

YORK AREA QUAKEVINE

Quaker News, Views, Insights and Reports

Issue 1

November 2018

The editor writes

We ask your forbearance in adjusting to the changing format of this new, entirely York Area Meeting-focused, incarnation of Quakevine. Unforeseen hiccups have as yet prevented us implementing all that had been hoped, so this introductory issue remains a work in progress at present. And all of us, readers as well as producers, will take a little time to adjust our planning to the new two-monthly schedule. It may be that some items intended for December have not reached me (though I did send a reminder to all Local Meetings about the change). So do please note that the deadline for the January/February issue will fall on Thursday 13th December.

Barbara Windle

Lifting the Shadow of War & Prospects for Peace Today



On October 6th York Quakers marked the end of WW1 with a conference looking both at the war's immediate effects and prospects for peace today. 70 people came to Friargate for the meeting from York, Yorkshire, Cambridge and London.

Prof. Simon Ball spoke of the gradual disarming of post-war Britain, an encouraging initiative later confirmed by Prof. Nick Ritchie on arms control. Ben Griffin, inspiring speaker from Veterans for Peace, was less sanguine and urged us to

campaign for arms control and against sales, our membership of NATO, and the hosting of US bases. He even suggested that Britain should become a neutral country. Ben developed evidence which Dr. Trudi Tate had given in the morning, about the deliberate undermining of truth during and after WW1 by the press under government guidance.

Other speakers and workshops described constant efforts throughout the twentieth century to promote peace, through conscientious objection (Ros Batchelor), political movements (David Rubinstein) and conflict resolution (Peter and Roswitha Jarman). Meredith Andrea and John Gilham showed how poetry had been used to explore peace and they persuaded us to write our own peaceful poems. All told the day did suggest peace was a real option if we could but grasp it. Workshops on 17 November may help us develop personal skills to assist the process.

Anna Baldwin (Friargate)

Yearly Meetings. The strap line ‘Simple Church, Simple Charity’ was put forward as an aspiration to make things clearer. More of this in the future...

There was an interesting consideration of investment in and companies profiting from the occupation of Palestine. A database of such businesses will be published in 2019. [BYM does not hold any such investments.] Before further decisions, MFS was mindful to wait for this information; meantime we were encouraged to pray for Israeli and Palestinian co-operation. Concern was expressed about the implication of further action on the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI). Edwina Peart, Inclusion and Diversity Co-ordinator, gave a fascinating insight into her area of work and quoted two statements made by meetings in their feedback: ‘quite often it’s about hierarchy’ and ‘all divisions among people are made by people’. I found these two comments particularly helpful in understanding how to be more inclusive in our meetings. Some of Edwina’s future work will involve a baseline audit of diversity in our meetings and a definition of diversity.

Last of all we were reminded about living up to our sustainability commitment and the work that still needs to be done in this area.

Sarah Allen (Friargate)

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/meeting-for-sufferings/papers-and-minutes>

York Area Trustees 14 October meeting

We had a rather long agenda, which covered the Area Meeting’s finances, items relating to properties and land that we own, and we reviewed a number of policies, including five relating to employment.

Five of the current trustees — half our current number — are retiring at the end of 2018. This means we will need to reallocate our areas of oversight, and several trustees will need to take on work they haven’t done before. All three members of the current clerking team, for various reasons, are retiring as trustees so there will be a hiatus in the clerkship until the new trustee body is able to appoint a clerking team. We have made arrangements to cover issues that might come up in the meantime, but we acknowledge that this is not an ideal situation for us to be in.

From 2019 the Area Meeting’s finances and property will be organised differently, with a new Property Committee coming into existence, and greater clarity over where financial responsibilities lie. Friends have already been working on bringing our new structures into being, so that in the new year things run as smoothly as they can. We heard a bit from our treasurer and the nascent Property Committee, about how changes are starting to be worked through, and identified some things we will need to keep an eye on next year. We also updated our Memorandum of Understanding to reflect the new structures, and to include feedback from Local Meetings. There is clearly a lot of willingness among Friends in the Area Meeting to work together on getting our new structures to work well for us.

A big part of our agenda was the review of policies relating to employment, conflicts of interest, and a new one was brought on legacies. This last has been referred back to Local Meetings for advice. We reaffirmed our commitment to being a Living Wage employer. While a lot of this work is not glamorous — and requires Friends to read carefully through complex documents which may impact on the lives of those who work for us — it is important, and it’s one of those activities where the ‘trust’ element of being a ‘trustee’ seems to me to be very apt.

Richard Ogden (New Earswick)

Dates and Events

Saturday 10 November York Area Meeting at Friargate

Note new timings – Theatre first – business after soup & bring-own-lunch

10.40 hot drinks

11.15 watch the splendid performance of *And the Beat Goes On....*

Journeyman Theatre's production charts over 300 years of Quaker Nonviolent Direct Action, from the early Abolitionists, through Quakers living in Nazi Germany and Jean Zaru in Palestine to Trident Ploughshares in the twenty-first century. All donations to this two-person show go towards work with Seir Women's Co-operative in West Bank, Palestine.

