

YORK AREA QUAKEVINE

Quaker News, Views, Insights and Reports

Issue 2

December 2018/January 2019

The editor wishes...

... health and strength, mental and spiritual as much as physical, to you all in 2019.

Barbara Windle

Volunteering in Calais in January 2019

Sally and John Bourton from Acomb Meeting spent last Christmas volunteering in Calais and are going back on 15th January 2019 for a week. They will be working as volunteers for Care4Calais, sorting and distributing donations of clothing and food for refugees in Calais. Care4Calais and other charities are currently supporting around 700 refugees in Calais as well as several hundred in Dunkirk and Caen.

They would like to take as much as they can fit in their car of the following and would be very grateful for any donations. They would collect from the Meeting House in early January, latest date would be 11th January. Priorities are:

New pairs of men's underpants, boxer shorts not Y-fronts, sizes small and medium;

New pairs of men's socks - again, size small and medium

Gloves, hats and scarves for men

Fleece neck warmers / neck gaiters

Last year, refugees asked particularly for neck warmers / gaiters and John and Sally have found fairly cheap suppliers, so if anyone wanted to make a donation direct to them, this is what they would spend it on. Contact: johnsallyb@hotmail.co.uk

Sally (left) enjoying herself a year ago



Days for Girls

Our Quakerish (I say Quakerish because although we are mostly Quakers a few Friends and Family have snook in!) Days for Girls (DfGs) group is now almost two years old – a lively toddler. We meet on the second Monday morning and the last Saturday afternoon of the month at New Earswick Meeting House.

DfGs makes and distributes reusable sanitary protection for girls who lack access to this either because of poverty or cultural taboo. Each girl is supplied with pads, liners and panties, a pictorial education sheet, soap and a flannel as well as a plastic bag for washing. Each kit is packaged in a brightly coloured cotton bag and is designed to last for up to four years. The girls also receive instructions on making new pads and liners with the aim of enabling self-sufficiency. Practical sanitary protection is vital to girls' education in the developing world and can often mean the difference between a girl continuing her education after puberty or leaving school.

In 2018 we have made over 200 reusable pads and 50 shields. We donate these to the York DfGs group, organised by the Rotary Club. Being in partnership with a larger group means that we can get access to materials easily and can use their distribution networks. It also means that we can support projects of our own and send more than we could if working alone. We have participated in York Minster's DfGs sessions, held for several years on International Women's Day and once or twice during the year.



If you would like to support our DfGs, come and join us. Our sessions are very sociable and we work with ample coffee to hand. We have tasks at all levels of expertise (and none) and once familiar with the procedure you can continue at home. We also welcome donations of cotton flannelette sheets, it doesn't matter how worn. For more information please contact Mary Griffiths (Friargate) or Elaine Ross (New Earswick). When coming for the first time, please contact Elaine elaross@gmail.com as occasionally the times of meetings change.

Elaine Ross (New Earswick)

Ireland Yearly Meeting – July 2018 at Limerick

Two members of New Earswick attended Ireland Yearly Meeting this summer, myself and Liam Brighton. Our paths crossed occasionally as we took our routes through the five days. We were made very welcome, thoroughly enjoyed the occasion and in my case marvelled at the similarities and differences between Ireland Yearly Meeting and Britain Yearly Meeting. An account of everything we did, heard and saw would be of little interest to most people but there were two issues which really impressed me.

Although Northern Ireland and Eire are different countries, they have one Yearly Meeting; this must try to reconcile not only different histories and viewpoints but also different legislatures. Recent legislation which has caused headaches for our own Trustees (Data Protection, Safeguarding, Health & Safety) may all have originated in the EU but has been interpreted differently by the governments, so that makes writing policies twice as complicated. When we leave the EU it will be ten times worse!

