

Newsletter No 116

ACOMB QUAKER MEETING

May 2018



Worshipping Upside Down!



Sally talking with a local Quaker in Wellington, NZ.

During our six weeks in New Zealand we managed to take part in Meetings for Worship in Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland. This brief article is our first impressions of Quaker Meeting Houses and worship on the other side of the world.

All three meetings were housed in their own buildings and sited in the suburbs in mainly residential areas. Wellington and Auckland had flats attached or alongside where visitors could stay. Both had English couples living there for a nine to twelve month period serving as Quakers in Residence. Margaret Beckett & Keith Bruce were from Skipton LM and had been in Wellington since November. The other couple were from somewhere in southern England, I forget where!

We weren't fully aware of all the roles and duties of Quakers in Residence but they are clearly regarded as providing a valuable contribution to the spiritual and pastoral life of their meetings. If anyone is interested we can provide a bit more information on how they are selected.



Auckland Meeting House

All three meetings had similar numbers attending MfW as our own Acomb meeting. With similar ratios of gender and age, though perhaps more younger adults in Wellington, the capital. Both Auckland and Wellington had small children's groups of 3-4 who joined the adults towards the end of MfW,

just as in Acomb. They told us what they had been doing in their children's group which was interesting.

All three meetings used name badges which had just first names in large clear lettering. Regulars each had their own permanent ones which they picked up from a table as they arrived. Visitors and newcomers were invited to write their own names on temporary labels. They say that this helps people to get to know each other, and



Christchurch Meeting House

getting a permanent badge after coming a few times is seen as a positive and inclusive 'rite of passage'. In all three we felt welcomed by the doorkeepers and the process of writing name badges helped. Something to consider for Acomb?

Sharing worship with New Zealand Quakers became very important to us. Spoken ministry was varied but overall was very similar to our own experiences here in Acomb and made significant contributions to our shared worshipping in silence. One meeting had Afterword straight after Worship and before Notices which seemed to us rather disconnected from what had gone before. But it did introduce us to the famous New Zealand theologian, over 100 years old and still very much alive.

After Worship and before Notices, all three meetings invited visitors to introduce themselves. This was done sensitively and as far as we could tell no one felt pressured. Introducing ourselves certainly helped later during refreshments as people came up to us with comments and questions linked to our introduction. Not surprisingly, the numbers of visitors at each meeting were greater than that normally experienced here. Could inviting introductions be something to consider trying in Acomb?

Refreshments followed Worship in all three meetings and in only one of the three did we feel a bit left out and ignored. This could have been because they were preparing for their Business Meeting which was to follow. Overall, we came home feeling that our Acomb Meeting is welcome and inclusive to newcomers and visitors, and this was borne out by the testimony of one New Zealand Quaker who had visited our meeting in 2016.

In summary, we felt instantly at home worshipping with Quakers in the Antipodes. We were warmly welcomed and an added bonus was local advice and suggestions on places to visit. Attending as many Meetings as we could became an important part of our trip.

At all three meetings we passed on greetings from Acomb Meeting and these were formally accepted and returned.

John and Sally Bourton

Do you have too many books or DVDs?

On **Sunday 6 May** Keep Your Pet will be holding a fund raising event, a Dog Walk, for the 3 **Lord Mayor's Charities** – *Keep your Pet, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People* and *Refugee Action York* – and as part of this I will be running a Book and DVD Stall. It's the last direct fund raising which I will organise as part of the Lord Mayor's Charities as our Lord Mayor, Barbara Boyce, will hand over to a new mayor at the end of May, and I am hoping to have lots to sell.

If you have any books or DVDs you would like to pass on for good cause, please let me know – I am happy to collect them.

Also, if anyone has a **smallish gazebo** they would be willing to lend me for the day, I would be very grateful.

Thank you very much.

Sally B

Shared lunch 15 April: What are Overseers for?

- To provide pastoral care, discerning what is wanted
- Ensure no one is left out
- To provide the community glue
- To come to meeting and get to know people
- To create trust and foster well-being
- To understand boundaries
- To organise extra-curricular activities
- To facilitate group consultation
- To make time for friendships
- To provide hospitality

Should we:

- Have more social activities?
- Have a social committee?
- Have more fun?
- Use social media more?

