

The Gloucestershire Area Quaker Meeting Charities



Trustees Report for Year Ended 31st December 2014

Principal Address: The Clerk to the Trustees
Northfields, Old Bristol Road
NAILSWORTH, GL6 0LJ

The registration number of Gloucestershire Area Quaker Meeting Charities (GAQMC) is 1134212

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Assistant Clerk: Sal Drummond
(Membership)

Treasurer: Sarah Eilbeck

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Assistant Treasurer: Jan Gronow

Trustees: Colin Gerard, Clerk
Paul Castle
Christopher Chamberlain (until 9.2.2014)
Sarah Eilbeck exofficio
Jan Gronow
William Rowland
Marilyn Miles
Andrew Turrall
Robert Maxwell (Link to trustees)

Custodian Trustees: Friends Trust Ltd

registered charity
no.237698

Examiner of Accounts; Gardner Brown, Chartered Accountants
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Bankers:

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1. OBJECTIVES and ACTIVITIES

An area meeting is the primary meeting for church affairs in Britain Yearly Meeting. The objective of this area meeting is the furtherance of the general religious and charitable purposes of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, in the area of Gloucestershire Area Quaker Meeting Charities (GAQMC) and beyond.

The guide to the conduct of business continues to be Quaker Faith & Practice and the governing document, as amended and adopted by Area Meeting on 19 September 2009, registered with the Charity Commission on 9 February 2010 and amended on 26 November 2012.

The area meeting consisted of eight local meetings.

Table 1. Local meeting names, membership, and changes of membership

Cheltenham Quaker Meeting.....	68	decrease of	1
Cirencester Quaker Meeting.....	30	increase of	2
Forest of Dean Quaker Meeting	19	no change	
Gloucester Quaker Meeting.....	30	no change	
Nailsworth Quaker Meeting.....	76	increase of	4
Painswick Quaker Meeting.....	27	decrease of	1
Stroud Quaker Meeting.....	26	decrease of	1
Wotton Quaker Meeting.....	11	increase of	1
Members not attached to a local meeting.....	5	no change	
Total membership was 109 men and 183 women. Total	292	An increase of	4

In addition there were approximately 226 adult and 35 children attenders, that is, friends not in membership: in the previous year there were 226 adult and 36 children attenders, no change of adult attenders and a decrease of 1 child attender.

There were no marriages according to Friends' usage in 2014.

Where friends are more numerous, meetings for worship were held every Sunday and once midweek. At smaller meetings worship was held on at least two Sundays each month. Friends met as an Area Meeting for business ten times during 2014: that was monthly, except for January and August, as is the custom. Our representatives to Meeting for Sufferings and other central meetings, have made their reports, which have been received with interest and sometimes with concern.

Every three years each local meeting presents a report to Area Meeting in answer to the question “How does the Truth prosper amongst you?” In Quaker parlance, this is a way of asking ourselves about our relationship with the Spirit. This provides an opportunity for a local meeting to review its activities, strengths, weaknesses and proposals for the way forward. This year the area meeting heard one report. This was from Nailsworth meeting (see page 9).

TRUSTEES

The trustees are appointed by Area Meeting. They met eight times during 2014, in order to manage the property and finances of the Area Meeting, to carry out their responsibilities as the employers of staff in our meetings, including wardens, to ensure compliance by area and local meetings with the agreed policies for the protection of children and vulnerable adults, premises, including health and safety and data protection and also to uphold the Area Meeting in carrying out its activities and meeting its objectives.

All meetings returned satisfactory compliance forms for all these areas of responsibility, including a record of those appointed to safeguard and the dates of DBS approval to accompany the Safeguarding Children and Young people and Vulnerable Adults Compliance form.

In October the trustees completed the annual review of the level of payment to our wardens and other employees. The minute read: All our wardens and employees will receive an increase in pay in line with the minimum wage increase. We agree that the existing Wardens’ Contracts of Employment and Occupancy Agreements should continue. Together they ensure that our wardens are paid above the living wage. All employees not in our accommodation will be paid the living wage or above.

The trustees received the Annual Wardenship Reviews. This process is an opportunity for the warden and the local meeting to check that the warden is not overworked and is happy in her/his post; to clarify roles and responsibilities of the warden, if necessary and to consider how the distinction between wardenship and being a member of the meeting is working in practice. As with other properties, there was an annual landlord’s inspection.

The Memorandum of Understanding between Area Meeting, local meetings and the trustees continued and the list of office holders has been updated.

We thanked Chris Chamberlain who stood down in February 2014 and Andrew Turrall and Robert Maxwell who completed their periods of service in December 2014.

