaret Aileen (Meg) Chignell (pages 55-59 of *Epistles & testimonies*) has been read.

Minute 27: Quaker Stewardship Committee

Yearly Meeting in 2003 accepted the proposals for the setting up of a Quaker Stewardship Committee, directly responsible to Yearly Meeting. It also approved amendments to *Quaker faith & practice* describing this new body (minute 25). The work of this Committee will be reviewed by Yearly Meeting 2006.

Further to minute 22 of Yearly Meeting held 2-5 May 2003, we confirm the initial appointments to the Quaker Stewardship Committee made by Meeting for Sufferings as follows:

Appointed by minute 6 of Meeting for Sufferings held 6 December 2003 to serve until Yearly Meeting 2005:

Christine A. M. Davis	West Scotland MM (clerk)
Donald Southall	Hertford & Hitchin MM (assistant clerk).

Appointed by minute 6 of Meeting for Sufferings held 7 February 2004:-
To serve until Yearly Meeting 2005:

Nigel Dower	North of Scotland MM
Ian Jackson	Warwickshire MM

To serve until Yearly Meeting 2006:

John Phillis	South East Scotland MM
John Welton	East Devon MM

To serve until Yearly Meeting 2007:

Christopher Coffin	Southampton & Portsmouth MM
Rosemary Elias	Dorking & Horsham MM

The Committee met for the first time on 30 April 2004 and we receive its minute QSC 04/04/1 which endorses the draft terms of reference as approved by Meeting for Sufferings that appear as Appendix J to the Annual report of Meeting for Sufferings (*Quaker work in 2003* pages 110-112). We approve these terms of reference for the Committee.

A draft bill on Charities for England and Wales has now been published and the Committee plans to submit a response on our behalf. The Committee is also considering the situation in Scotland, in the Isle of Man and in the Channel Islands.

Minute 28: Receipt of the Yearly Meeting General Epistle

The Epistle Drafting Committee appointed by minute 4 has submitted a draft Epistle, which has been read and accepted after amendment as the General Epistle.

Minute 29: Working Group on Representation, Communication and Accountability in our Structures (RECAST)

We have received a progress report from Ralph Molland, Clerk of the Working Group on Representation, Communication and Accountability in our structures setting out the timetable for the work that the Working Group still has to do in order to complete its remit. We look forward to receiving the final report of the Working Group at yearly meeting next year.

Minute 30: Size of Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee

We have received minute 3i of Meeting for Sufferings held 6 December 2003, on the size of Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee, which reads as follows:

Minute 3i: Size of Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee

We have received Minute QPSWCC 03/79 of Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee held 12-14 September 2003 (paper S03/12/ mc iii. c) concerning the size of the committee.

We support the request to Yearly Meeting to consider an increase from fifteen to seventeen in the membership of the committee.

Roger Sturge, clerk

We note that minute 18 of Yearly Meeting held 26-29 May 2000 requests Meeting for Sufferings ‘to inform us should any change to the proposed size of the new central committees be needed in the light of experience’.

Yearly Meeting will need to approve a change to the text of *Quaker faith & practice* section 8.10 (Constitutions of central committees) so that this increase in the membership of Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee can be made. We agree to do this. A draft has been prepared and will come to us with other draft amendments to *Quaker faith & practice*.

Minute 31: Amendments to *Quaker faith & practice*

We agree amendments in *Quaker faith & practice* as follows:

a) on the recommendation of Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee, by minute 04/3 of its meeting on 10 January 2004, an amendment to *Quaker faith & practice* 6.15 (as amended 2001 – section 6.12 in the 2nd Edition).

Chapter 6

Permission to non-members

6.15 Permission for the attendance of non-members at one or more sessions may be given at the discretion of the clerk, if satisfied that their presence is likely to be of service to the Society. Such permission should be sought well in advance of Yearly Meeting and should be supported by one or more elders to whom the applicant is well known. Last-minute requests should not be made. Elders supporting applications should ensure that non-members receive suitable support and guidance to enable them to be of service and to benefit from attendance at Yearly Meeting. If called to speak in a Yearly Meeting session, non-members should be sensitive to the fact that they are not in membership and should make this known.

b) on the recommendation of Meeting for Sufferings, by its minute 10 of 3 April 2004,

Chapter 7

7.14 (based on section 8.22 in the 2nd Edition)

In the sentence beginning ‘The Recording Clerk serves, for the purposes of the Data Protection Act 1998, as Data Controller’ the words ‘Data Controller’ be replaced by ‘Data Compliance Officer’.

