

Newsletter No 124

ACOMB QUAKER MEETING

February 2019



Photo
courtesy of
Peter Taylor

For a Quaker, religion is not an external activity, concerning a special 'holy' part of the self. It is an openness to the world in the here and now with the whole of the self. If this is not simply a pious commonplace, it must take into account the whole of our humanity: our attitudes to other human beings in our most intimate as well as social and political relationships. It must also take account of our life in the world around us, the way we live, the way we treat animals and the environment. In short, to put it in traditional language, there is no part of ourselves and of our relationships where God is not present.

Harvey Gillman, 1988



NAZ & MATT
FOUNDATION.org

BE THE PERSON YOU WERE BORN TO BE

We tackle homophobia triggered by religion to help parents accept their children.

Naz and Matt Foundation was set up in 2014 following the sad loss of Matt's fiancé, Naz, who took his own life two days after his deeply religious family confronted him about his sexuality.

Naz and Matt Foundation exists to empower and support LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, and Intersex) individuals, their friends and family to work towards resolving challenges linked to sexuality or gender identity, particularly where religion is heavily influencing the situation.

We are a registered UK charity and have won multiple awards for our work building bridges between religious and LGBTQI+ communities.

Our mission is to never let religion, any religion, come in the way of the unconditional love between parents and their children

By tackling the problem head on and raising awareness Naz and Matt Foundation hopes to open the eyes of closed minds in communities and families so that they will love the children they gave birth to, for the individuals they were born to be.

UPDATE Special Monthly Collections 2019

We have collections planned as shown in the list below but need suggestions for June onwards:

March	Refugees at Home
April	York Cycling without Age (York Bike Belles)
May	Carecent

We would welcome your input and support with this. Ideally you would be willing and available to:

- 1) speak about the charity at the end of each meeting during the month proposed, or if not, that you would ask somebody to do this on your behalf,
- 2) collect the money at the end of each meeting, and
- 3) send the money on to the charity confirming to me the amount and date sent on so that I can provide a report to the meeting at the end of the year.

Please send your suggestions to: Clare.Brint@networkrail.co.uk copying in acombquakerclerks@gmail.com

Please provide the following information:

- ⇒ Charity name
- ⇒ Contact details for the charity (website for example)
- ⇒ Month - if you have a preference

Thank you in advance.

Clare Brint

Quaker Phrases clarified ... by QV's Backbencher **"What do elders do?"**

Elders are responsible for the right holding of meeting for worship and the care and support of the spiritual life of the meeting. They're appointed by the Area Meeting, following nomination, and usually meet monthly. Not a permanent role. Like overseers, they serve for up to two terms of 3 years. In spite of the name, age has nothing to do with the role (in theory, anyway).

My Handful

In 2012, when I came to the end of my six-year stint as Quaker Chaplain at HMP Askham Grange, I made a very big decision; I would give up all my security clearance and have no formal relationship with the Prison Service.

During those six years (and the sixteen years before that as a Chaplaincy Volunteer at HMP Full Sutton, and Askham Grange) I had encountered a small number of 'Lifers' with whom I discovered a real rapport. If I was going to go on seeing them and offering them support and friendship, I had to do it as an ordinary member of the public; the 'Friend' bit of 'Family and Friends'.

It sounds very cold if I suggest I had criteria for selecting my five (My Handful), but looking back I know that what they had in common was that we enjoyed each other's company, and I felt confident that none of them was out to exploit our friendship. Prisoners are by definition, needy and desperate, and I am only too ready to help in any way I can, but my Handful all have a keen sense of that fine line between being able to ask for help and pushing it too far.

Four of them (Chris, Edward, Neil and George) are still in prison, serving very long sentences. Kate has been out since 2010, has two sons (currently 6 and 8) and lives near me. Chris and George are both full members of the Society of Friends, having joined whilst in prison. Chris is in an open (Cat D) prison and might get released before this year is out. Edward and Neil are both close (fingers crossed) to getting to Cat D in a similar time-scale. George's future is less clear, and Kate (fabulously capable single mother) is losing her sight.

Wishing them a Happy New Year is not straight forward. What they need above all is hope and self-belief, and I try to nurture that in bucket-loads. We all of us have to balance delusional chicken counting against despair.

In the immediate future, my two main areas of concentration are

Edward's next Parole Hearing at the end of January, when he just may get recommended for open conditions after being slammed down at three previous hearings. I have submitted a letter of support to the Parole Board and I shall attend the hearing, but am not permitted to speak at what is effectively a formal court session.