Trustees are responsible for the management of the Area Meeting properties. A report is included at the end of this trustees report, on page 18.

FINANCIAL POLICY

Local meetings control their own funds. These are the only funds not under the full control of Area Meeting. Apart from the general fund there are three designated funds, one for property, one for bursaries, grants and other purposes, as decided by Area Meeting and one for Quaker camp.

There are no restricted or endowment funds.

The trustees, including the treasurer and assistant treasurer, are responsible for the financial running and oversight of The Gloucestershire Area Quaker Meeting Charities (GAQMC) and the upkeep of the meeting houses and associated property. These are held in trust by Friends Trusts Limited. Our accounts and statements are prepared by separating from income and expenditure all transfers between local meetings and the Area Meeting. Gift aid tax refunds and room hire receipts are recorded in the year of receipt except where such receipts are overdue by more than one year. Apart from these two exceptions we include debtors and creditors on the balance sheet. We are aware that we must comply with the latest Charity Commission Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) especially as regards reporting. This calls for our adherence, as closely as possible to the guidance contained in the Association of Church Accountants and Treasurers (ACAT) Handbook, whilst allowing comparison with figures from the previous years' annual financial reports. We apply consistent treatment of the accounts in each accounting period subject to the above statutory requirements. Britain Yearly Meeting Treasurers' Handbook has been phased out and we now have access to the online ACAT Treasurers Handbook from our membership of ACAT.

Each set of accounting records deals with a specific part of GAQMC activities, covering all financial transactions, facts and events relating to them. All of the local and area accounts are examined by an accountant, who also prepares the annual financial report for consideration by the trustee body. In accordance with the governing document, the report is then presented to Area Meeting for acceptance.

The Area Meeting in session sets an annual quota, now called a guide contribution for each of the local meetings, after advice from the trustee body. This is to allow the transfer of funds, contributed by friends, to GAQMC. This is the major source of income for the Area Meeting.

Our wasting assets are depreciated with the object of writing off the cost (less residual value) over their useful life. No depreciation reserve is set aside.

RESERVES POLICY

The General Fund reserve is £6,000 - approximately 6 months expenditure.

Property Fund reserves are held in two separate bank accounts. This allows the treasurer access

to approximately one year's expenditure. The other account holds a similar amount as a contingency reserve, which is not under the treasurer's control. Equities to the value of £78,000, say, at the year-end, might be regarded as further reserves should area meeting so decide. See next section.

The bursary fund's equity investments are valued at £78,000. Bursary fund bank accounts hold just over £36,600. This sum includes £12,300 held on behalf of two local meetings. £21,000 of this has been re-invested in a One Year Bond to give us more interest income. Our investments have decreased slightly in value this year due to an average performance of the financial markets.

One meeting has deposited two legacies amounting to £32,600, with almost £8,000 of this sum being deposited last year in the Triodos account, to earn interest while deciding on the appropriate use of the legacy.

INVESTMENT POLICY

Equity investments have long been held. Nowadays they are held in ethical funds lodged with Friends Trusts Ltd in order to save trustees from making frequent investment decisions.

REVIEWS OF RISKS

Insurance of buildings has been reviewed (see Table 2). Valuations of contents continue to be under review.

The vulnerability of the meeting funds to embezzlement, fraud and error is kept under review. Over forty percent of current assets are currently beyond the treasurer's control in a TRIODOS account. Checks on the bank balances are carried out weekly by the treasurers. The treasurer makes a financial report to trustees quarterly at which time the bank balances are compared with the cashbooks. Electronic copies of the current financial records are checked against the bank balances by the treasurer and assistant treasurer on a monthly basis.

GRANT MAKING POLICY

Grants from the Bursary Fund have been decided in accordance with the established policy, by those appointed as Overseers/Pastoral Friends in consultation with the treasurer. This year a young friend was supported to attend the Southern Friends Summer Event. The general fund was able to support Friends attending training courses at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre and elsewhere including three Young Friends attending Junior Yearly Meeting which took place at the same time as the Yearly Meeting Gathering in Bath.