Chapter 8

Constitutions of central committees

8.10 (section 8.11 in the 2nd Edition)

In the sentence beginning ‘There are between 10 and 15 members serving on each committee’ the word ‘normally’ to be inserted before ‘between’.

Further to minute 24 of Yearly Meeting held 2-5 May 2003, which referred back to Meeting for Sufferings the proposed amendments to section 15.03 of *Quaker faith & practice* (on Six Weeks Meeting) for further consideration, we note that Meeting for Sufferings now recommends no amendment to this section.

Minute 32: Meeting for Sufferings: interim membership changes since last Yearly Meeting

The following changes to the membership of Meeting for Sufferings have occurred since Yearly Meeting 2003:

Added	Released	Nominating Body
	Maureen Turner	East Devon Monthly Meeting
Rachel Arnold		Young Friends General Meeting
Gerard Benson		Brighthouse Monthly Meeting
David Burnell		Westminster Monthly Meeting
Christine Goodgame-Nobes		North Somerset & Wiltshire Monthly Meeting
Ann Millar		North of Scotland Monthly Meeting
Dawn Rossiter Smith		Gloucester & Nailsworth Monthly Meeting
Pat Thomas		West Kent Monthly Meeting
Lyn Wilson		West Somerset Monthly Meeting
Co-opted: Paul Bowers Isaacson		Meeting for Sufferings Nominations Committee
Richard Bartholomew		Worcester & Shropshire Monthly Meeting
David Dargue		Darlington Monthly Meeting
Ian Metcalf		West Kent Monthly Meeting
Janet Quilley		Wensleydale & Swaledale Monthly Meeting
John Green		Ex officio (Meeting for Sufferings Committee)
	Robin Vanner	Young Friends General Meeting
Ann Mason		Ratcliff & Barking Monthly Meeting
	Michael Haig	Bournemouth & Swanage Monthly Meeting
Euranis Neile		Bournemouth & Swanage Monthly Meeting
	Ian Metcalfe	West Kent
	Michael Phipps	Jordans Monthly Meeting
	Peter Wright	Chichester Monthly Meeting
John Fitzgerald		Young Friends General Meeting
Edward Hurst		Southwark, Lewisham & Bromley MM
	Kim Bailey	Darlington MM
	Claire Edmunds	Southwark, Lewisham & Bromley MM
	Judith Knox	Norwich & Lynn MM
	Barney Smith	Quaker Life Central Committee
	Deborah Rowlands	Quaker Life Central Committee
Jensine Hough		Jordans MM
Michael Phipps		Ex officio, Assistant Clerk, Meeting for Sufferings
Colin Billett		Quaker Life Central Committee
Anne Ullathorne		Quaker Life Central Committee
Mary Waldmeyer		Darlington MM
	Elizabeth Sleightholme	Pickering & Hull MM
Richard Bush		Bournemouth & Swanage MM

Linda Wood		Luton & Leighton MM
	John Fitzgerald	Young Friends General Meeting
	Beryl Milner	Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee
	Pat Roberts	Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee
Miriam Branson		Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee
Virginia Membrey		Quaker Peace & Social Witness Central Committee
	Ian Chandler	Quaker Employment & Service Central Committee
Brian Batchelor		Quaker Employment & Service Central Committee
	Eleanor Barden	Northampton & Wellingborough MM
Derrick Whitehouse		Northampton & Wellingborough MM
Brenda Rigby		Pickering & Hull MM
	Pat Stoner	North Wales Monthly Meeting
	Mary Jo Clogg	Quaker World Relations Committee

Minute 33: Appointments

The Nominations Committee appointed by minute 5 brings in the following nominations:

As **clerk of Nominations Committee** to serve from Yearly Meeting 2005 to Yearly Meeting 2006:

Margaret Mortimer (South East Scotland MM)

As **convener of Yearly Meeting Overseers** for Yearly Meeting 2005:

Fran Woolgrove (Kendal and Sedbergh MM)

To form a **Yearly Meeting Publications Group for *Quaker faith & practice***:

2004-2005 Jeremy Greenwood (Ipswich and Diss MM) (Convener)

2004-2006 David J. Hall (Cambridge and Peterborough MM)

2004-2007 Gill Skidmore (Reading MM)

These names being acceptable, we appoint the Friends accordingly.

