

YORK AREA QUAKEVINE

Quaker News, Views, Insights and Reports

Issue 9

March/April 2020



Glimpses of the early life of our Friend Eva [nee Ternstrom]

One of Eva's early memories illustrates at least four traits she's never lost – her love of being up and doing and of music, her sociability and fearlessness. Aged four years, she went out 'for a walk'. Not far from home, she heard music coming from a house, went up to the open door, was welcomed and taken inside where many other people were sitting, all happily singing. Eva joined in. It was a Salvation Army meeting. Having enjoyed it, she simply went back home. In 2020, the mind boggles!

Our Friend Eva Sessions was born in 1918 – no, that is not a misprint – north of Uppsala, Sweden to a sea captain father and musician mother. Her inherited artistic gifts and love of outdoor adventure are evident in all the stages of her life. If only there were space to include more than the merest snapshot of its earlier part in QV!

Eva was 11 and her brother 13 when their mother died so Eva was largely brought up by her father and his second wife, his first wife's youngest sister. It was an interesting but perhaps not easy upbringing.

On leaving school in 1936 Eva went to Newcastle [her English interests and connections were already strong, thanks to her father's career and inclinations].

Ostensibly her role was to be an au pair; actually she helped look after the family's infirm elderly relative, who soon had to go into care. She was asked to stay on as she was already involved in the family's international club. They treated Eva as family and she got to know the city well, mainly via university students she met, such as the widely cultured Russian medical student who introduced her to Shakespeare.

But Eva wanted to see London, so her Newcastle hosts helped her advertise in The Times and she moved to a real au pair job; following her father's advice to walk and walk, she became familiar with the capital by using her feet. On one occasion her walk took her close to Friends International Centre. How extraordinary life is! The sign 'international' was enough. She ventured inside, where she was immediately welcomed by two Irish Friends and was soon playing table tennis with them. End of story? Not at all. Later on she married Martin Lidbetter and found herself related by marriage to the young Bewleys with whom she'd played that game of pingpong.

Still in England in 1939 she, like all 'foreign nationals' received official notification that she must leave the country; but how? a sea captain friend of her father's saw to that little difficulty for her! Back home, she found her father glued to the BBC daily. A little later she moved to Stockholm, where she trained as a nurse and loved it. When she fell very seriously ill - her life was only saved by a German doctor - she was told on recovery that she would not be strong enough to nurse for two years. What to do? Being too late to join the Art School, she got an interview at the Eastman Institute dental school conveniently near her flat, was accepted and enjoyed the course there.

During this time Eva's facility in English gave her contact with foreigners: her aunt took in refugees from Germany. Eva already knew the Quaker architect, Ralph Erskine, who had come to Stockholm pre-war. There were other young British Quakers around, as part of the Friends Ambulance Unit had been stationed in Finland when the war started; soon after that they were moved to Norway for safety - and when that too became extremely unsafe, they were told to escape as soon as possible into neutral Sweden. The journey was hazardous to say the least. Martin Lidbetter was at the wheel of the ambulance for one of those hair-raising cross-border rides. Once safely settled in Sweden, Martin met Eva through Ralph Erskine and they, with other Quaker architects, became a walking group of F/friends.

Later in the war the FAU members were sent to Egypt. Eva and Martin began writing to each other there and continued when the FAU was moved on to Greece. This was no Byronic adventure. While in Crete they were first bombed, next captured, then held as prisoners of war for two years in starvation conditions, finally ending up imprisoned in Stalag 8b till the war ended in 1945.

It was late in his captivity that Martin was allowed to write a letter to three people, Eva being one. Once hostilities had ended Eva received a postcard saying that his ship, en route to England, was docked not far from where she was living. Eva somehow got permission to enter the restricted dock area, despite the fact that she & Martin were not affianced. [Mores were different over 75 years ago!]. Once in the area, Eva had to guess which of three ships was Martin's and then talk her way into crossing the gangplank. She succeeded of course - having guessed the right ship - and out of all the milling mass of men on the deck, she saw and met Martin. Another little miracle.

