

# YORK AREA QUAKEVINE

Quaker News, Views, Insights and Reports

Issue 18

September/October 2021



*August Sunset at Arisaig*

*Margaret Bryan*

## What is/are your favourite Quaker quotation(s)?

*Continuing the series in which ten voices from Friargate & Acomb respond personally to Barbara Webb's question (above). Each diamond indicates a different voice.*

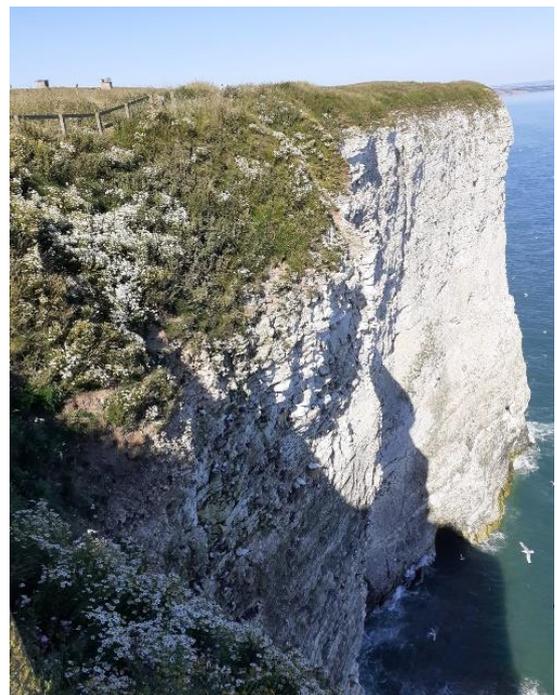
❖ The quote from Rufus Jones about beauty is one of my favourites. **QFP 26.32:** 'wherever beauty can break through, it does break through.'  
Beauty and the sacredness of the cosmos have always been connected for me.

❖ The William Penn words referring to love and marriage and mentioning the word 'pleasure' as a moral imperative- I love the fact he said that, in a time when marriage was more often seen in terms of duty. The surprise of it! I find it much more widely applicable. I think if our actions are compassionate, then acting for others brings joy. (**QFP 22.35**) 'Here it is we ought to search out our pleasure.'

And the George Fox quotation about the ocean of darkness and light. As well as the beautiful imagery, I love the bit which goes:  
'And I cried to the Lord, saying, 'Why should I be thus, seeing I was never addicted to commit those evils?' And the Lord answered that it was needful I should have a sense of all conditions, how else should I speak to all conditions.' (**QFP 19.03**).

And of course, living adventurously, because it's something I enjoy doing!

- ❖ I love most of chapter 2 QFP Approaches to God - worship and prayer (I also have a document somewhere listing all my favourite passages throughout QFP!). Maybe - if I had to choose - Thomas Kelly in **2.40**, about the “Real Presence of God” you can find at the heart of worship. Or Thomas Green in **2.49** for its tender encouragement. Or “Is my message cream or scum?” from Violet Holdsworth in **2.64**. Anything by Isaac Pennington or John Woolman (eg **20.10** about the place of prayer)... I could go on!
- ❖ Need to think about this- will get back to you.  
. 'Walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone.....'  
[though I gather the 'walk over the world' is supposed to mean' being above material matters etc' -- sounds a bit self-righteous]
- ❖ Impossible to choose! Just for starters, here are some of my touchstones:  
**27.12** Thomas Story (1737) The unity of Christians never did nor ever will or can stand in uniformity of thought or opinion, but in christian love only.  
**17.13** Isaac Pennington (1660).....This is the true ground of love & unity, not that such a man walks and does just as I do, but because I feel the same spirit and life in him, and that he walks in his rank, in his own order, in his proper way and place of subjection to that; and this is far more pleasing to me than if he walked just in that track wherein I walk. [it would have been inclusive language if he'd written today]  
**29.16** Val Ferguson (1991) too long to quote the whole passage – but especially the section which includes: ‘Wherever we are seeking... we are affirming... wherever there is no division between our words and our actions... we are faithful Friends’ .  
And, of course, so much of Rufus Jones, Thomas Ellwood, George Fox, Margaret Fell, Carolyn Fox, William Penn.
- ❖ The last sentence of **Advice 17** –  
"Think it possible that you may be mistaken". This gets more difficult as each year passes!
- ❖ My favourite quotes are **Advices and Queries numbers 1 and 3**.  
And I'm very fond of William Dewsbury. **QFP 19.05 , 19.33, 19.45, 29.19**  
e.g. 'Therefore dear Friends, wait in the Light, that the Word of the Lord may dwell plentifully in you'.
- ❖ I like **Advices and Queries 28**:  
Attend to what love requires of you, which may not be great busyness.
- ❖ Let your life speak
- ❖ **QFP 25.02**; We can all listen to the sounds of the earth tuning into it with joy.