Minute 34: Epistles from other yearly meetings

We have received Epistles from 29 yearly meetings and other bodies (pages 4-46 in *Epistles & testimonies*), extracts from three of which have been read in our sessions.

Minute 35: 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:

<i>Names</i>	<i>Epistles & testimonies page no.</i>
Anne Isabella Brooke	48
Henrietta (Hetty) Cecilia Siddons Budgen	49
John Ormiston Burt	51
Jo Campbell	53
Alun Davies	59
Charles Dewhurst	60

Edwin Vero England	62
Innes Farrar & Joyce Farrar	64
W. Jean Foster & William J.T. Foster	66
Elsie M. Harris	67
Helen Margaret (Peggy) Hepworth	69
Ruth Herring	70
Jean Hillyer	72
Dorothy Ann Hirst	73
Enid Huws Jones	77
Kathleen Mary Jackson	79
Kathleen Jannaway	81
Arthur Kemp	85
Patrick Leach	87
Lorna Marsden	88
Mary Martin	91
Jackie McLeod-Roberts	93
David Murray-Rust	95
Eric Mitchener Neil	98
Judith (Judy) Caroline Dove Penaluna	100
Evelyn Brownie Phillips	102
Honor Sargeant	103
Mary Howard Schicker (born Campbell)	105
Sydney Anthony (Tony) Smith	107
Agnes Dalrymple (Nancy) Tennant	109
Vivien Thomas	111
Lewis Waddilove	112
Athol Wallis	114
John Southall Whiting	116
Denis Winteringham	118

Minute 36: Welcome to overseas visitors

We have welcomed visitors from other yearly meetings and other Friends' groups as follows:

Catherine Geerts	Representative of Switzerland YM
Astrid Kiselman	Representative of Sweden YM
Sebina Lubben	Representative of German YM
Patrick L. Neavyn	Representative of Ireland YM
Katherine M. Stephenson	Representative of Ireland YM
Jethro Zevenbergen	Representative of the Netherlands YM

Ute Caspers	German YM
Elizabeth Duke	Aeotearoa/New Zealand YM
Nancy Irving	North Pacific YM
Johan Maurer	Northwest YM
Beverly Polzin	Australia YM
Gail Tayler	Intermountain YM

Also attending:

John Fitzgerald	Ireland YM
Aidan McCartney	Ireland YM

Minute 37: Annual Report of Meeting for Sufferings 2003, and the Trustees' Report and Accounts 2003

The Annual Report of Meeting for Sufferings and its committees (printed in *Quaker work 2003* pages 7-174 & 177-189), and the Trustees' Report and Accounts 2003 are now accepted.

The report of Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee (pages 174-176) and the Tabular Statement are also accepted.

Minute 38: Thanks

We record our thanks to all the people who have worked to enable this yearly meeting to take place.

Minute 39: Receipt of Under 19 Programme minutes

We have received minutes from the groups of the Under 19 Programme of this yearly meeting as follows:

0-5s First Friends

We were delighted to welcome seven little children, with ages ranging from 4 months to 4 years, to First Friends this Yearly Meeting. They enjoyed; sticking, playdough, listening to stories and playing with the model railway. Some joined with the Lively Friends for fairtrade cooking, and a visit to Camley Street National Park.

5-7s The Lively Friends

We have enjoyed getting to know one another. Jennie Craddock showed us how to make prayer flags. We drew our special places on the flags and we were quiet all the time.

We then learnt about fair trade bananas by doing a play and a running about quiz. We felt very tired at the end of Saturday.