Table 2. Property - insured values

Date	Meeting Houses	Insurer's year end values (£)	
		2014	2013
1985	Cheltenham	564,932	532,946
1673	Cirencester, including 51 Thomas St. (Listed)	2,251,353	2,123,918
1834	Gloucester (Listed)	1,232,659	1,162,886
1680	Nailsworth (Listed)	509,270	480,443
1706	Painswick (Listed)	420,208	396,423
	Sub Total	4,978,422	4,696,616
	Other Properties		
	49 Thomas St., Cirencester	601,574	567,523
	The Lodge, Greyfriars, Gloucester	306,113	288,786
	Quaker Close, Nailsworth	778,640	734,566
	Sub Total	1,686,327	1,590,875
	Burial Grounds		
	Siddington near Cirencester	nil	nil
	Shortwood near Nailsworth	nil	nil
	The Dell near Painswick	nil	nil
	Total value of buildings	6,664,749	6,287,491
	Contents		
	Cheltenham (including solar panels)	43,345	33,705
	Cirencester	48,431	46,125
	Gloucester	44,703	42,574
	Nailsworth (including Heritage books)	34,653	28,383
	Painswick	20,488	19,512
	Total contents	191,620	170,299
	Total buildings & contents	6,856,369	6,457,790
	Camp Equipment	15,223	11,715

2. SOME OF THE ACTIVITIES OF AREA AND LOCAL MEETINGS

We continue to have active and involved membership. Some activities are the result of personal concerns, some the result of area meeting appointments and others result from our ability to make our meeting houses available to others.

During 2014 our meeting houses continued to be hired or made available on a regular basis for Oxfam Lunches, individual counselling, Alcoholics Anonymous, the Macular Society, Bipolar Support Group, Friendship Group (for older people), Parent Line Plus (support for families), Fair Trade, Tanzania Link, a week-long book festival and many others. Other faith groups also use our meeting houses including Unitarians, Buddhists, Sufis, Sathya Sai, Baha'i and Liberal Jewish women. These occasions help those using the meeting houses and enable quiet outreach of our Quaker values through personal contact and published information.

Three of our meeting houses, Cirencester, Gloucester and Nailsworth, opened for Heritage Open Days in September - a national scheme to celebrate England's architecture and culture. These days offer the opportunity for the public to view the buildings without the prospect of commitment to a Quaker meeting, yet many welcome the opportunity to enquire. Some who visited have subsequently become regular attenders at our meetings for worship.

We are grateful to our wardens who are frequently the point of contact at our meeting houses. The absence of the warden at Nailsworth meeting, on maternity leave, has brought home to us how many minor, yet important tasks are undertaken by our wardens. Job descriptions are essential but they do not cover those extra small tasks that make our meetings the welcoming places that we wish them to be.

In keeping with Quaker concern for criminals and criminal justice, dating back to the time of Elizabeth Fry, the Area Meeting supports our Quaker chaplain in Leyhill prison. As well as working with chaplains of all faiths in a pastoral way, they organise weekly silent meetings for worship for prisoners.

Until March 2013, when Gloucester prison closed, we also supported a Quaker chaplain there. The Area Meeting now supports a member of Cheltenham meeting as a prison chaplain at Long Lartin prison in Worcestershire. The prison also has a Quaker chaplain nominated by Evesham & Banbury AM, so it is probably the only prison with two Quaker chaplains. We receive reports on the positive and expanding benefits that this chaplaincy brings to the prisoners, including lunchtime meetings for worship.

Gloucestershire Quakers were in the forefront of setting up of Positive Justice Gloucestershire (www.pjglos.org) a group seeking to encourage the use of restorative and therapeutic practices within the criminal justice system, to redress the balance of negative representations in the media, and to raise public awareness of, and support for, positive initiatives within the criminal justice system, particularly alternatives to imprisonment where appropriate.

PEACE WORK IN WW1 ANNIVERSARY YEAR

Quaker Services Memorial Trust exhibition

The idea began as a request from the Area Meeting in November 2012 for the Peace Group to explore a possible venue for this exhibition. By the end, it had blossomed into a two-month-long peace project during the anniversary year of the outbreak of World War 1, involving Friends from every meeting in the area.

A tentative request in September 2013 to Gloucester Cathedral Diocesan Offices for us to show the exhibition in the cathedral, perhaps for a week, met with a generous response and a two-week booking in the south transept for May 2014 was agreed - together with the added bonus of being included in cathedral publicity. From here grew the idea that, in the anniversary year of the outbreak of WW1, Area Meeting could arrange for the exhibition to tour elsewhere in Gloucestershire. Eventually, this resulted in the following programme:

Nailsworth Friends offered it as a special and different dimension to the Nailsworth Festival, as well as the destination for the peace walk planned as part of the Nailsworth Walking Festival.

In **the Forest of Dean**, Friends borrowed an empty shop in Lydney to display the panels for two days (along with photographs of one attender's father's Friends Ambulance Unit (FAU) experience in Germany) and arranged its display for a further two days in the community café in Newnham, already known for its exhibitions in their upstairs room.