Kate is my other current priority. Many years ago, learning that I had just one son of much the same age as her, she asked wistfully, 'You wouldn't like to adopt a daughter, would you?' My separation from the Prison Service means that, in a sense, I have now done just that. I have also, more recently, agreed to go on the journey into sight loss with her. It's a huge learning curve for us both; it is frightening; it is heart-breaking; but there is a wealth of kindness and support out there.

Jenny Hartland
(Names are all fictional)

Study group at Acomb Meeting House at 19:00

Friday 22 February

These meetings are always relaxed and thought-provoking so please join us to share and discuss. The next topic is: "**The keeping of special days**" Refreshments will be provided beforehand at each session. Everyone is welcome!

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Upholding Meeting

An Upholding Meeting will be held on the FIRST Sunday (even months) at 12:00 **after** Meeting for Worship for half an hour. The next one is 3 February. Please come to spend 30 minutes holding people in the light.

Everyone is welcome.

Dates for February

Everyone is welcome at everything.

**If no venue is given, events take place at
Acomb Meeting House.**

Regular Events

Every Sunday: 10:30-11:30 Meeting for Worship (MfW) and Children's Meeting (followed by refreshments)

Every Wednesday: 11:30-12:00 MfW (see p8)

1st Sunday (even months): 12:00 Upholding Meeting **after** MfW (Debbie Wright)

2nd & 4th Sunday: 12:00-12:30 'Afterword' after MfW

3rd Sunday: 12:00-13:30 Shared Lunch after MfW

Shared Lunches

February
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Calais Refugee Crisis *John and Sally Bourton*

Special Monthly Collections

February

Naz and Matt Foundation *Peter Taylor*

If you are welcoming people to the Meeting, please remember to offer them a printed copy of the newsletter. We always have a few spare copies printed for newcomers to gain a flavour of Acomb Meeting.

Please Note a full diary of events for York AM and LMs is available on the York Quakers website:

www.yorkquakers.org.uk/eventscalendar.html

February

Saturday 2	Menwith Hill Worship: 14:00-15:00 (see p9)
Sunday 3	Upholding Meeting: 12:00 <u>after</u> MfW (see p5)
Friday 22	Study group: 19:00 (see p5)
March	
Saturday 9	Area Meeting: 13:30-16:00 New Earswick

Special collections feedback

December: **CAAT (Campaign Against the Arms Trade)**
 £170

Thanks to everyone for your generous donations.

Gill Boccock

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Mid-week Meeting for Worship

The mid-week Meeting for Worship will take place at Muriel Acomb's home: **30 Vyner House, Front Street**. Same day and time: **11.30-12 on Wednesdays**. Please note that it would be very helpful if you could be there by 11.25 to make access easy.

If you are not a regular at the mid-week Meeting you might like to let **Heather** know if you are coming to make sure we have enough chairs.

Newsletter Feedback to Acomb BM 6 January

When Ruth & I began editing the newsletter in July 2016 it was being published every two months. After our first issue in Aug/Sept 2016, we asked people to complete a survey in order to find out what the Meeting wanted from the newsletter. As a result, in December 2016, we started a 6-month trial of bringing the newsletter out monthly. This was very well-received and we have since produced 25 monthly newsletters.

John Bourton established the excellent relationship with our printers, Inc-Dot, which we continue to enjoy. However, their process now means that, after they receive our draft, they have to send back what they intend to publish. They will not print without our written approval so their draft has to be checked and then emailed back to them. Allowing time for the newsletters to be printed, collected, named and distributed means that the deadline is now **BEFORE** the third Sunday of each month.

The current distribution of copies is: **PAPER** 20 (including a library copy); **EMAIL** 35 (including QV & York Area website)

Over the past two years I have really enjoyed finding items of interest and the technical challenge of fitting them all into the space. Ruth's eagle-eyed proof-reading has been invaluable along with gathering important dates for the calendar, distributing the paper copies and generally keeping me grounded. Some members of the Meeting have been very supportive by sending articles and photos. In particular, Paul O'Kell's "Library Corner" has become a regular, and valued, feature.

Without these contributions, it would not be possible to cover such a wide range of topics and I would be **VERY** glad to receive lots more! If there is **ANYTHING** which you would like to see in the newsletter, or which you think might be of interest to others in the Meeting, please send it to the newsletter email address.

Thank you.

Loretta

Menwith Hill Worship

RAF Menwith Hill, Birstwith, Harrogate HG3 2RL is a Royal Air Force station which provides communications and intelligence support services to the United Kingdom and the United States.

Meeting for Worship outside Menwith Hill takes place on the first Saturday every two months: February, April, June, August, October and December. This action is a York Area Meeting Concern and Harrogate Meeting would appreciate support.

For details/help getting there, contact:

Gilly Charters (07808 863009), *Barbara Penny* (07737 368459) or *Ruth Rymer* (01765 677943)

Do join us, bringing a chair and wear warm clothing!

