

**QUAKER SOUTH ASIA INTEREST GROUP (QSAIG) ANNUAL BUSINESS
MEETING 24 October 2015 (3.30– 4.00 p.m.)**

Present: Andrew and Ann Noel Clark, Gerald Conyngham, Cora and Rob Gallagher, Stuart Morton (QSAIG convenor), Stephen Petter, Penny Robbins, Pat Saunders, Anne Smith (Treasurer & Membership Secretary), Fran Wilde

Prevented: Anne Austin, Georgina and Trevor Bending, John Evans, Birgit Felleisen, John Gibbs, Tracey Martin, Graham Mortimer, Ram and Stephanie Ramamurthy, Liz and Martin Schweiger, John & Sue Smithson, Caroline Tisdall, Margaret Waterworth.

1. Minutes of last Annual Meeting on 18.10.2014 were agreed
see QSAIG website: <http://www.qsaig.co.uk/news-and-events/>
2. Convenor's report: printed copies (see attached below) was presented by Stuart Morton
4. Interest Groups within Britain Yearly Meeting – Martin Schweiger has been a member of the Group examining this within BYM but had not been well enough to present a report. Matters will be followed through by the Convenor when it is brought to his attention later in the year.
5. Treasurer/Membership Secretary's report – Anne Smith spoke briefly. Our bank balance is more than adequate for our immediate needs.
6. Possible future work: Gerald Conyngham and Stuart Morton keep QPSW informed of Ekta Parishad's work and have agreed to send the information from Ekta Parishad (through Action Village India and Ekta Europe) and presented by Fran Wilde, to QPSW committee members David Mowat and Tracey Martin. *a
7. Appointment of officers for 2015-16 a. Convenor –Stuart Morton b. Treasurer – Anne Smith c. Membership Secretary – Anne Smith d. QSAIG Newsletter Editor (likely to be one edition p.a. – Rob Gallagher e. Website manager – Martin Schweiger (subject to consent) *b

Date and place of next meeting – subsequently decided as October 15th 2016 at the home of Liz and Martin Schweiger in Leeds.

*a

Subsequently agreed to have a QSAIG Group Table at the Groups' Fair on May 29th 2016 at BYM. Gerald and Stuart to coordinate). We will not hold an Interest Group as we are being encouraged by the Recording Clerk's office to hold one every two years and we did hold one in 2015..

*b

Martin Schweiger whose health is, thankfully, "heading in the right direction" has agreed to continue as Website Manager .

**QUAKER SOUTH ASIA INTEREST GROUP (QSAIG)
CONVENOR'S REPORT
(19 October 2014 - 24 October 2015)**

Main actions:

2014 AGM- follow up. The Convenor, treasurer/Membership Secretary and Website Manager worked together to finalise the QSAIG aims. These were attached to the minutes of the 2014 AGM, are on the QSAIG website and copied below (*1).

Newsletter material gathered together and published: 30 April, 2015. Copies were made available at BYM on 2-4 May, 2015. Material included up-to-date accounts from Nepal of the earthquake, articles and news from several QSAIG members, and update on QPSW discussions re South Asia work (not including the ongoing conciliation work in N E India).

Organising QSAIG meeting at BYM 2nd May 2015: Gerald Conyngham and I organised the meeting at which Ivan Nutbrown, the coordinator of Action Village India, spoke about his recent visit to India and, in particular, to visit the work of Ekta Parishad (Unity Forum). Copies of Ekta Parishad's book "Journey to the other India" (published in May 2014 in India) were sold. Tracey Martin, a QPSW committee member spoke about her recent work visit to Nepal during which time the very destructive earthquake occurred. The meeting responded positively to the Convenor's willingness to collect donations for the earthquake relief that would be sent to Subhash Kattel, a capable younger man who is also the coordinator of the Alternative to Violence programme in Nepal. The meeting included a short time of remembrance of Geoffrey Carnall who had died earlier in the year and who had been a member of QSAIG. He had completed and published Marjorie Sykes' book in 1997 "An Indian Tapestry- Quaker Threads in the History of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh from 17th century to Independence".