Not that that was the only miracle needed. Getting permission to enter England herself was very difficult; the obstructive person manning the Stockholm office

blatantly denied having received any paperwork from England. As Eva could actually see papers bearing Martin's handwriting on the shelf behind him, she insisted that the official should look at them. That certainly helped, but the clincher was that among the papers was proof that she had lived in England pre-war. But how was she to get transport? Fortunately, back in England Martin's mother – a great doer – knew an English pilot still stationed in Stockholm and arranged for him to fly Eva over in his plane. All his official passengers were embassy staff. As there was no seat for Eva, he put an upright chair into a space and on that, not fixed to any part of the aircraft, Eva and 5 kilo luggage allowance flew off to start a new life. On the tarmac at Croydon, her cousin and Martin were waiting. So it was that, not yet 30, a new phase of Eva's already extraordinary life began.



February blossom 2020 *photo: Jennifer Barraclough*

News: Max, Matt, a word about YFHS - & about BOD*

* *Quaker Faith & Practice* is formally described as our 'Book of Discipline' [BOD].

In the next ten years or so, we shall hear much about the revision of the current book and the creation of its successor. Find out more on the quaker.org.uk website.

Featured on the back page of *Quaker News* [*Spring issue*] is a Young Friend who grew up in Harrogate Meeting - **Max Kirk**. Now aged 21, Max is serving on Quaker Life Central Committee and says that 'Quakerism is such a fundamental part of my life that I don't know where I'd be without it...I often say that if I hadn't been to...**Yorkshire Friends Holiday School** I wouldn't be the person I am now.'

Take a bow, YFHS! Many now active in Quaker life might well echo Max's words. **Matthew Moore**, son of Sheila and Chris, is another graduate of YFHS. Matt [now Northumbria AM] is one of 25 members of the Book of Discipline [Quaker Faith & Practice] Revision Committee.

There are five other BOD Revision Committee members with a Yorkshire flavour: **Craig Barnett, Rosie Camall, Jessica Hubbard-Bailey, Rachel Muers, Ben Wood** – all of them are members of Area Meetings within Quakers in Yorkshire.

York Area Quaker Meeting (YAQM)

Saturday 14 March 1.30 pm – 4.00 pm New Earswick QMH

hot drinks beforehand. Tea with light bites at 4 pm

Agenda will include the following:

Membership – news - items from YAQM Trustees - sustainability - and more

YORK AREA QUAKER MEETING BURSARY FUND

The Bursary Fund has been set up by Trustees to provide financial assistance to Members and established Attenders of York Area Quaker Meeting, and to Young Friends (aged 13-35), to attend courses relating to their personal or spiritual growth or to further their understanding of Quakers. Grants are to be used at Quaker Centres such as Woodbrooke, Glenthorne, or Swarthmoor Hall. Grants will normally be up to a maximum of 50% of the course fee, plus 50% of reasonable travel expenses.

If you would like to apply for Bursary Funding, you should first seek the advice and support of your Overseer. Further information and an application form can be obtained from the Bursary Fund Group [Keith Barnes, Lee O'Neal, Jo Reilly].

Lee O'Neal (loneal@peryer2.plus.com) 01423 562712

Useful Background to the Assisted Dying Debate

Sarah Allen, our Meeting for Sufferings rep, writes: Interested in the background to the present assisted dying debate? If so, go to quaker.org.uk/mm-dec19. Under the heading: 'Documents relating to AMs' you will find: 'Assisted Dying: an exploration' which fills in a lot of factual information and includes Area Meeting minutes already sent to Meeting for Sufferings.

Part of our process of informing ourselves about assisted dying is to make sure we actually understand the various terms used. Please follow this link [thanks to Carol Gilham] to the NHS site for clarification <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/euthanasia-and-assisted-suicide/> Euthanasia and assisted suicide – NHS

YORK AQM: Our Local Meeting Clerks in 2020

Acomb:	Sally Bourton	Jemma Weeks
Friargate:	David Laverick	Eleanor O'Flynn
Harrogate:	Ruth Rymer	Lynn Anderson
New Earswick	David Roberts	Brian Jardine
Thirsk:	Pat Brooks	Alison Pollard

Interfaith News around York

Here's an opportunity in March

Tuesday, March 3rd at 7.30 pm The Snow Room,
City of York Council West Offices, Station Rise, York.

**Sin and silence in Islam and Christianity-
a Muslim and Christian in dialogue**

Meeting for Sufferings, February 1st

In the opening worship, a Friend reminded us of Jo Cox's words: **'there is more that unites us than divides us.'** Particularly apt as it was the first day post- Brexit.