QFP 20: 65 Wills

When death occurs, difficulties are encountered where an unsatisfactory will or no will at all has been made. It is therefore recommended that Friends should make wills in time of health and should obtain professional advice. Wills should be reviewed from time to time, as due to change of circumstances it may be wise for new wills to be made. [...]

In choosing executors, care should be taken not to overburden those who are to act, particularly where continuing trusts may be involved. Friends who have responsibility for children should make provision for their care, appointing guardians and trustees as necessary. Where there is more than one parent the will should cover the possibility of their dying at the same time. Finally, the place where the will may be found should be made known to those likely to be directly responsible.

How did the rose ever open its heart and give to this world all of its beauty? It felt the encouragement of Light against its being; otherwise we all remain too frightened.

Hafiz, translated by Daniel Ladinsky

Report on Area Elders & Overseers Meeting 24 November 2018

Back in November, a group of elders and overseers from Acomb attended this Meeting in Harrogate. which was entitled *Grounding our Practice: Returning to the Centre*. Hosted ably and warmly by Harrogate Friends, the day was affirming and enjoyable. Activities included role-play, group discussions and reflection time. Aside from it being an opportunity for inexperienced elders and overseers to meet new people and benefit from the wisdom of old(er) hands, it also allowed us to reflect on the roles we hold and explore ideas about streamlining or consolidating what we do. There were two main points we took from the day.

Firstly, we were all struck by the many areas of cross-over that exist between the two roles (understandably, smaller meetings often combine them into 'elderseers'), and that at Acomb we might wish to allow the two teams to have more opportunities to work, talk and eat together. Thus, we are looking at how we might have joint meetings - perhaps twice-yearly - to facilitate a deeper understanding of our respective roles and improve our communication.

Secondly, we were struck again by the need to increase awareness and provide better preparation for people undertaking roles and responsibilities within Acomb meeting. Speaking personally, some roles have seemed mysterious or beyond my capabilities, yet what was needed was a demystification process to allow me to picture myself within the role. Thus, we will be exploring ways of enabling shadowing/mentoring; formal and informal training; and developing a bank of information resources available to all.

Meanwhile, we would encourage members and attenders of our meeting to feel free to ask questions about roles; equally, we welcome suggestions about ways we can improve.

Deb Evans

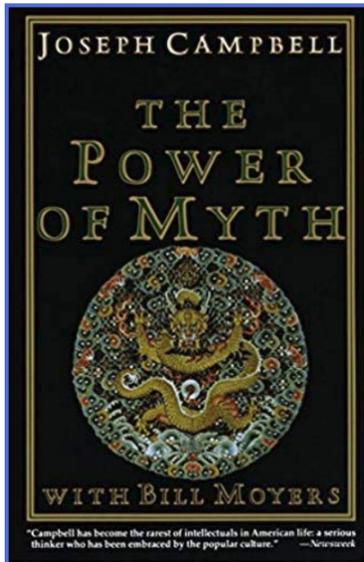
Library Corner

The Power of Myth by Joseph Campbell

We often hear talk, in politics, of who has the most compelling narrative: one that will persuade people (though by no means all) to vote, thus giving power to either left or right. According to script theory, we have plots for being passengers, drivers, teachers or pupils; 'transactional analysis', meanwhile, talks of life scripts, which – at least in part – shape our personal destinies. Freud, Jung and others delved into the depths of the subconscious and unconscious, recognising the importance of myths to our lives: the story of Oedipus, for example. Karen

Armstrong has written of the importance of myth, even when recording events in the lives of figureheads: the Buddha, Christ and others.

We see the myths of Arthur and the round table; the shootout on Main Street in westerns; the Star Wars films, inspired by B movies of the 1930s. The work of Joseph Campbell not only discusses myths and their importance to the individual and society, but also that they are transcendent in their own right.



Campbell died in the late 1980s, but his work lives on. As an old man, he was interviewed by a disciple. The interviews were recorded and transcripts published. I've purchased a copy of these in book form for the library. I believe them to be vital to an understanding of our lives, and of Quakerism in particular; to the inner conversation between our conscious and our unconscious, the home of the spirit, the place where joy resides ... if only we journey there.

Paul O'Kell



I am thrilled to have had a watercolour painting, '**Tongli, A Chinese Venice**', accepted for the **Ferens Art Gallery Open Exhibition**, Hull. The exhibition is from the 2nd February to the 14th April 2019.

Lois Folkard

Please email items for the newsletter to:

AcombQuakerNewsletter@gmail.com

... or give printed copy to **Loretta**

... **before** the **third** Sunday of the month

Printed by **Inc Dot Design & Print** www.inc-dot.com