On Sunday we made treats to sell to the grown ups. We thought very carefully about who to collect money for and agreed to Quaker Peace and Social Witness for helping peace and the poor. We collected £84.72.

In the afternoon we walked to Camley Street National Park. We saw many plants, minibeasts, swans and sadly, a dead frog. We thank Richard for organising the walk.

Some of us felt nervous but we all felt very special leading the big meeting in worship this morning. We asked everyone to help us carry forward our concerns which we had written on balloons.

We then enjoyed Dominic's magic show and saw him make a fair trade banana disappear.

We have enjoyed our three days at Britain Yearly Meeting and hope to meet again next year.

7-11s Friends R Us

- At the beginning of the weekend we learnt each other's names and got to know one another.
- We thought about why people go to Meeting for Worship and what they do in Meeting.
- We relaxed to a piece of music called Whale Song, which was written by a Quaker.
- At the end of Saturday's session we made posters of what we think a perfect Quaker would be like.
- We talked about the children of Reading Meeting, then finished off the sentence: "I feel valued in my Meeting when...". Here are some of our ideas:
 - In the Meeting, I feel valued when I'm listened to.

- I feel valued in my Meeting when people smile and welcome me.
- I feel valued in my Meeting when I can give something back to the Meeting.
- When we do activities with one of the adults in the Meeting.
- I feel valued in my Meeting when I'm sitting in Meeting with all the adults.
- We then created a role-play about situations where children had to carry on the values of the Meeting.
- We thought about conflict and how we react to it. Then we practised being mediators.
- During the weekend we had lots of fun: we went swimming, played lots of games, did craft and cookery, went to Coram Fields and collected special things to put in nice boxes.
- We really enjoyed Britain Yearly Meeting in 2004!

11-13s Funky Finchley Friends

At Finchley Meeting House 16, 11-13 year old Friends met for Britain Yearly Meeting as the Funky Friends, from the 28th-31st May 2004.

Central to the whole weekend was making friends and friendship bracelets. We were also given gifts, hugs and other trivia from a mystery person whose job it was to make someone else's stay even happier.

As we made new friends, we caught up with old ones. We have learnt a lot about each other as everyone has been very open in what they say for example sharing experiences of bullying. We value meeting with other Quakers with similar experiences. In one of our sessions we worked on power shields which gave us a chance to express our feelings. We designed and performed our own adverts explaining Quakerism and its value.

Candles have been a focal point during epilogue. In our free time we had lots of music and made our own video shows, one of which was Little Brother. There were lots of laughs. We have shared many games our favourite being wink ministry.

We have each had space to be ourselves. This weekend has been said by many as the best ever. We thank the Core Team, Jane Dawson, Britain Yearly Meeting and the teenagers that had to be there to make it happen.

13-16s "Muswell Magic"

Hello Friends, how are you?

We feel discombobulated but at the same time happy, tired and hopeful.

This weekend, young Friends travelled from all corners of the country (some taking longer than they expected) to be a part of the magic at Muswell Hill. On arrival we were greeted with smiles from Friends new and old and soon tucked into legendary Britain Yearly Meeting baked potatoes.

During the weekend we shared our many talents and taught each other new skills such as friendship bracelet making, origami and juggling.

We much enjoyed our trip to Alexandra Palace and the fun fair which included a very popular pink twirly ride. Here our group was joined by several inflatable aliens not all of which survived the walk back to the meeting house.

During our many journeys on the tube we attracted odd looks from other travellers because of stray friendship threads, hand crocheted elf hats and our mad running up the stairs.

We looked at how we can find the sparkle that Quakerism brings us, and how we can try to live by Quaker values in our everyday lives although this can often be difficult. This related strongly to the Swarthmore lecture which we really enjoyed despite our tiredness.

We had the opportunity to explore different conflicts and our responses to them in practical situations through drama and role-play.

We appreciated the chance to learn more about the Quaker business method and experienced it for ourselves through an interesting and interactive session on testing concerns with Helen Drewery.

We joined Friends at Muswell Hill for meeting on Sunday and were delighted to hear that they may be installing showers soon!