The second issue was same-sex marriage. The Yearly Meeting had agreed to allow it at a special IYM back in March 2018. The task facing IYM in July was to agree a form of words which would allow same-sex marriages to take place in Meetings in Ireland while allowing a get-out for any Christian whose beliefs could not countenance such proceedings. Northern Ireland does not recognise same-sex marriage, so reaching an acceptable compromise was never going to be easy. Although the issue had been decided at the earlier YM one or two hard-liners refused to accept this and continued to argue against it. Every time the clerk asked for questions or views these Friends stood up to voice their objections at length. The clerking team was magnificent. Led by Heather Bewley they called these objectors whenever they rose, heard them out, then calmly and quietly called others to answer whatever had been raised, making it clear that the feeling of the meeting favoured the earlier decision. Although all were relieved when the chief objector walked out and progress could be made, under no circumstances could he ever claim that his voice had not been heard!

Limerick Friends made us very welcome in every respect. In so many ways it was a very memorable occasion.

Meg Forrest (New Earswick)

York Area Sanctuary Meeting

York Area Sanctuary Meeting (YASM) met in September and twelve Friends present represented all Local Meetings. It was the first opportunity to hear what Friends were doing individually to support asylum seekers and refugees and to discuss what more we could practically do to meet our collective obligations as a Sanctuary Meeting. It was really exciting to hear all that Friends are involved with and we agreed that simply connecting more often with each other was a good start in maximising all our efforts. We left the meeting with many ideas for 2019, such as: sharing an annual calendar of activities in York Area Quakevine; hosting Welcome to York visits from neighbouring towns; looking at new ways that we could use Quaker resources and buildings to support other partners. Already, we are pleased to report that Friargate Resources Committee has agreed weekly times when York City of Sanctuary can use Friargate as a safe space to meet and support refugees seeking assistance and as a meeting point for volunteers to coordinate refugee support.

The YASM group will be meeting again in January to agree a plan for 2019, which we will publish in Area Quakevine's March issue. We look forward to the year ahead!

Wendy Bennett (Friargate)

Dates and Events

Saturday 12 January York Area Meeting at Harrogate

Do come. We have much of special interest to consider and/or decide, from a Testimony for David Peryer to a draft sustainability questionnaire and a proposal that we consider minuting Sufferings about revising the criteria for Court & Prison Register entry. Regular items will include membership & the latest annual tabular statement of membership.

13.30 - 16.00 opening worship, then business
Before & after: hot drinks – getting to know one another

Other January/February dates:

Saturday 5th Harrogate QMH Spiritual Nurture series
9.30 am coffee and pastries 10 am – 12 noon “Quaker Renewal”
Details/ booking: contact Barbara Penny or ring Harrogate Meeting House

Wednesday 16th Friargate QMH Active Hope - reading group
Introductory session (no preparation expected) of a Joanna Macy reading group. Joanna, respected in peace, justice & ecology movements, teaches a method of active hope: ‘The Work that Reconnects’. Meetings: Wednesdays at 7 pm, January - March, to discuss *Coming back to Life* (responding to world crises) & do interactive exercises. Details: James McCarthy (Acomb) 330977 (james.mccarthy90@ntlworld.com).

Saturday 19th

New Year, New Venue and a stimulating programme at

Quakers in Yorkshire Saturday 19th January 2019

QiY meets at the Mill Hill Unitarian Chapel, City Square/9 Lower Basinghall Street, Leeds, LS1 5EB. This is very near Leeds Railway Station.

Hear about 2018’s range of activities for young people and families and projects enabled by Outreach Projects Committee funds. They have been very busy, with meetings commemorating the end of World War One.

Lee Lester, new Youth Development Worker for QiY/Sheffield and Balby, will speak about engaging young people, some of whom hope to come. After lunch Rachel Muers, our representative on CTWY, will report on Churches Together in West Yorkshire and Rev Jo James, Mill Hill Chapel’s Minister, will speak to us.

