

FRIARGATE NEWS

February 2019

Issue 4

Editorial



Friargate News is very much a work in progress. It seems that some readers have struggled with the new format for dates and have missed having everything in one chronological list. So this month we're listing all events in date order and are also trying to make it easier to pick out events and dates at a glance. Please let us know what helps.

And please remember that we are dependent on all of you to point us in the direction of news items. Do provide or suggest items of interest to us all as the Friargate community. Don't be shy of offering us photos we might use - a colour production without them would be a real waste.

Meeting in mid-January with Christmas roses – hellebores – on the table focused on the hope that such winter flowers bring us. A sufficient reason,

I trust, to share the joy of witch hazel flowering in dark days (*photo: Jennifer Barraclough*).

Barbara Windle

Quaker Homeless Action's Open Christmas in London

The recent 'Friend' ran an article about Quaker Open Christmas. Two Friargate Friends, **Frank Brogan and Camilla Wimberley**, were part of the action, as was another York person, Tim Mathieson. This gives us the opportunity to learn a little more about how it felt to be part of it.

How did you find out about the opportunity to be part of Quaker Open Christmas?

I have volunteered at QHA Open Christmas once before, about 4 years ago. I'm not sure exactly how I found out about it – probably from QPSW website and its own website.

Did you have to take any prep/training for it?

The first time I volunteered I attended an excellent training day in London. This time I decided very late, so couldn't repeat it. As I'd done it before I suppose it was not essential, although some things had changed, including the building we were using.

How many of the 190 of you were 'working' at any one time? Hours? Tasks?

Most of mine were night shifts (one evening and four overnight), so there were fewer volunteers needed – ten or so most nights I was on duty – whereas the day shifts had more like 25 I think. A lot more people are on site during the day, so more staff needed. Tasks vary; mine included serving food and drink (including cheese on toast at 3am!), general cleaning, manning the gate, washing up pots/pans, laundry, talking to people,

organising stock, compressing cardboard into 5kg bundles, finding a hat, chopping vegetables (a good 4am task) and whatever else might need doing.

I made a sign telling people not to pull out a particularly important plug!



How was staying in the Penn Club? Did you meet Quakers from lots of other places?

It is fantastic to have accommodation provided for those of us who need it, and lovely to meet other volunteers. It definitely helps create a sense of shared purpose and community. I also appreciated the heavy curtains this year, when I was having to adjust my body clock and sleep in the

daytime! A nice variety of Quakers take part, and one or two familiar faces, so good conversation is to be had. And brilliant Penn Club stalwart volunteers look after us, make sure the fridge is full – and lay on Christmas dinner! (I slept through mine, but they saved me a plate!)

Who came to QOC? Once or every day? Did you get to know them or their stories?

Not sure how to answer - many people, and how could I capture the whole variety of their lives and reasons for being there? I spent quite a long time in the early hours discussing life and theology with one man (sample topic: did Jesus do marketing?) and a group of us had a 'telling bad jokes and riddles thing' going at the gate one night. I try to avoid asking about personal situations, but if someone wants to converse, have a laugh, or just to talk and be listened to, then that is part of what we are there for.

What felt most useful about it - food - shelter - conversation – etc?

I think just being a body, being there and mucking in – it all felt useful. If I was doing one thing, someone else would be able to do something else. It was good this time to get a bit of a sense of the decisions taken and work done by QHA trustees (I am full of admiration). Though it felt tiring after a long shift, we had some really useful debriefing meetings which then fed into decisions taken and implemented the next day.

Would you do it again? Would you recommend it?

Yes, I would always consider it if at a loose end then. I would definitely recommend it.

Tiring but good! (Volunteers are really encouraged to do what they feel comfortable with, not more, and to take breaks when they need, so it doesn't need to be too tiring!)

I think it is a shame we couldn't offer more - but then, we shouldn't have to. These things are much too important to depend on the time and inclination of volunteers to pick up the pieces and fill the gaps through which more and more people, it seems, are falling. Nevertheless it is a rewarding way to spend some time and use some energy for good.

Camilla Wimberley was answering the editor's questions – thanks, Camilla!



News of Members and Attenders

Announcements personal and official

A Message from our Overseers

2019 sees the number of appointed Overseers in our Meeting at an all-time low. Ten years or so ago we had 18 Overseers. This year there will be only 10 Overseers for almost 300 Members, Attenders and children. This means that everyone at Friargate needs to be aware that it is unlikely that Overseers will be able to be as proactive in making contact with Friends as they have been in the past.