QSAIG table at BYM Groups' Fair 3rd May 2015: Liz and Martin Schweiger organised a QSAIG table at the Groups Fair. As a result of this a number of newly interested people have been added to our correspondence list. They also sold a further £50 worth of copies of Ekta Parishad's book "Journey to the other India" which added to those sold at the QSAIG Interest Group.

Donations for the relief and emergency needs following the first wave of the Nepal Earthquake: The appeal was coordinated and managed by Stuart Morton. It was mentioned on the BYM website and written about in "The Friend". By the end of August 2015, £2866 had been collected. This came from 13 individuals and 5 Quaker Meetings. Subhash Kattel (see above) was the receiver and coordinator of the money. He was also the recipient of moneys from "Friends Peace Teams- Asia -West Pacific" with whom he has had a solid association for some years. The total amount received by the end of September 2015 was US\$ 75,230 (mainly from USA and Australian sources) Through this initiative, Stuart also enabled other two other Nepal charities based in Britain and with strong involvement from concerned Friends, to receive over £700 in total. The money was carefully used to provide food, shelter, and kitchen utensils for families identified through five organisations with whom Subhash had long term, trusted relationships i.e. Community Self Reliance Centre, (CSRC), National Land Rights Forum (NLRF), Educate the Children Nepal, Child

Welfare Nepal (in Hetauda), Women's Power Development Centre.

Articles in "The Friend" following QSAIG meeting at BYM particularly relating to Nepal appeal. Arranged tape recorded interview of Rajagopal by QPSW's Steve Whiting (Turning the Tide" coordinator) on 13.10 2015. This will appear in a future edition of The Friend and is likely to become an online resource on the Turning the Tide website.

Communications' role: have sought to be a focal point re connecting QSAIG members over particular needs/information e.g. the news that Martin Schweiger had suffered a heart attack in France and continuing news of the well being of Liz and himself. Have liaised with Anne Smith, the membership secretary who has carried out all postal communication with members not on Email.

Seeking news of QPSW's thinking/work in South Asia: thankful to have (D.V.) the presence of Andrew Clark to update us at QSAIG on the conciliation work concerning the people of N.E. India; and news from Tracey Martin (see* 2 below) who serves on QPSW Overseas Peacebuilding sub-committee with up to date experience of parts of South Asia.(to be shared at QSAIG meeting).

The future of QSAIG: We have been informed by BYM that further news on the review of Formally Listed Groups with BYM will be available in December. Whatever its outcomes, we need to find ways of sharing the tasks more widely within QSAIG if it is to continue to work at its present level of activity. Tasks include: Convenor and organiser of meetings, Treasurer, membership secretary/communications, newsletter editor, website manager.

Stuart Morton – QSAIG convenor
16th October 2015

***1**

Aims of QSAIG:

To assist in the building of a peaceful, just and sustainable world inspired by our Quaker faith and focussing on the South Asian region*, by:

- a Sharing information and understanding in order to inform our actions
- b Supporting individuals and groups, in Britain or the wider world, which act to progress QSAIG's main aim, including the work of Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) in South Asia
- c Sustaining relationships with those in the region that continue to value the support of Quakers in Britain

** For the purposes of QSAIG this includes Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka. (in this list, only Myanmar is not a member of the eight nation South Asian Association of Regional Co-operation – SAARC – though it has expressed an interest in becoming a member).*

***2**

October 2015 - The QPSW Central Committee decided not to support our request to continue work on South Asia – we had suggested getting things started again by developing an exhibition of peacebuilders in the region. Their rationale was less

about the work itself and more about a lack of clarity about what work we should be doing and where and how to use limited resources. The Overseas Peacebuilding Committee have a vision of our role being to contribute to a global non-violent peace movement. We are currently working on how to articulate that more clearly to QPSW CC (who have asked us to do so informally). I think that the current discussions in BYM about how to put our faith into action and Diana Francis's Swarthmore lecture will lead to more coordinated peace work in QPSW. But, as always, it may take some time.....Our next meeting is our retreat in Feb – followed by QPSW CC meeting which will look at how they can work for peace strategically. (Tracey Martin)