

YORK AREA QUAKEVINE

Quaker News, Views, Insights and Reports

Issue 7

November/December 2019



Autumn in Thorpe Perrow Arboretum

photo: Alison Clarke

Pacifist Approaches to Humanitarian Relief

Thanks go to *Ros Batchelor* for providing this information from *Quaker Strongrooms* (slightly edited to fit into York Area Quakevine)

Creating a world without war:

Friends House Library has received Wellcome Trust funding for a project with the above focus on pacifist approaches to humanitarian relief in World War II and after.

The project will catalogue, preserve, and promote the papers of the Friends Ambulance Unit (1939-1946) and the Friends Relief Service (1943-1948). A dedicated Project Archivist will be recruited to catalogue and repack the collections so that they are accessible to researchers, to promote the collections widely and to create related resources such as subject guides, exhibition materials and more.

Many associate the Friends Ambulance Unit with overseas work in conflict zones, and tales of derring-do in far flung places such as China and the Middle East. However many FAU members carried out more prosaic, but no less needed, work in Britain. This included hospital work, setting up rest centres for evacuees and those who lost their homes through bombing, manning Citizens Advice Bureaux to help people with wartime regulations and gaining access to provisions.

"The archives are an invaluable source for all people interested in the history of medical humanitarianism. They are globally significant...I can think of few sources, anywhere in the world, that provide such a nuanced, complex and personal record of what it is like to work in the medical humanitarian field in periods of war and conflict." [Dr Toby Kelly, University of Edinburgh]



"There are no barriers of race, national feeling, custom, climate or culture which cannot be broken down by the method of Woolman and St Francis – the method of self-identification with the need of the poorest, even in distant lands, by means of hard manual work done at his side for his benefit. It remains to apply this method, and this idealism, to the international situation in Europe today... The influence of such work will no doubt be entirely negligible as regards the international situation, as the influence of Woolman seemed to be in his own lifetime... But failure does not matter. All that matters is that the right way should be tried."

John Hoyland, QFP [part of 24.31] *speaking of Friends' Relief work between wars*

Meeting for Sufferings: 4-6th October, at Woodbrooke



The words of Roger Wilson, 1976 read out in the initial opening worship, set the tone for the weekend. He said:

...our Quaker forebears challenged the conventions of the day – in politics, in commerce, in the law, in the established church, in social etiquette, in education, in attitudes to war, poverty and crime. In face of the sterile institutions of their day, they found living answers about the ways in which men and women might go about their business of living together. (Q F&P 23.08)

In many ways, the agenda led us to ‘challenge the conventions of our day.’ (QFP 23.09) Firstly, we agonised over whether to include in the Prison and Court Register the names of Friends who had been arrested at the DSEI, Defence

and Security Equipment International [Arms Fair, London, September] and at Extinction Rebellion events. In the end, we agreed that names should be sent to Meeting for Sufferings, mostly through the Area Meeting, to reflect the support and awareness of upholding Friends at a local level. Of interest to York was another discussion on the parameters of the Court and Prison Register in relation to employment: it concluded that this was one for employment law.

Secondly, The Independent Inquiry into Sexual Abuse is examining how faith groups protect children in their communities. Safeguarding co-ordinators of six AMs (out of the 66 AMs in England and Wales) are to be approached for information. York AM is not one of the AMs chosen.

Thirdly, sustainability and continuing to be faithful to the Canterbury Commitment of 2011 occupied much of our time. AMs are encouraged to share stories of how Friends are reducing carbon consumption. Five themes have been chosen to help us focus on sustainability: eldership, oversight, living faithfully, right ordering and witness. Please see the details in the minutes for more information. <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/meeting-for-sufferings/papers-and-minutes> The UN Climate Summit (COP26) from November 7th – 17th in Glasgow is a target now for Quaker witness.

Last of all, there was an interesting sharing of views about assisted dying and various standpoints were aired. This matter was originally brought to Meeting for Sufferings by North West London and Staffordshire AMs. Meeting for Sufferings agreed to make AMs aware of balanced material to enable further thinking on this subject.

Please see Sarah Allen or James McCarthy if you want to find out more.

Sarah Allen (Friargate)

September's York Area Quaker Meeting

There was one section of the Area Meeting that stood out for everyone. Friends wanted something of this moving and informative experience to be widely shared. Here is the minute that was written.

Minute 4 of York Area Meeting, held at Thirsk, 14 September 2019

Deb Evans has introduced an exploration of the topic – gender and transgender – which Meeting for Sufferings is currently examining. Her introductory paper contained a very informative and helpful glossary of terms, followed by a summary of areas of conflict, a document from Quaker Life Central Committee and a link to a statement from Young Friends General Meeting. She has spoken about her own experience of the real risks one can run by entering into this field of discussion, whether on the internet or the street.