Our priority has to be welcoming Enquirers and newcomers to Friargate, being aware of the needs of the sick, the elderly, the isolated, the bereaved, and all those who are going through a difficult time. Quaker Faith & Practice reminds us that some of the responsibilities of Overseers are also shared by Elders so we hope that we shall be able to work together to serve the needs of the Meeting.

Oversight has always been and will always be the responsibility of everyone in Meeting. Overseers are there to try to ensure that no-one gets forgotten or missed out. We know that much care is carried out by friendship groups, house groups, work colleagues and those who live near each other and we hope that this will continue on an even greater scale. Overseers still want to be available for everyone in Meeting, but this coming year the emphasis will need to be on all Friends looking out for each other while at the same time, alerting Overseers to anyone who may need special help. The names and photos of all Overseers are available in the foyer or you may contact either/both of us.

Chris Love and Julia Terry Co-convenors in 2019

Sustainability Questionnaire – your help needed

York AM agreed in November to undertake an audit of actions being taken by the Area Meeting, its Local Meetings and individuals in relation to climate change and sustainability. Martina Weitsch (New Earswick) and James McCarthy (Acomb) were asked to devise a questionnaire. The draft text was then agreed by AM in January.

Most questions concern our current practice and can be answered by Friargate staff or committee members. John Gilham has agreed to coordinate responses. We hope that Local Meeting in March may give time to the broader question of what we might try to do as a meeting in the future.

Finally there are questions for individuals. These are:

- How do you get to meeting? Do you regularly bring others with you?
- Are you willing to answer a questionnaire about current practice in your household?
- Have you any stories about how you embrace sustainability where you have had success, overcome obstacles, identified experience to be shared, joyfully, with others?

Please send your reply to Sarah Allen sarahelisabeth.allen1960@gmail.com or via the Treasurer's pigeonhole at Friargate. Sustainability will be on the agenda again at AM in May once all the replies from all five Local Meetings have been collated.

Sarah Allen, Margaret Bryan & John Gilham

Activities in February

1 st	Friday	Bishophill Group	12.30 pm, bring your own lunch to 6 Portland St (David R & Ann H). Continue chapter 5: God, Words & Us
2 nd	Saturday	Harrogate Spiritual Nurture	9.30 am coffee and pastries 10 – 12 noon "Creativity Workshop" Details/ booking: Barbara Penny
3 rd	Sunday	Local Business Meeting	12 noon
6 th	Wed	Book Group	7.30 pm 40 Westlands Grove (Alison England. tel 41 316). Discussion of Patrick Gale's 'A Place Called Winter'
10 th	Sunday	Exploring Quakerism	9.00 – 10.15 am All welcome
10 th	Sunday	Afterword	12.00 – 12.30 pm
14 th	Tuesday	Knavesmire Group	7.30 pm 6 Marlborough Grove (Anna B) Christine Abbott on 'active learning'
17 th	Sunday	Soup Lunch	Soup and rolls lunch from 12 noon
24 th	Sunday	Attenders Group	12 noon – 12.45 open discussion

NOTICE READERS & SUNDAY COLLECTIONS

3 rd February	David Laverick 798050 or Huw Still 07915 607903
Other Sundays:	Keith Knight 07808 770224 or kk@deanknight.co.uk
Breakfast Meeting:	Margaret & David Laverick 798050
Collections:	3 rd , 10 th Quaker Social Action; 17 th , 24 th Snappy (York)

QUAKER MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

Every Sunday	Friargate 10.30 -11.30.	Lamel Beeches 10.30 -11.15
Every Wednesday	Friargate 1.15-1.45	(bring lunch from 12.45)
2nd, 4th Sundays	Friargate 9.15 -10.00	(shared breakfast from 8.30)
3rd Sunday	Eastern Villages Group 8pm (contact Val Humby)	

FRIARGATE NEWS contact details

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Please note and use the editor's new email address.

All dates to Julia Terry jhterry10@gmail.com 01904 656634

Next issue's deadline: Sunday 17 February. Font: Palatino Linotype 12

Looking Further Ahead

Friargate 28th March at 5.30 pm will see the launch of Janet Dean's new book.

This will be as part of the York Literature Festival.

More information available later - but save the date now.