*Flamborough Cliffs*

## *Religious Alliance for Dignity in Dying*

This article is written for those Friends and members of other faith groups who support the campaign for assisted dying. Just over a month ago the “Religious Alliance for Dignity in Dying” was launched. It already has over 800 members, all of whom support choice at the end of life alongside our faith. The campaign challenges the notion that religious believers and disabled people are monolithically opposed to assisted dying. In fact, those who oppose are probably a minority.

There are currently two assisted dying Bills, one in Scotland and one in the House of Lords. The Bill in the House of Lords was proposed by a Quaker. In addition, the Sunday Times has joined the campaign. There is also an All-Party Parliamentary Group for Choice at the End of Life, and this has been hearing evidence in public from various faith groups, a palliative care doctor, and a disability activist. If you missed it, you can watch back on [Youtube](#). It is very moving.

In addition, more Religious Alliance members have been arguing the case for a change in the law; Rabbi Charlie Baginsky wrote a piece for the [Jewish News](#), Rev Simon Woodman had a blog posted by the [Baptist Times](#), Canon Alan Race (Modern Church) was quoted in the [Church Times](#), while Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain had an article in the [Daily Mail](#).

Current statistics, according to Dignity in Dying, are as follows.

- 86% of people with a disability support change to the law.
- 84% of the public support the choice of assisted dying for terminally ill adults.
- 80% of people with faith support the legislation of assisted dying for terminally ill adults with mental capacity.
- 54% of GPs are supportive or neutral to law change on assisted dying.

For those who oppose assisted dying and who have continued to read this piece, perhaps out of curiosity, I have two pleas:

1. Please can you learn the facts before offering opinions. In particular, the two old memes about slippery slopes and safeguards have long since been disproved by the experience in other jurisdictions.
2. For those whose beliefs are not determined by facts, please uphold the human rights of those people who may have different beliefs to your own. There is room in our hearts for both.

To learn more, or join the campaign:

<https://www.dignityindying.org.uk/assisted-dying/>.

**Martin Birley** [New Earswick]



## York Area Quaker Meeting (YAQM)

**York Area Meeting: Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> September 10.30 am**

The meeting is being held on Saturday MORNING as several of those present will wish to attend Rosemary Johnson's memorial meeting at 3 pm the same day.

Link:

Matters before the meeting:

- ❖ Any necessary business (nominations; membership) will be taken first.
- ❖ We shall next concentrate on Yearly Meeting Gathering, starting with brief personal impressions from four Friends who were present.
- ❖ We shall receive the report on AM action responsive to Acomb's concern. Paper A [report on AM action re Acomb's concern] refers.
- ❖ Receipt of New Earswick's response [below] to questions asked in July by our MFS rep. Replies from all our LMs will be received & considered in November.
- ❖ NOTE Acomb has asked that direct consideration of its concern [flagged up in info sent to LM clerks] be deferred to November AM and this has been agreed, so Paper B is held over until November.

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*New Earswick's minute re July questions*

- 1 At July 2021 Area Meeting, Sarah Allen reported on the Meeting for Sufferings held on 10/07/2021 and asked the following questions, which Area Meeting then referred to local meetings for consideration, asking for a reply by September or November Area Meeting: 1. Do we support the central work of BYM sufficiently in our giving as an Area Meeting? [see chart at foot of this agenda+]
2. Can we as an Area Meeting think of suitable young people who might be considered for nomination for Meeting for Sufferings, and can we suggest these names to the Area Meeting Nominations team?
3. Given the appointment of the new Local Development Worker now working in our Region, are there any specific aspects where we would welcome their input?

**Responses follow:**

- 1 NEQM has contributed the funds requested by BYM over the past two years and intends to do so this year. Some Friends send money to BYM in addition to this. We also recognize that as the number of Friends reduces and therefore the funding available reduces, both BYM and meetings generally need to reconsider their core purposes.
- 2 In terms of young Friends who might serve on Meeting for Sufferings, we agree to forward any suggestions individually to Eleanor Tew, who is a member of Area Meeting Nominations Committee.
- 3 We agree to return at our October meeting to the question of aspects which would benefit from the input from our new Local Development Worker.

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## Date of next Area Meeting in 2021

Saturday November 13<sup>th</sup> Friargate – in person

## York Area Quakevine (YAQ)

YAQ appears in January, March, May, July, September, November

Contributions to Barbara Windle ([barbwindle@outlook.com](mailto:barbwindle@outlook.com) 01904 481977)

The editor may select and edit all contributions.

**Deadline for next issue: Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> October.**

## *Ideas please for your dream home and community in York*

This is your opportunity to dream and share your ideas for the kind of community you would like to be part of, and the home you would want to live in, within the York area. This would be an alternative vision to the proliferation of new housing estates presently on offer. There is a possibility of making the dream a reality but as many replies are needed as possible from yourselves, family, friends and colleagues.