We had a memorable final evening with a succulent veggie barbeque and many loud and energetic parachute games.

We have enjoyed the opportunity to be involved in planning and leading sessions, worship and base groups with guidance from our fantastic Core Team. We especially enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere of our candlelit epilogues during which we shared our hopes, prayers and deepest thoughts.

Our days ended with a bedtime story read to us by Simon and which taught us an important lesson: moles can dance! We bonded in many different ways which helped create a caring atmosphere and a close and happy group.

We will all leave with fond memories, a smile on our faces and the knowledge that although alone we are like solitary candles – together we can bring light to the world.

16-18's

Over the weekend, 19 young people and 3 adults bonded together as a group in Brentford & Isleworth Meeting House. The weekend centred around an atmosphere of inclusive fun. The jollity of the Big Top, with circus skills and silly games and gathering around the dying embers of the bonfire for epilogue brought us closer together in our quaker community.

Margaret Heathfield explored with us the theme of The State of the Society. We have discovered that as a group we do not hold membership so highly as perhaps expressed in other parts of Britain Yearly Meeting. Instead we see living our lives guided by Quaker values as more important than if we have officially joined. We do, however, acknowledge that people are needed to maintain the structure of the society both in Friends House and in Monthly Meetings.

From the Swarthmore Lecture we took away the importance of not only challenging other people's beliefs and actions but also our own. By challenging beliefs, people re-evaluate the reasons behind them. We welcomed Simon's idea that peace vigils and demonstrations may not be the only way of using our time and resources for change.

Through creative listening we explored how young quaker events allow us to be more ourselves because of the accepting and inclusive atmosphere. These events help shape our lives in being a loving environment in which self-exploration and individuality are nurtured. We are also grateful for feeling accepted into Britain Yearly Meeting as a whole.

Minute 40: Yearly Meeting Epistle

The General Epistle approved by minute 28 has been read and signed by the clerk on behalf of the Meeting.

It reads as follows:

To all Friends everywhere,

Loving greetings to Friends everywhere from Britain Yearly Meeting 2004.

At the centre of our Religious Society of Friends lies a precious pearl, the Truth that we know in our hearts. Let us be confident and not withhold the joy of this continuing discovery from the world. To strengthen our Meetings, we need to tell others why we are Friends. We must face our fears of conflict and change, but also express our joy in our faith and community.

We want to ask ourselves and each other good questions. Are we living our lives under the discipline of the Inward Light? Are we prepared to meet radical challenges that arise from living faithfully to our testimonies? We must answer bravely and be ready to embrace insecurity and vulnerability if this is what God requires of us.

God is revealed to us in feelings as well as in thoughts. When we are aware of God's presence within our daily lives, we can be truly led. We have heard this state of spiritual attunement described as dancing, with God taking the lead.

We differ in how we express our spirituality. If we shy away from using the expressions which come naturally to us, through fear of offence or lack of confidence, our Meetings are diminished. But when we come together in a place of deep listening and deep awareness, we can find unity.

Prayer is not just something that we do with our eyes shut, it is also facing the world with our eyes open. Prayer is love in action; it is profoundly subversive and can turn the world upside down.

In our privileged position, we must recognize that the gifts of our material wealth and comparative security, used in a prayerful way, empower us to act effectively on our concerns, both in this country and elsewhere.

'Dear God, help us to know the truth about ourselves, no matter how beautiful it is.'

Signed in and on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting
PETER J. ECCLES, *Clerk*

Minute 41: Concluding Minute

This yearly meeting has been a rich time of sharing. Each day we have been blessed by great variety in our periods of opening and closing worship. In the stillness of the gathered meeting we have received personal experience, prayer, personal concerns, readings, poems and balloons carrying concerns. We have been taught that it is difficult to keep too many balloons in the air at once.

Lake Erie Friends in their Epistle wrote that 'We are invited to prepare for a Pentecost, in which the Power and Life breaks through our Meetings into a world desperate for Friends' witness.' Let us be ready to respond to this invitation.

There being no further business for this yearly meeting, we separate, hoping to meet again in York from 30 July – 6 August 2005.

PETER J. ECCLES, *Clerk*