In the course of her introduction Deb showed us how definitions of words are becoming huge areas of conflict. Transgender is about identity, not sexuality. She has helped us appreciate the complexity of these issues and the risks which people, experts included, run if they express views or attempt research. There are safeguarding issues: spaces where people can be sex-segregated are reducing all the time. There is a huge rise in the number of children being diagnosed with gender dysphoria.

Friends have been very moved by Deb's presentation and have started to appreciate what a vast field this is and how ignorant of it we are. Our responses have ranged over many aspects, including questions of oppression, class analysis of power and hierarchy, the limits of tolerance. We have expressed deep concern about young children being made prey to these worries and uncertainties, instead of being protected from them by adults.

We listened to one another in love, and we have learned from one another. We are very grateful to Deb for the clarity and depth of her explanation and for being prepared to expose some of the pain and risk she has faced and does face.

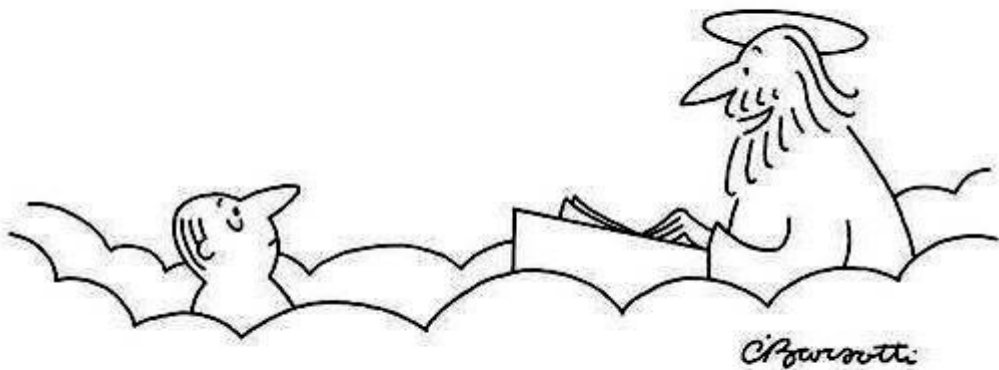


Time they were starting on their journey? Barcelona: Margaret Bryan

York Area Quaker Meeting Trustees

AM Trustees held their final full meeting for 2019 in October at New Earswick. A meaty agenda included the following; full details are available to everyone of course.

- **The financial reports**, all encouragingly within budget, included the good news that Friargate has been able to pay off the remainder of its loan from AM.
- Proposed quota figures of £37 for AM and £5 for Quakers in Yorkshire per member for 2020 were agreed.
- **Property**: Friargate's & Thirsk's quinquennial reports have been recently completed. There were reports on work in progress for Harrogate, New Earswick, Thirsk and Acomb. We also considered new requests for programmes at Harrogate, New Earswick and Friargate; we agreed the property fund quota. There will be a disability audit of all our meeting houses in 2020.
- **Business group**: after discussion, we confirmed that such a body should be a light touch mutual support group. Thinking about the specifics continues.
- **Employment policies & procedures** Community First Yorkshire is reviewing them.
- **Burial Grounds** Trustees authorised the Committee to seek to recruit administrative/maintenance help for work required at the Retreat Burial Ground. The Retreat Trustees are keeping in touch with us as their own plans develop; we are assured that the burial ground and its access will be safeguarded.
- **Potential administrative assistant for YAQM**: Trustees agreed the principle of making service less onerous and more possible by paying for administrative help. A small working group will take this forward.
- **Thanks** were expressed to John Gilham for his completed term of service.
Barbara Windle



"Theologian? You guys are always fun."

York Area Quaker Meeting (YAQM)

Saturday 9 November 11.00 am – 2.30 pm
in Friargate Meeting House

hot drinks beforehand - soup at lunchtime
light bites & hot drinks after the meeting closes

AGENDA includes:

- Membership matters
- Appointments
- News
- Special Guest Speaker immediately after lunch

Sergei Nikitin will give an illustrated talk on Quaker relief work in Russia in the 1920s. Sergei spent 14 years as Director of Amnesty International's Moscow office & has also been on the staff of Friends House Moscow. He is giving the University of York's lecture on Human Rights in Russia Today on Friday 8th.

Important December date:

Tuesday 24th Carol singing for Christian Aid at York Station

We have our regular singing slot of 10.00 – 11.00 on Christmas Eve at the station. Everyone is welcome. If you have a green or white Oxford carol book, do bring it. There will also be the usual carol sheets.

There are carols all day, raising significant amounts of money for Christian Aid and so is not only a worthwhile activity – but great fun too! Hope to see you there.