Everyone with any Quaker meeting connection is very welcome for all or part of the day (10.30 am - 4 pm). Details: pick up a newsletter in your local meeting or try quakersinyorkshire.org.uk or chris234love@btinternet.com.

Chris Love, Co Clerk 01904 758 344

Saturday 2nd February Harrogate QMH Spiritual Nurture series
9.30 am coffee and pastries 10 am – 12 noon “Creativity Workshop”
Details/ booking: contact Barbara Penny or ring Harrogate Meeting House

Saturday 16th February 9 – 9.30 Bootham School Reflect meeting for worship

Meeting for Sufferings in November 2018

This was an extended and very full meeting. I regret having to omit from James's report three sections; those dealing with the Committee on Clerks, the four central committees, and also the reports from representatives to European YMs. All can be read on the AM website and James will speak on some of them at Area Meeting in Harrogate.

November's Sufferings weekend at Woodbrooke was full and varied, with elements of inspiration, comfort and controversy. One of the most fruitful aspects was the chance to get to know one another, and this worked well for representatives of Yorkshire's seven area meetings. Two sessions in regional groups meant we could bond as a group and exchange ideas, for example we heard from Rosie Roberts (Sheffield & Balby) about the youth worker who will work with Meetings across Yorkshire to encourage and support Quaker work with young people of secondary school age.

Also controversial was the proposal (which had originally come to MFS some months earlier) to lay down the BYM sustainability group now that processes are in place and intended to make the group's work an integral part of our central work. Two members of the sustainability group spoke passionately about what the group means, clearly feeling that the message was at risk of being marginalised; but MFS accepted the proposal and set up a monitoring group to ensure the issue is on MFS's agenda at least once a year and is part of every central committee's report to MFS.

Sustainability also came into BYM Trustees' report setting out priorities for the Yearly Meeting. Their priorities focus on three areas: peace and sustainability, thriving Quaker communities, and simple structures and practices. Interwoven with these are the expectation that the work will be well-governed, integrated and distinctively Quaker. This well-grounded report inspired me with confidence and hope.

The usually routine matter of Quaker Recognised Bodies (QRBs) also gave rise to controversy. Sufferings grants QRBs status, a formal link to the Society carrying both benefits and responsibilities. On this occasion, six of the twelve bodies seeking approval were Quaker schools. A young Friend commented that fee-paying schools were by their nature inconsistent with Quaker testimony. The meeting heard this view but granted recognition to all twelve bodies. During free time I offered a listening activity on the topic of fee-paying schools. Fourteen people attended. The question of private education and our testimony to equality seems unlikely to disappear soon.

A further session was devoted to the Speaking Out policy. Anne van Staveren, BYM media officer, spoke to this, focusing on the recent statement about non-investment in firms that profit from activity in the occupied West Bank, and the extensive media coverage that resulted. Friends may have heard Paul Parker's interview on this topic on the BBC Today programme. Anne's talk was fascinating; it illustrated very well the quality of careful preparation under pressure that needs to go into public statements of Quaker concern.

This was for me a most productive and focused Meeting for Sufferings. I am very happy to talk to any member of our AM about the topics discussed and decisions reached. As always, there is a very readable report in the Friend and the full minutes are available on the quaker.org website.

James McCarthy (Acomb) *AM rep to Meeting for Sufferings*

After worship at The Retreat. Thursday 13th December



*Commemorative photo after the final Thursday morning meeting for worship at The Retreat. Sheila Moore is sitting in William Tuke's chair. Andrew Carter took the picture. Anyone wanting to know more about current changes will find Jennifer Barraclough's account in *The Friend* (14 Dec) open & informative.*

Quaker Faith & Practice: extract of the month

Introductory paragraphs to chapter 29

What shall we hand on? Where is the Spirit now leading us? In this book we have seen how we have been gathered, guided and ordered for more than three hundred years. We shall want both to keep the rich openings we have inherited and to be open to continuing guidance in changing circumstances. This will only be possible if we heed the promptings of love and truth which we trust as the leadings of God.