Cheltenham meeting then organised the exhibition's next location: five days in the long corridor of Cheltenham Hospital, providing interest for staff, patients and visitors. From there, **Wotton** Friends took it to St Mark's church in Dursley, where it formed part of a week-long celebration of the life of the late Lionel Ayliffe (a prominent Dursley citizen, member of Nailsworth Meeting and a member of the FAU).

The final stopping place, at **Cirencester** Meeting House, provided a fitting contribution to the start of Cirencester town's World War 1 centenary programme.

Other Activities

At most of these venues, we were also able to offer the additional dimension of a short silent DVD of archive material produced by Fiona Meadley of Painswick meeting.

On 15 May, we hosted a public meeting in the Cathedral Chapter House with Diana Francis, Quaker specialist in conflict transformation, speaking on the topic: 'Peace now: time for action', which Friends publicised widely. This drew an audience of fifty or so and a collection of £140 for Peace Direct.

Other activities included a workshop at Nailsworth Meeting on conscientious objection in World War 1, and war poetry reading events at Cirencester Meeting and at St Mark's Church, Dursley. In addition, archive material that we posted onto our website, www.glosquakers.org told visitors of the FAU wartime experiences of our Cheltenham Friend Margaret Sheldrick's father, Noel Taylor, and of the peace witness of Gloucestershire residents in both wars; and our press releases

resulted in coverage on BBC Radio Gloucester's Sunday morning programme, and local newspapers in Forest and Gloucester.

Feedback and Benefits

While some glanced only briefly at the exhibition, many took time to read every panel. During its tour across the county, it was seen by several hundred people - of whom 260 people wrote comments in its visitors' book. As these suggest, the exhibition seemed to speak deeply to those with family members who had been conscientious objectors - almost as if they were finding for the first time a way to talk about and affirm this past:

"Remembering my courageous and peace-loving father, a conscientious objector in World War two – thank you".

"My uncle born in 1924 was strongly influenced by the Quaker faith and became a conscientious objector in WW2, serving as an ambulance driver supporting the front line".

Others related to wider peace and to Quaker peace work:

"If only all mankind held these views". "Hope that one day there may be peace throughout the world". "The Quakers facilitated my entry into Britain with my parents from Vienna in Feb 1939. But for them I doubt I would be alive – thank you".

An important outcome of the exhibition was the many opportunities it provided for Quaker outreach. Hosting the exhibition in some non-Quaker venues helped us to reach a wider audience; visitors enjoyed the calm of the two meeting houses; ecumenical links were strengthened.

3. REPORTS FROM SOME OF OUR LOCAL MEETINGS

NAILSWORTH MEETING

At the area meeting held on 9 November 2014 Nailsworth Meeting presented their report on: How Does the Truth Prosper Among You?

Margaret Fell Qf&p19.61 "The Truth is one and the same always, and although ages and generations pass away, and one generation goes and another comes, yet the word and power and spirit of the living God endures for ever, and is the same and never changes".

Between June and September elders held 6 small group conversations and worship-sharing sessions on the theme "How does the Truth prosper among Nailsworth meeting". The group

conversations took place after each of our three meetings for worship with a total of 40 members and attenders participating.

Elders prepared notes summarising all the different viewpoints that had been expressed in the six group conversations. Put together, the range of topics and opinions was quite diverse. Together with our clerk, elders met to consider how Friends could best use these summaries. We wanted to work with them creatively and in a Business Meeting that would be interesting for everybody, including the older children. We came up with the idea of asking Friends to work together in small groups, with adults and children together, to write some advices and queries that would focus on how the Truth prospers in our meeting.

Our clerk met with the children and young people's meeting to prepare them for our All Age Meeting for Worship for Business, which was held on 5th October. At this Meeting we began by reminding ourselves about Advices and Queries, using the passage from Quaker Faith and Practice that begins:

“Dearly beloved Friends, these things we lay upon you...”

[Postscript to an epistle to ‘the brethren in the north’ issued by a meeting of elders at Balby, 1656.]

What followed was inspiring in all kinds of ways. The notes below, prepared by elders are alternated with comments put forward by Friends on the day, meeting in small groups to consider six different themes.

1. Truth

- is integrity, belief, discipline and is linked to early Quakers;
- the truth of lives lived in the present;
- messages for ourselves and for people of different approaches to spirituality;
- we need to focus on our spiritual core and not focus too much on practical things.

Diverse Spirituality and Belief.

How much is our meeting like a tree?

Do we remember the importance of roots below the surface (as made so clear in much Indian art)? Do we appreciate their strength in stopping our tree falling down? Do the roots go down to the deep, to divine vitality which feeds all? Do we understand that all roots are different and equally important?

Is our trunk able to withstand bullets and barbed wire, to absorb them, and even use them?