12.30 bring own lunch – soup provided

13.30 Area Meeting Business including items on: Membership; Quaker Life Rep Council challenges us; Sustainability, hope, action; see background pp 5-6

16.00 Area meeting concludes

Other November dates:

Saturday 3: Harrogate Kindlers Day - Finding Our Own Silence

10am coffee & pastries. 10.30 start until 4 pm, bring your own lunch. To book contact Barbara Penny or ring Harrogate Meeting house for details. £10 fee.

Saturday 17: Peace Now -Workshops. Friargate 10.00 am - 4.45 pm

Practical peace-making, conflict resolution and non-violent communication

- Nonviolent communication* (Roswitha Jarman)
- Listening for a new world* (James McCarthy)
- Conflict resolution in schools* (Lydia Noor and Gillian Darton)
- Being Peace* (Lynda Williams)

Application forms in all five of our Local Meeting Houses. Electronic version friargate@yorkquakers.org.uk

December dates:

Wednesday 5: Quaker Business Conference 2018

Trust and Integrity in Business:- What questions do we ask? And of Whom?

9:30am to 4:30pm. Friends House, 173-177 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BJ

Sign up at:- <https://qandb.org/qbc18>

Saturday 22: Carols for Christian Aid

We will again be singing carols at York Station as part of York churches annual Christian Aid day of Christmas music. Please make a careful note of this year's date.

It's **Saturday 22nd December**. The time is the same: 10 am to 11 am. All are welcome – just turn up and meet in the station foyer from 9.50 am ready for a 10 am start.

Words will be provided. As usual, we'll be unaccompanied throughout: you will be very welcome either to sing the familiar tunes or to follow one of the harmony lines. Most of the scores are in the Oxford Carols for Choirs Book 1 (the "green book") and many are reprinted in the Oxford 100 Carols for choirs (the "white book") so do please bring yours if you have one.

Nearly two thousand pounds (after gift aid) was collected during the day last year, so, as well as being pleasurable, our hour's singing makes a worthwhile contribution to 'mending the world'. Come and enjoy!

John Harris (Friargate)

Looking towards November Area Meeting

Two background papers to ensure we can all feel part of the Area Meeting process

All are welcome here: transforming our Quaker Communities with younger friends

Quaker Life Representative Council – October 2018

Extracts to whet the appetite – Edith Jayne will speak more fully at November AM

This was a challenging weekend where the learning came both in programmed sessions and in talking to Friends from other meetings and finding what they do. Friends included two very articulate young Friends of 15 and 18, organisers of the (under 35s) Young Adults Programme and Helen Chambers, heading a team promoting all age worship. We also had three babies – so it truly was an all-age programme.

What did I learn that might be useful to our meetings?

- The abundance of help available. Do we utilise Journeys in the Spirit monthly ideas for CYP work, Young Quaker website for teenagers, Quaker Life staff?
- We really should see if we can stagger our times of MfW more – Sunday morning 10:30-11:30 may not “speak” to teenagers or Young Adults starting their careers and not living near “their” home meetings. Do we need a membership category for Friends in transit who don’t readily attach to an “Area” at that time of life?
- Podcasts and Facebook are helpful – do we use them? Might our AM website engage with this age group and set up a Meet-up Group or whatever is newest in the electronic world.
<http://www.yqspace.org.uk/yqspace-you>
- <http://yfgm.quaker.org.uk>
- Young Adult Quakers : youngadults@quaker.org.uk
- And of course QiY hold numerous events for Young People as well as Easter Settlement which is truly All-Age. Yorkshire Friends Holiday School seems way ahead too in catering for this age group (so well done us!)
- Other University towns have more links with their Meeting Houses – could we establish more links with either the University and our meetings?
- I notice that Leeds has a Link Group (as of course do the London AMs) Should we do so too? Link Group is for older teenagers.
- If you haven’t seen a copy do download the Young Quakers Calendar from the web-site and visit www.yqspace.org.uk

Bridging the Gap: Hope and Action BYM Sustainability Gathering

19 – 21 October

Some 110 Friends attended including representatives from 50 area meetings. We were both comforted and discomfited. We were inspired and at times daunted by the urgency and scale of the task. But we trust that through faith and discernment we will have the power to achieve change. We were reminded on Friday of the Valiant 60 who sought to change the world and were not daunted by the task.

In addition to some scene setting from the Clerk of MfS, we heard from three speakers and then engaged in a series of response groups and workshops. It was a rich and deliberately very varied programme to ensure that we could learn as widely and as deeply as possible.

We knew the urgency of climate breakdown; this awareness pervaded the weekend.



One strand of thinking that struck a chord with many participants was one speaker's reference to the concept of exceptionalism. He defined this as the incomprehension that what we apply to others should also apply to us. He reminded us that we all fall prey to this and this operates at an individual, a national and at a species level.

