

400 being prosecuted for census boycott

AT LEAST 400 PEOPLE are being prosecuted for failing to complete last year's census. Miriam Yagud, of Nailsworth Meeting, reports that this figure was given to her by the Office for National Statistics after a lengthy telephone conversation.

The number is significantly higher than previous estimates by census boycott campaigners. A boycott campaign began after the government awarded the contract for running the census in England and Wales to multinational arms firm Lockheed Martin. In Scotland and Northern Ireland, it was run by another arms company, CACI.

Long-standing peace activist John Marjoram, of Stroud Meeting,

is one of the latest individuals to be prosecuted. He will face court in Bristol on 6 February, where he will plead not guilty. Supporters are planning to make a short online film about his case.

Miriam Yagud suggested that the Bristol venue follows a trend of census resisters being summoned to courts outside of their local area. John Voysey, of Ludlow Meeting, has already criticised the authorities for calling him to court in Wrexham (see 'Court for census boycotter', 6 January).

Eight census resisters at Nailsworth Meeting met on Sunday with a support group of local Friends, who offered emotional

and practical support should they find themselves in the dock. One of them, Indigo Redfern, said that she was 'very pleasantly surprised at the support there was' in the Meeting.

Quakers in Nailsworth have been discussing the census ever since a Friend mentioned the boycott in ministry last spring.

All eight Nailsworth boycotters returned their uncompleted census forms with letters explaining their reasons for boycotting.

Indigo Redfern told *the Friend* that 'at least half' of the Nailsworth boycotters have said they will go to prison if convicted rather than pay a fine.

James Nayler Foundation closes

THE JAMES NAYLER FOUNDATION has announced that it is to close. The foundation was started in 1998 following an article in *the Friend* and a BBC television *Panorama* documentary on the prison work of consultant psychiatrist Bob Johnson. It aimed to embed Quaker values in work with people with severe personality disorders.

The foundation, courtesy of a small legacy and the generosity of Friends, opened an Emotional Support Centre on the Isle of Wight. It moved three years ago

to east London where it ran training courses, offered group and individual support work and conferences and workshops.

Sue and Bob Johnson, of Hampshire and the Islands Area Meeting, explained: 'Unhappily, its expanding workload has exceeded the capacities of its unpaid staff. Multiple grant applications failed, as did hoped for income from training courses and dwindling finances left its trustees and members with no option but to close.'



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Pews and views

THE QUAKER ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN AND WRITER David Butler is to speak at a forthcoming conference devoted to the non-conformist contribution to the story of pews, benches and chairs.

The conference, 'Sitting in Chapel', is to be held on Friday 2 March in Carr's Lane Church Centre, Birmingham, and is an attempt to raise awareness of a little studied aspect of non-conformist history.

A new publication from the Ecclesiological Society, *Pews, Benches and Chairs*, has helped to rectify this for the Church of England but its findings are not entirely applicable to other denominations.

The focus of the conference is on aspects of seating in non-conformist places of worship. The organisers hope to increase understanding of the role, design and traditions associated with historic seats in chapels and meeting houses. David Butler will talk about the tradition of Quaker seating.