Can our branches sway in the wind and storms, rustling, staying attached?

Do children play under our tree, swinging, pushing each other?

Do other creatures take shelter under and in our tree?

Do we remember the cycle of seasons; that, after leaves fall and it looks dead, the tree replenishes and grows new leaves and fruits and seeds?

Do owls hoot from our holes?

Disagreement and Difference

Does our fear of being unloving inhibit our ability to disagree?

Do we truly have the courage to disagree and have others disagree with us?

Do we humbly accept each other and our differences with love?

Let us listen not just to the words, but to what people are actually saying.

2. Diversity

- is different ways of finding fundamental truths; is there something missing?
- Some Quakers focus on the practical side of Quakerism, others are more overtly spiritual.
- We do not have a dogmatic approach to belief and emphasising our diversity is important.
- We should be able to use language that means a lot to us as individuals (such as traditional Christian).
- Sharing and celebrating our differences is important.
- The power of 'Getting to know you' brings everyday lives into meeting and the power of our experiences in meeting is taken into our everyday lives.
- It is important to share our hugely varied individual journeys.

Being an All Age Community.

Do we appreciate how precious it is to have families in our Meeting?

Do we nurture our families as a whole Meeting?

Can we consider becoming Children's Meeting helpers to enable more parents to experience Meeting?

3. Worship

- is the heart of what we are in business and other meetings;
- do sufficient Friends understand the commitment to our business method? How do we communicate this energy?
- we need to consider the quality and frequency of vocal ministry and to seek a balance between (divine) inspiration and inspiration from events/stories from everyday life;
- introduce readings from A and Q more frequently, to help us focus in meetings for worship.

Our Worship Together

Spoken Ministry – don't feel daunted!

After taking into consideration the gathering of the Meeting speak when you feel moved to do so – don't think that you need permission.

Try to consider the others in Meeting. Stand and speak clearly. Don't wander off the point. Better to sit down sooner rather than later.

4. Challenging the world

- is a Quaker tradition that we don't do enough of these days.
- There seems to be a lack of putting our faith into action communally and a lack of encouragement to live our values through meeting.

Challenging the World

Do we challenge each other and all living things with love, integrity and respect?

If we maintain awareness of light and darkness it gives us balance and colour.

Communication and Shared Endeavours

We believe that shared endeavours can be better initiated and developed by a range of different methods of communication, to include our whole meeting, whatever our age, geographical location or digital connectedness. We welcome the energy and greater knowledge of our whole community shared through our News of Friends network.

How can we build simple systems of communications, to ensure all are included, and achieve a right balance between face to face and new technologies, maintaining worshipful decision making?

The more stillness we have, the more effective our worship will be, the more the light will shine through into everything we do.

Other Nailsworth Meeting news

In June Liz Willis and Jenny Daisley, Joint Chief Executives of The Springboard Consultancy and members of Nailsworth meeting were awarded OBE's, '*... for services to the Empowerment and Development of Women in the UK and Worldwide*' in the Queen's 2014 Birthday Honours List. Liz and Jenny set up The Springboard Consultancy in 1988, working from their (then) homes in Woodchester, Stroud. It is a training and development consultancy, specialising in women's personal and work development issues. They create training programmes, write the accompanying materials and then train other professional trainers to deliver the programmes under licence. Over the years, they have trained 1,300 trainers and their flagship 'Springboard Women's Development Programme' has reached over 240,000 women across 37 countries. This required many culturalised and translated editions, for countries as diverse as Australia, Saudi

Arabia, Sweden and South Sudan. Two other local Friends have contributed to Liz and Jenny's success: Martin Large (Nailsworth meeting) of Hawthorn Press, who has been their publisher from the very beginning, and John Meadley (Painswick meeting), who was a client, introducing 'Springboard' into Ghana. Both continue to be staunch supporters of Liz and Jenny's work.

We were delighted with the arrival of Luca Finn on Wednesday 27th August to our warden Rebecca Stapleford and her husband James Porter, a brother for Caleb and Jacob. He was warmly welcomed in his first meeting for worship on Sunday September 28th. He had already made his first appearance at Area Meeting supper in Nailsworth on September 9th.

NEWS FROM OTHER MEETINGS

Cheltenham Meeting

The meeting started a new ecumenical prayer group in April, which meets monthly. The meetings started by looking at Gerard Hughes' book: *God of Surprises* which the Quaker broadcaster Gerald Priestland described as "one of the great books of spiritual guidance". They shared their spiritual insights from the book in a prayerful manner. This topic is expected to last for twelve months.

Other monthly groups are The Searchers (a discussion group about Quakerism and fellow worshippers) and the Quaker Book Club.