In conversation and discussion we realised that our culture, both as Quakers and Europeans, focused as it is on individuality, the value of the individual, individual rights and freedoms, and the uniqueness of the individual, is part of what drives this exceptionalism. Some of us saw the connection between the implications of this for sustainability and for lack of diversity in our Society because exceptionalism is also a form of privilege.

Some possible action points that emerged that might be taken up by Area and Local Meetings are provided here as a prompt for further consideration:

- We saw the close connection between our economic system and the impending climate breakdown and recognised that action needs to be taken on that. We considered the implications for action of the fact that the division isn't primarily between people and business but rather on the one hand people, local business and local government and on the other national government, multinational business and their lobbying organisations. We felt that local

action might arise from that recognition and that local alliance building might be considered in that light. Friends might have some convening role here.

- Still on the economic theme, engagement with new economic thinking (Doughnut Economics for example) was seen as an important part of shifting the dominant mode of thinking.
- There was a sense of hopelessness among some and a recognition that this impacts on many people and closes off effective engagement. We considered how we could engage with this, acknowledge the grief we feel for the losses the planet has already had and move beyond it.
- There was a call for stories; stories of how small actions make a difference; how just a few people can change things; and a call for sharing these stories widely. We heard in video footage from Friends in Africa and Asia and their stories of climate breakdown. We need to collect our stories and we need to be open for the wisdom from Friends elsewhere. FWCC is collecting these stories and it is hoped that they will be available both at YM next year and more widely on the Internet.
- Fracking was on everyone's mind in light of the recent start of fracking in Lancashire. We know that this is an ongoing threat on our doorstep and we may want to consider how to engage with this and engage more Friends.
- There was discussion about the possible range of political action but also a view that pressure needs to be put on the media and that we need to engage with legal challenges to the actions that threaten the planet's systems. It might be possible to find ways of being better informed about these especially at a local level and to engage with them and support them.

Martina Weitsch (New Earswick)

Quaker Faith & Practice:

William Penn (1644-1718) was, among other things, a politician, a courtier, a theologian, a prolific writer and the founder of the colony of Pennsylvania. Quaker faith & practice contains a significant number of extracts from his work, especially from 'Some Fruits of Solitude'. He had occasion to know about solitude, as his punishment for being a Quaker included a period of solitary confinement in the Tower of London.

QFP 19.28 The humble, meek, merciful, just, pious, and devout souls are everywhere of one religion; and when death has taken off the mask they will know one another, though the divers liveries they wear here makes them strangers. This world is a form; our bodies are forms; and no visible acts of devotion can be without forms. But yet the less form in religion the better, since God is a Spirit; for the more mental our worship, the more adequate to the nature of God; the more silent, the more suitable to the language of a Spirit.

QFP 24.03 A good end cannot sanctify evil means; nor must we ever do evil, that good may come of it... It is as great presumption to send our passions upon God's errands, as it is to palliate them with God's name... We are too ready to retaliate, rather than forgive, or gain by love and information. And yet we could hurt no man that we believe loves us. Let us then try what Love will do: for if men did once see we love them, we should soon find they would not harm us. Force may subdue, but Love gains: and he that forgives first, wins the laurel.

QUAKER MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

Sundays

- ❖ all our meeting houses 10.30 – 11.30
- ❖ Friargate 2nd & 4th Sundays 9.15 – 10.00, after 8.30 shared breakfast
- ❖ Lamel Beeches 10.30 – 11.15 The Oaks 11.00 – 11.30
- ❖ Knaresborough, Gracious Street 2nd Sunday, 10.45 – 11.15
- ❖ Eastern Villages Group 3rd Sunday, 8 pm

Midweek

- ❖ Hartrigg Oaks 11.45 Tuesdays
- ❖ University Quiet Place 2.00 pm Wednesdays in term time
- ❖ Acomb 11.30 Wednesdays
- ❖ Friargate 1.15 – 1.45 (bring lunch & gather at 12.45) Wednesdays
- ❖ Knaresborough, Gracious Street 10.45 1st Thursdays
- ❖ The Retreat 9.30 Thursdays
- ❖ Harrogate 12.30 – 1 pm 3rd Thursdays

Local Meetings contact details www.yorkquakers.org.uk

Acomb	The Green, Acomb	01904 795595
Friargate	Friargate, York	01904 624065
Harrogate	12a Queen Parade, Harrogate	01423 563391
New Earswick	Top Folk Hall car park	01904 763248
Thirsk	Kirkgate, Thirsk	01845 523491

York Area Quakevine (YAQ)

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

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The editor may select & edit all contributions.

Deadline for next issue: Thursday 13 December

Dates for Area Meetings in 2019

Saturday January 12th Harrogate

Saturday March 9th New Earswick

Saturday May 11th Friargate

Wednesday July 10th (evening) Acomb

Sunday September 15th Thirsk

Saturday November 9th Friargate