John G

Northern Scripture Festival

On **12 May 2018** a celebration of the bible is being held in York at **All Saints School** (lower site).

The aim is to help Christians to know more about the bible, and to encounter it in new and dynamic ways.

Through talks, workshops, exhibitions, and worship, Festival-goers will see the bible in a whole new light.

The Festival is rooted in the Catholic tradition, but is open to all Christians. **Churches Together in York** has been asked to publicise this exciting event. To find out more, visit the website:

www.scripturefestival.org/york-12-may-2018.html

Bookings for York on 12 May are now open
Just £5 per person!

Suggestions for stilling before Meeting

Looking round the Meeting and thinking about each person, one by one, by name, making a connection in my mind.

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*, *Barbara Penny* or *Ruth Rymer*

DO join us, bringing a chair.

Dates for May 2018

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 (+ refreshments)

1st Sunday: 09.45 Upholding Meeting before 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

May 20

"Carr Junior School & New Earswick Quakers: a Meeting's response to local need"

Ruth McCarthy & Gill Darton

Special Monthly Collections

May

Naz and Matt Foundation

Peter Taylor

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

Study Group

Friday 18

19.30 "Preparing for death"

Nick Folkard

May

Friday 4 - Monday 7	<u>Yearly Meeting: Friends House, London</u> Website: quaker.org.uk/events/ym2018
Saturday 5	<u>Swarthmore Lecture 2018:</u> 19.00 Friends House, London
Sunday 6	<u>Upholding Meeting:</u> 09.45 - 10.15 before MfW <u>Business Meeting:</u> 12:00 after MfW
Sunday 13	<u>Area Meeting:</u> 13:30 - 16:30 Bootham School PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE!
Friday 18	<u>Study group:</u> 19.30 talking about death and the afterlife at John & Sally Bourton's , 138 Wetherby Road YO26 5BY (see p8-9)
<h2>June</h2>	
Saturday 2	Menwith Hill Worship (see p5)
Sunday 3	<u>Upholding Meeting:</u> 09.45 - 10.15 before MfW

THANK YOU!!

March collection for **Sasha's trip** (see p11) **£121**

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.

**Quakers and the Afterlife:
three brief texts for discussion at the Study Group on
Friday 18 May**

Are you able to contemplate your death and the death of those closest to you? Accepting the fact of death, we are freed to live more fully. In bereavement, give yourself time to grieve. When others mourn, let your love embrace them.

Advices and queries 1.02.30, from *Quaker Faith & Practice (3rd ed.)*, the book of Christian discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends in Britain

"This night or tomorrow night
I shall depart hence ...
Do not seek to hold me
For it is too strait for me;
And out of this straitness I must go,
For I am wound into largeness...."

*Richard Hubberthorne (1628 (baptized) – 17 August 1662),
early Quaker preacher and writer*

Friends do not consider a life after death as a reward for virtue, or as a compensation for the suffering in their lives on earth. Neither has the fear or threat of damnation been used to induce Friends to live better lives. The Quaker view of what happens beyond death is firmly rooted in the experience of this life. Friends believe that life is good, and that an essential clue to its real nature is to be glimpsed in the love that people have for one another.

There is always an element of mystery about love which people cannot fully penetrate, but Friends are convinced that it has a

timeless quality. Love cannot be destroyed by death and cannot be limited by time and space. This conviction is underlined by the experience of Quaker worship, and by the awareness that the personality of Jesus was not diminished by his death. His life was based on his profound trust that God is love. Friends respond to this love. They experience heaven here and now, and believe that whatever lies beyond death must be for our good.

Friends do not dogmatise about what happens after death. There are Friends who are convinced that there is an after-life, and those who are convinced that there is not. But all Friends feel that it is more important to get on with living this life, and seek to improve the conditions of humanity in this world, than to engage in speculations about the next.

Charleston Friends Meeting - Charleston, West Virginia

<http://charlestonwv.quaker.org/meeting-the-spirit.html#1>

Quakers in Yorkshire Book of Members & Attenders

The Meeting has bought copies of the 2018 edition, which is published every three years. They will be "on the table" for the next few weeks – price £5.