Whilst on the book theme, Nigel Smith (attender at Cheltenham) has recently published his book *Speak to Me: Mute, Witty and Dangerous*. This is about a wheelchair bound teenager who can only speak through facilitated communication (FC). She has to rely on a personal assistant who helps her tap out the words on a keyboard.

June 20th to 22nd saw the spiritual adventure weekend for Cheltenham Meeting held at Charney Manor. The title was '*What is my Ministry: What is Ours?*' and was facilitated by Zelig Gross of South Wales Area Meeting. A number of things have emerged: fourth Sunday worship sharing after meeting, coffee mornings in each other's homes and a Friday coffee get together at the Footsteps cafe in Winchcombe Street, to coincide with Cheltenham Farmers' markets.

Cirencester Meeting

Economic Justice

Two of us had represented Area Meeting at the Economic Justice Conference held in Brussels by Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) with Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) in November 2013 and had reported on the meeting. As a result we chose QCEA as our

fundraising focus in May and June. Simon Bond, a member of the QCEA UK British Committee, came to Cirencester during that time and discussed with us Quaker work in Europe. We were impressed by the fact that QCEA aims to work 'where a Quaker voice will have most impact' and suggest that we should use it as an example when planning the use of our resources locally.

Criminal Justice

Our fundraising focus for July, August and September was the Prison Phoenix Trust. The trust offers personal support to prisoners and prison staff through teaching, workshops, correspondence, books and newsletters. A key activity is training and supporting qualified yoga teachers to teach in prison and other secure conditions. In July a local trust member and trainer came to talk to us about their work. Two yoga days were organized in the meeting house in August in support of the Trust and raised £465 which helped us to achieve a good total donation.

Open day

Cirencester Meeting in common with several of our meetings with older meeting houses took the opportunity of Heritage Weekend in September (<http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/>) to open its doors and undertake some outreach. A loop of a presentation of Cirencester's Quaker Heritage (previously shown at a Cirencester Civic Society Meeting) was shown. There was good attendance, and visitors took the opportunity offered to discuss religion and Quakerism.

Social Justice

From October to December we supported our local charity, Gloucestershire Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers. GARAS offers support to those seeking asylum in Gloucestershire, welcoming them when they arrive, advocating for them in their daily struggles, supporting them if they face being sent back, as well as helping them adjust to their long term future if they are recognised as refugees. Rebecca Francis from Nailsworth local meeting came to talk to us in October about her work with GARAS. We also sponsored a member of our meeting, who lived for the month of November on the £36.62 per week that is asylum support. They both inspired us to collect nearly £1,500 for GARAS. Marina found that she put on weight as food containing carbohydrates is cheaper than other types!

Gloucester Meeting

Because the fire at Gloucester in 2013 caused so much damage, they had been unable to hire out the building and it is taking time to find new people and organisations who wish to use the rooms – whether large or small. At the end of March the Meeting House was transformed into an exhibition and performance space for the Gloucester Strike a Light festival.

The piece in the Meeting House was *97 years* by Jo Hellier. In this interactive installation, Jo delicately worked through a series of conversations between her and her Grandfather. It was a poignant investigation of mental health that invited the audience to decipher a confused mind together with the performer.

The last weekly Oxfam Lunches took place on 25th June. The lunches have raised a great deal of money for Oxfam in the decade or so they have been running. However, in recent times the number of people attending has dwindled and there are fewer volunteers to call upon for staffing the rota.

Ursula Windsor's 90th birthday party was held on a sunny day in July. Ursula is known to both Gloucestershire Friends and Friends in many parts of Britain Yearly Meeting for her peace activities.

Painswick Meeting

Painswick has been having extended renovation work which has included a second toilet (accessible for disabled people), a new serving area for making hot drinks (and washing them up afterwards!) and a hearing loop. Once the secondary double glazing is fitted the work will be completed. Those who attended Area Meeting in April benefitted from many of the changes.

As well as renovations to the meeting house, a new memorial garden has also been developed. In Painswick's local newsletter, Claire Frehilly wrote about 'Cultural Memory', which is concerned with how societies remember: how the past survives in cultural forms, what gets remembered, why and by whom, and with the various forms that commemoration can take. She concluded "We now have a new space in which to gather at Painswick. Creating it has brought some of us closer to each other. Taking care of it will enable us to hold dear memories in our hearts".

Hugh Ross (1917-2014) A member of Painswick Meeting

Quaker Faith and Practice 21.37 – a favourite of Hugh Ross

"What's that on the shelf?" my artistic friend asked. "A turbine blade. I designed it, I replied proudly. "Oh", she said.