Individually and corporately Friends are seeking new ways of expressing our testimonies to equality and social justice, to the building of peace, to truth and integrity in public affairs, and to simplicity in a lifestyle that reflects our renewed understanding of our relationship with all creation.

As we try to respond to new leadings we often cannot discern what will remain important and what will be seen as ephemeral. There will be tensions as we wrestle with our diverse perceptions and convictions, and tensions can be creative. Our hope and our experience is that when we are faithful we shall be rightly led.

Reflections on York Diocesan Synod

In the week in which Brian Cox's amazing programme Human Universe reached its climax and I attended York Synod (Saturday 10 November), I was moved to ask myself where I stood on proselytising (fairly negative) outreach (generally positive) and community and the environment (rabid and unashamed . . .)!

This was the first meeting of the York Synod's new Triennium; a full day, overall it was energising and hopeful. There are three meetings a year, in March, July and November, largely reporting on sub-committees and groups working in the interim.

The meeting began with the John Sentamu's Presidential address. He took as his theme Philippians chapter 4 where Paul is writing of joy and delight in his friends and their continuing service, joy far above the grief occasioned by his own imprisonment. The world constantly goads us to be anxious: Paul exhorts us to be joyful whatever our present circumstances.

The introductory session covered the workings of Synod and the role of a Synod member: taking decisions, ensuring two-way communication, asking insightful questions, reporting back or onwards.

In the financial update we heard that lower recruitment had meant less expenditure than had been budgeted for salaries and housing; on the other hand, safeguarding, a new concern, had greatly exceeded its forecast spending. There was also new financing needed to set up the Generous Churches initiative.

The Generous Churches session was an update on ongoing work towards its aims. These were: making and nurturing disciples by "reaching those we currently don't; moving into growth; establishing sustainable finances" (all were goals mentioned in a previous report). The building of thirteen new worshipping communities was envisaged.

Bishop Alison White of Hull presented to us another strand of ongoing work: People in Poverty. Hubs are to be set up to meet people's needs, share faith, give hope and understanding. Appointing Community Mission Enablers was discussed. It was acknowledged that this was not inventing something new, but rather putting resources and light into specific areas in the Diocese.

Judging by a report from General Synod, the central controversial item in that forum seemed to have been whether to organise safeguarding work internally or be serviced by an outside body. There had also been sessions on CO2 emission reductions and on human sexuality.

All in all I found myself reflecting that attending York Synod has been an enriching experience and that for any community, it is much easier to formulate worthy general aims than to grapple with the specifics of turning them into concrete reality.

Elaine Ross (New Earswick) outgoing Quaker Observer

YORK AREA QUAKER MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

Sundays

- ❖ All our meeting houses 10.30 – 11.30
- ❖ Friargate 2nd & 4th Sunday 9.15 – 10.00, after 8.30 shared breakfast
- ❖ Lamel Beeches 10.30 – 11.15
- ❖ The Oaks 11.00 – 11.30
- ❖ Knaresborough 10.30 2nd Sunday, in Calcutt Village Hall
- ❖ Eastern Villages Group 3rd Sunday, 8 pm *contact: Val Humby*

Midweek

- ❖ Hartrigg Oaks 11.45 Tuesdays
- ❖ University Quiet Place *to be confirmed*
- ❖ Acomb 11.30 Wednesdays
- ❖ Friargate 1.15 – 1.45 Wednesdays (bring lunch & gather at 12.45)
- ❖ Knaresborough* 10.45 1st Thursdays (Bridge Cafe behind Gracious St. Methodist)
- ❖ Harrogate 12.30 – 1 pm 3rd Thursdays
**no Knaresborough Midweek Meeting in January*

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 and November

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The editor may select & edit all contributions.

Deadline for next issue: Thursday 14 February



Another Calais camp picture