Homes? Yurts, log cabins, geodesic domes, tiny homes, shared accommodation, standard bricks and mortar but more eco-friendly. Houses with gardens on flat roofs, or with easily moved interior walls so spaces can adapt to different needs during the day. Modular houses, able to increase/decrease in size as requirements or income change. Hobbit houses may sound strange but are actually practical in view of climate change; earth shelters save energy, cooler in summer, warmer in winter, allows food to be grown on top. In Turkey there are remains of whole towns that were in caves.

Lifestyle: you may prefer to be solitary, family-orientated, community-minded either with minimum shared facilities or fuller involvement. You may wish to live as lightly as possible on the earth. Or to form a community with like-minded people based on the early christian church in which you hold all things in common and live very simply. Whatever your preferences are, this is an opportunity to express them.

Why people should all be shoehorned into one type of housing and community, or lack of it, just because that has been the general pattern for ever? Developments could, and should, include all possible varieties allowing people a democratic choice of how they live. It is particularly important, when we face climate change, that we



are able to explore and learn from as many alternatives as possible, instead of being stuck in the patterns that have helped create the problems.

The more people share their ideas, the greater the likelihood that we can make them a reality. No need to include your name and contact details if you prefer not to. I shall prepare a report and share all ideas. Replies to Jo fox at

[treefox@hotmail.com](mailto:treefox@hotmail.com)

*Community living in Skara Brae some thousand years ago...*

## *Continuing a York Quaker's family history*

*Many Friends will remember very warmly both Ed and Elizabeth Simmonds.*

*Their daughter now follows up her memoir of Elizabeth with that of Ed.*

### **Katharine Dodgshon: Edmund's Story: A Family History**

This companion piece to Elizabeth's Story, memories of an Irish childhood during the early twentieth century Troubles and beyond, will particularly interest those of us who remember Ed Simmonds, Bootham teacher and a regular at Friargate before he died in 1996, though there is much else to savour.

Ed was born in 1909 and grew up in a prosperous family in Exeter. He enjoyed his schooldays, sport, drama, music – and the Officer Training Corps. In spite of which,

when war came in 1939 he realised he had to become a Conscientious Objector. Although the tribunal sent him back to his teaching job, the inner turmoil involved resulted in a breakdown. He became a member of the Society of Friends about this time and met Elizabeth when both were working at the same school. They were married in 1943.

One of the joys of local and family histories is that they lead us into byways we would not otherwise encounter. In this case, how else would a general reader come across a detailed account of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century artisan hat making, revealing the dark origins of the expression 'mad as a hatter'? Unhealthy working conditions, dust, chemicals and fumes which caused memory loss, mood swings, aggression and tremors, plus a tradition of heavy drinking meant, as Katharine observes coolly, 'longevity was not a feature of hatters'. There are windows into the worlds of working-class evangelists at the end of the nineteenth century, farming, inter-war commercial travellers and a reminder of the devastation which infectious diseases caused before modern medicine. A book to appeal to many tastes, crammed with evocative old photographs.

**Ann Holt** [Friargate]

For more information contact Katherine Dodgshon, [k.dodgshon@talk21.com](mailto:k.dodgshon@talk21.com).

### *Reflection: an extract from The Double Search - Rufus Jones*

Prayer, like faith, is itself the victory. The seeking is the finding. The wrestling is the blessing. It is no more a means to something else than love is. It is a kind of first fruit of the mystical nature of personality. The edge of the self is always touching a circle of life beyond itself.

[The Lord's Prayer] is in every line a prayer of fellowship and co-operation. There is no *I, me, or mine* in the whole prayer. The person who prays is enmeshed in a living group and the reality of that vital group clarifies the vision of the deeper reality to whom we pray. This prayer is the girding of the loins for the sublime task of helping God to make the world. Prayer ends in labour and labour ends in prayer. But it is not a cry for a miracle. It is an inward effort at co-operation.

### *For Interest: Exploring the Bible – a U3A Group at Friargate*

This is a friendly study group for people of any faith, or none. It meets weekly from **10.00 - 11.45** on Mondays from September 13th in the **Fell Room** at Friargate.

This term starts with the hilarious book of Jonah, the prophet who thought he knew better than God.

We shall then go on to study 'The Bible of the Early Church' - the parts of the Old Testament used by those who wrote the New Testament.

Next we study the history of the formation of the Church's beliefs, in the first few centuries AD, basing our discussions around extracts from the New Testament.

Topics are wide-ranging and chosen by members.

**Peter Wells**

Leader's contact details: [exploringbible@yorku3a.com](mailto:exploringbible@yorku3a.com); 07871478891 or 01904422414