Visiting three weeks later she asked, "Why is that still there?"

"Because I think it is beautiful." "Oh", she said.

My friend enthused over the beauty of a cathedral, a Rembrandt, a Turner, a sonnet. I find none in a cathedral, little in Rembrandt or poetry, a lot in a Turner.

I find great beauty in Concorde, a Norton, a modern suspension bridge, in calculus and a good computer program – especially if I have written it! She little or none. I thrill to the sound of a racing car, the sight and smell of a machine shop, the noise and balletic movement of

men and machine shaping white hot steel in a forge – and in my turbine blade. She does not.

We could both be moved to tears by mountains, Beethoven, Britten, clouds ... and by friendship.

Graham Clarke, 1994

Stroud Meeting

Our friend Mary Brown has been corresponding with a prisoner on death row in the US since last year as part of the Lifelines project (begun by Quaker Jan Arriens in 1988). In the summer she heard that the prisoner was to be executed and wrote to BBC4 iPM about the correspondence she had with him. Mary was interviewed for 15 minutes by Eddie Mair.

Her book – Confessions of a Quaker Chaplain - was published in May and describes, amongst other things, her time as a Quaker Chaplain in a closed men's prison and her experience of being in prison herself as result of a peace protest. As Mary insists, there is 'that of God' to be found in everyone no matter what their crime.

Wotton Meeting

In September, Wotton Meeting started a regular weekday meeting for the first time. The meeting is held every Tuesday at 6pm for half an hour; numbers attending vary between four and nine, and the meeting is really valued by those who are able to come.

We were glad to see our Young Quakers group start in the Autumn, with the young people involved in planning the programme for the monthly meetings. This has been a very positive development, which enriches the whole meeting.

During Quaker Week in October, in addition to our meetings for worship for enquirers, we held an evening of sacred circle dance in the local arts centre, and an evening of mindfulness, led by a friend from Nailsworth Meeting. These events were advertised locally, attracting a few visitors, and were much appreciated by all who attended.

We continue to hold our sharing group meetings on a weekday evening once a month. During 2014 we looked at several of the booklets in the "Twelve Quakers and..." series. Towards the end of the year, we agreed to use the new resource "Being Friends Together" for future sharing group meetings.

4. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Children and young people's work in our area – an overview (November 2014)

Across the Area there is a great variation in the number of children and young people in different meetings.

Cheltenham currently has one ten year old who comes regularly and occasionally one grandchild. Cheltenham has a volunteer rota so they are prepared in case children come.

Cirencester holds a regular children's meeting on the second Sunday in the month and they have five children aged from five months to seven years. They have a rota with four regular children's meeting volunteers.

The Forest of Dean has four children aged between seven and eleven, from two families. The meeting has no separate room to hold a children's meeting so they have until recently been holding a once a month all-age meeting for worship. However they are now rethinking this and are currently deciding what to offer.

Gloucester has one child who comes occasionally. The meeting has children's resources available and volunteers who can be prepared to go out if any family arrives unexpectedly.

Nailsworth currently has eighteen children on their list aged between two months and fourteen but a number of these come only rarely. They also have four older teenagers who no longer come to meeting but attend national and regional Quaker events for young people. Currently, there is a rota of fourteen regular volunteers. Two young friends attended the Young Friends' Participation Day at Friends House on 6 December.

Painswick no longer has any regular children coming, but keeps in touch with several older teenagers who have attended Link group and national Quaker events such as Junior Yearly Meeting and Senior Conference.

Stroud doesn't at present have any children and young people attending but now that they will be meeting every Sunday in the Exchange, they are optimistic about the potential for offering something for families in the future.

Wotton, excitingly, have recently launched their children's meeting – which they are calling Young Quakers and are holding once a month using the youth club next door. They have a potential six children and young people and have four volunteers.

It's important to stress that many of the young people in our area take part in other local or national Quaker activities even if they no longer come to meeting. These activities play a key role in keeping our young people in touch with Quakerism, particularly when they reach secondary

school age. The most important of these is our Area Meeting Link Group which meets at a weekend two to three times a year in one of our meeting houses with a Saturday night stay-over. Our Link group is often attended by several children from other neighbouring Area Meetings where there is no link group, so it plays a wider regional role as well. Then there are many other national events – such as Young Friends Summer School, The Quaker Tall Ships Adventure, Senior Conference and of course JYM – and often young people who went to meeting when they were much younger, regain their interest in Quakerism through being encouraged to attend these events.

5. AREA MEETING CAMP

This year's camp was at Parc le Breos (pronounced Broosh), on the Gower Peninsula, some ten miles west of Swansea and was held from 16th - 23rd August. The site was a field surrounded by deep forest; 20 minutes walk from a large sandy sea beach at Three Cliffs Bay.

6. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Table 3. Meeting Houses and Burial Grounds

Date	Meeting Houses
1985	Cheltenham
1673	Cirencester, including 51 Thomas St. (Listed)
1834	Gloucester (Listed)
1680	Nailsworth (Listed)
1706	Painswick (Listed)
	Other Properties
	49 Thomas Street, Cirencester
	The Lodge, Greyfriars, Gloucester
	Quaker Close, Nailsworth
	Burial Grounds
	Siddington near Cirencester
	Shortwood near Nailsworth
	The Dell near Painswick

The maintenance and improvement of the fabric and sustainability of our Meeting Houses continues to be a major concern of our Trustees and a call upon our funds. The interior decoration and furnishing is the responsibility of the local meetings.

Gloucester Meeting House has been back in use after repairs and refurbishment after a fire. This has been greatly welcomed and is a great relief to Gloucester friends.

We have five Meeting Houses, Cheltenham, Gloucester, Cirencester, Nailsworth and Painswick, with the exception of Cheltenham, our Meeting Houses are Grade 2 listed. We are also responsible for wardens' houses at Gloucester, Cirencester and Nailsworth and three properties that are let, two in Cirencester, one in Nailsworth. Another responsibility is the oversight and maintenance of three burial grounds that are not attached to our meeting houses. They are at Siddington (Cirencester), Dell Farm (Painswick) and Shortwood (Nailsworth). The Shortwood burial ground is the only one open for burials.

We have a programme of Quinquennial surveys that are carried out by a professional surveyor in order to identify replacement and maintenance requirements and provide a maintenance schedule. A Quinquennial survey of Nailsworth Meeting House and 1 and 2 Quaker Close was carried out in April 2014.

SUMMARY OF WORK TO PROPERTIES COMPLETED in 2014.

Cheltenham. Cheltenham Friends have explored the possibility of and benefits from the installation of photovoltaic panels on the roof of the meeting house. After a year the benefits have exceeded expectations. Minor works and maintenance have been carried out.

Cirencester. The Quinquennial survey of June 2010 indicated that the extensive stone roofs would need major work. A specialist stone roofer has indicated that a thorough maintenance scheme would extend the life of the existing roof by up to ten years. This work is now planned and further estimates have been sought. Repairs to the flat roof at the front of the meeting house have been completed. Windows in the meeting house have been serviced and a programme of internal and external decoration continues. A landlord's inspection indicated that 51 Thomas Street is in reasonable order. A replacement extractor has been installed in the bathroom and additional insulation installed. The upper flat of 49 Thomas Street is in reasonable order. Work to the boiler has been carried out. The lower flat is in need of extensive updating but it is difficult to achieve at the present time. The use of extension leads presents a hazard but the tenant continues to use them despite advice to the contrary.

Gloucester. It is good to report that Gloucester Meeting House has been in use for over a year since major repairs and improvements costing £144,000.00. A Quinquennial survey indicated further maintenance work to the exterior of the Meeting House and improvements needed to the warden's accommodation at The Lodge. This has also been completed. The exterior paint work of the Meeting House and the Lodge has been painted and the Lodge has a new condensing

boiler, a new bathroom and other improvements. This positive report has been marred by the breakdown of the gas boiler in the Meeting House in December. A condensing boiler is to be installed after Christmas.

Nailsworth. A Quinquennial survey of Nailsworth Meeting House and 1 and 2 Quaker Close was carried out in April 2014. No major work has resulted from this survey but further investigations have been completed. The repair/ replacement of the kitchen roof stone tiles remains outstanding. The wiring to electric heaters in the main meeting room has been replaced and all wiring has been inspected. There is an ongoing plan to demolish a redundant outbuilding in need of repair and replace it with a wooden building that can be used by both our young people and adults. Preliminary work has been completed to establish a Peace Garden that will be open to all.

Painswick. Following a Quinquennial survey report received in August 2012 a schedule of work was prepared and linked to proposals for the provision of ground floor kitchen facilities, an enhanced upstairs meeting room, improved insulation, a hearing loop and a toilet suitable for disabled users. This work has been completed and is much enjoyed by the meeting. The upstairs meeting room is now an excellent library as well as a room to meet. In addition a new memorial garden has been developed which is peaceful and offers views across a beautiful valley.

APPROVED by the trustees on 25 March 2015

SIGNED by

Colin Gerard, Clerk to the Trustees

Colin Gerard

Sarah Eilbeck
Treasurer

S.A. Eilbeck

Jan Gronow
Assistant Treasurer

Jan Gronow