John Guest [Acomb] green.lane@phonecoop.coop

Dates for Area Meetings in 2020

Saturday January 11th	Harrogate	1.30 pm
Saturday March 14th	New Earswick	1.30 pm
Saturday May 9th	Friargate	1.30 pm
Wednesday July 8th	Acomb	7 pm
Saturday Sept 12th	Thirsk	1.30 pm
Saturday Nov 14th	Friargate	11 – 2.30 pm

Quaker Faith & Practice: 27.05

Is this not a breathtaking example of very early Quaker insight and writing?

The church [is] no other thing but the society, gathering or company of such as God hath called out of the world and worldly spirit to walk in his light and life... Under this church ... are comprehended all, and as many, of whatsoever nation, kindred, tongue or people they be, though outwardly strangers and remote from those who profess Christ and Christianity in words and have the benefit of the Scriptures, as become obedient to the holy light and testimony of God in their hearts... There may be members therefore of this Catholic church both among heathens, Turks, Jews and all the several sorts of Christians, men and women of integrity and simplicity of heart, who ... are by the secret touches of this holy light in their souls enlivened and quickened, thereby secretly united to God, and there-through become true members of this Catholic church.

Robert Barclay, 1678

Interfaith Week November 9th -17th Some events around York

Sunday 10th, 2pm to 3.30pm 'The Ampersand Challenge'.an Interfaith Friendship Walk in the shape of an '&' from Memorial Gardens to Museum Gardens. Get to know new people from other faiths or no faith: for details & map contact us at xavierchesher@gmail.com or phone Graham on 07834 497378

Monday 11th, 7.30pm The Baha'i community is screening 'Dawn of the Light', a film about a founding Baha'i figure. Event is at De Grey 016, De Grey Court, York St John University, Lord Mayors Walk, York. Contact them on: yorkbahais@gmail.com

Tuesday 12th, 11am to 4pm. Open Day at York Mosque, Bull Lane. See the new building and talk to members. Refreshments.

Tuesday 7.30 to 8.45pm 'What is Buddhism'. Studio Building, Millers Yard, Gillygate,

Wednesday 13th, 7.30 to 9pm 'Promoting interfaith understanding & cooperation amongst young people' at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Acomb. Inviting young people of all faiths to meet in a relaxed setting with fun activities and light refreshments. Ample car parking. Contact Penny Siddall if you are planning to attend no later than Wed. 6th Nov. on pennyc@beehive-partitons.com

Thursday 14th, 11am to 12pm. Interfaith Meditation. Unitarian Chapel, St Saviourgate. Refreshments at 10.30. Several methods of meditation used. All are most welcome. Thursday 7.3pm to 9pm 'Faith in Fostering' with James Lee [CYC Children's Services]. The Bar Convent, Blossom Street. For all who want to know more about fostering and for religious leaders who could spread our message. Phone James 01904 553319

Friday 15th, 1pm to 3pm Interfaith Café. Friargate Quaker Meeting House. Chat to members of various faith groups over cuppa and cake. There will be activities for children and also a new Interfaith game to look at and possibly even play.

Saturday 16th, 11am to 12.15pm. York Liberal Jewish Community: Interfaith Service at Friargate Quaker Meeting House, then bring & share lunch (vegetarian/permitted fish)
Saturday 4- 6pm Hindu & Sikh Prayer. Contemplation Room, York St John's Uni, Lord Mayors Walk. All welcome. Contact Mahendra Verma on mkv1@york.ac.uk

Sunday 17th, 2- 4pm Interfaith 30th Anniversary Celebration & Social Event – De Grey 125, York St John Uni, Lord Mayors Walk. See what we have achieved & share ideas for the future. All welcome. Further details contact Daryoush on 0781480467.

And – not interfaith, but an event at Friargate

Ecumenical Accompaniment: Demolishing Peace in South Hebron's Hills

Mike Grierson returned earlier this year from volunteering for four months as an Ecumenical Accompanier in the South Hebron Hills. He will speak at Friargate on Tuesday Nov 12th at 7.30 pm about the impact of home demolitions and water inequality on Palestinian life here after 50 years of occupation by Israeli forces.

WORSHIP IN YORK AREA QUAKER MEETING

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 11.15 – 11.45
- ❖ Knaresborough, Calcutt Village Hall, 2nd Sunday 10.30 to 11.30
- ❖ Eastern Villages Group 3rd Sunday, 8 pm

Midweek

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

Local Meetings contact details www.yorkquakers.org.uk

Acomb	The Green, Acomb	01904 796113
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)



Rowan – Margaret Bryan

YAQ appears in: January,

March, May, July, September, November

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The editor may select & edit all contributions.

Deadline for next issue: Sunday 29 December!