Heather S



EBOR Lecture: "[Where love and justice finally meet](#)" The place of forgiveness in mending broken relationships

May 9, 2018 @ 19:00 at Temple Hall, University of York St John Speaker: **Marina Cantacuzino**

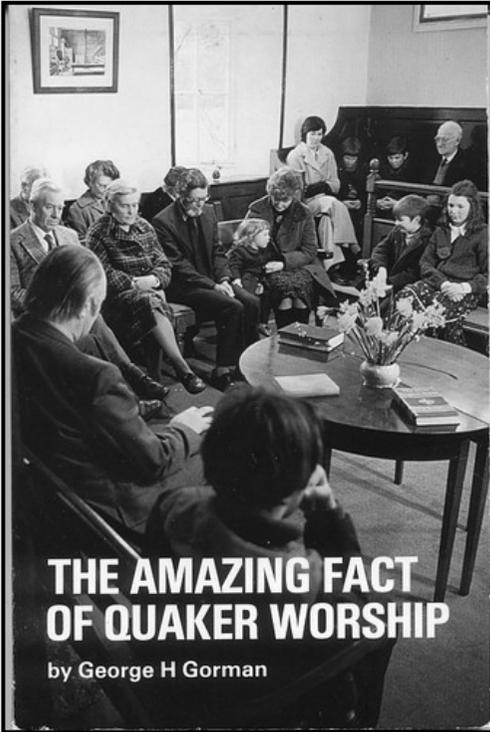
FREE but booking with Eventbrite is required

You can explore the full programme of events here:

<http://www.yorkhumanrights.org/events/>

Library Corner

Hello again. I've been busy, booking in many diverse Quaker-themed books kindly donated by Claire Thompson from her late father's library. He was a Friend respected for his depth of thought on Quaker concerns. We're very fortunate to have acquired these volumes; I do hope you'll find time to read at least one or two of them.



One of the books Claire has donated is a copy of George H Gorman's 1973 Swarthmore Lecture, *The Amazing Fact of Quaker Worship*, replacing an old, worn copy. It's a brilliant work, and still very relevant.

I'll be stocktaking over the next few weeks. Inevitably some books will go to make way for new ones; I'll give meeting first dibs on departures, by placing them on the library table one Sunday after meeting (date tba). Any left will go to charity.

Finally, I have an appeal: does anyone have a copy of last year's Swarthmore Lecture (currently unavailable), and be willing to donate it to the library? If so, I'll be very grateful; we should, ideally, have one in stock.

Thank you all.

Good reading.

Paul O'Kell

Bring and share meal for Sasha

On Friday 13 April (supposedly an unlucky date) 11 of us met for an evening of shared food and company and to collect for Sasha's trip to Namibia. Sasha could not be there as school commitments got in the way but she made an excellent video presentation of what she intends to do when she is there and to show us past work done in the school and how important the work is. There was a bit of a technological struggle with



speakers not talking to laptops etc but being so few we were all able to see it on Jemma's computer.

It was a lovely evening. Convivial company with much laughter and wonderful food. Everybody helped to set up and clear up. Despite the low

numbers, which were disappointing, we made **£121** which was unexpected and great.

Last October Sasha needed just over £1000. The Meeting has provided about £800 and grateful thanks go to all those who have contributed in various ways. Sasha now needs about £240 by the beginning/middle of May—certainly an achievable target.



Acomb Meeting is wonderful – thank you all.

Debbie Wright

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Editor's note: If you missed the meal, you can still donate online at Sasha's "go fund me" page:

www.gofundme.com/sashas-namibia-fund

All contributions gratefully received!

Area Elders & Overseers Meeting

This meeting, held on 7 April at Friargate Meeting House was on the theme of '**Quakers and the Community**' focussing



on '**Bridges and Glue**'. After discussing the 'glues' which hold Meetings together, the bridges we make between individuals in a Meeting, Meetings plus other people & organisations, we had fun creating a platform to hold copies of The Friend out of linguini, the bridges and play-dough, the glue. We also shared practical ideas from the different meetings. Members of New Earswick Meeting explained to the group the project they are

involved in with the pupils and teachers at Carr Lane Junior School called '**Restorative Approaches**' which looks at conflict resolution within the classroom and playground. Further discussion took place about whether this work could be further developed in other schools within the area.

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In addition, Maggie and Lois would like to collect postcards people have finished with in order to build up a resource for a possible future activity for one of our shared lunches.

Maggie Coxon & 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

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