Then it was business as usual with the **Prison and Court register**. We heard of Heather Rostron, an attender at Sheffield Central local meeting and John Lynes, member of Sussex East Area Meeting who had both been arrested and charged in the course of an Extinction Rebellion event.

Quaker Council for European Affairs triennial report made the point that the need for peace in Europe did not lessen at 11 pm the previous evening. QCEA does sterling work on various peace fronts; one initiative I learnt about was #ChooseRespect which challenges negative narratives about migration and refugees on social media.

As clerk of BYM Trustees, Caroline Nursey got us thinking about some challenging questions: **what does it mean for Quakers to be a simple church? what should we do about declining numbers?** She outlined the emerging strategy of Local Development Workers (LDWs) providing support and expertise to meetings.

The Speaking Out team asked us to consider two specific questions to help their work. **Is it more important to be Quaker or to voice all concerns? Do we feel compelled to witness or compelled to achieve change?** Most of us found the former question easier to answer in terms of a scale of 1 – 10 than the latter.

After lunch, we addressed **how to be more inclusive**, working in small groups. We then considered **whether the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust should become a Quaker Recognised Body? It was agreed of course.** Next came some background to discernment of the theme **'Listening, prophecy and Reconciliation: allyship in a climate emergency'** for Yearly Meeting Gathering [Bath University 1 -7 August]. We were all encouraged to consider attending. See <https://www.quaker.org.uk/ym>

The day ended with our agreeing the report of Meeting for Sufferings to BYM. **Sarah Allen** (Meeting for Sufferings alternate for York Area Meeting)



Succulents hosted by a tree in the garden of the co-clerk of Bulawayo Quakers

Photo: Lee Taylor, a 'Friends of Hlekweni' Trustee & part of Milton Keynes Meeting

You are invited...

Woodbrooke in York - Mar 7- Friargate QMH

10.30 am – 4.00 pm. Cost £20. This day features two pieces of fascinating enquiry conducted through the Centre for Research in Quaker Studies at Woodbrooke.

- **Joanna Dales** will share her findings about John William Graham, ‘apostle of progress’ and one of the leading Liberal Friends at the turn of the twentieth century.
- **Fran Handrick** will talk about her work amongst Old and New Order Amish women in Pennsylvania and Ohio, and how their lives are changing rapidly.

Ben Pink Dandelion will host. Prior booking is not necessary.

Exploring T S Eliot’s Four Quartets

Mon pm 13th – Thu noon 16th July at Holy Rood Conference Centre, Thirsk. Spend morning & evening sessions working together to deepen our understanding of these poems. Take afternoons to explore the area, enjoy using the art room or library, have personal retreat time or simply relax.

Residential places with full board: £280

Day places with all meals: £160

Tutor: Barbara Windle *from whom more details are available*

A Quiet Day at New Earswick

New Earswick Friends will be holding a quiet day on **March 28th**.

There will be some input with time for stillness and guided reflection.

Anyone from our area meeting is most welcome to join us.

Pilgrim Poetry & Advices and Queries

At 7.30 pm on the third Wednesday evening of each month, a group meeting in Friargate will be exploring Anna Botwright’s lovely book, which pairs each of the Advices & Queries with an appropriate poem of her choice. Each Local Meeting has been given a copy of Anna’s book. We’d be delighted for Friends from other LMs to join us, whether on the odd occasion or every month.

Wednesday 18 March, 7.30pm at Friargate. Anna Baldwin & Barbara Windle

Mindful Makers

The group meet **on the first Wednesday of every month, 10am till 12 noon**. to make and talk together. Bring your knitting, sewing, crochet, ideas for a joint project, or just yourself. Come to the comfy seating of Friargate foyer on **Wednesday 4th March**.

Tea, coffee and water are always on tap. Everyone is welcome. Details? Contact -

Lydia Noor lydiamnoor@icloud.com **Alison Ralph** grahamandalison@hotmail.com

‘How my values & interests come together in my work’

Maggie Chapman - Rector of University of Aberdeen, Quaker socialist, feminist, peace activist – speaks to an open meeting of the Quaker Socialist Society. 2 pm on Saturday 28th March at Friargate. Topic: tackling poverty and social injustice in my work.

Quaker Faith & Practice 23: 11

Edward Burrough, born in Westmorland in 1633, was one of George Fox's earliest converts, declaring himself a Quaker in his late teens, and travelling the country with Francis Howgill, preaching as he went. Howgill and he were part of the Valiant Sixty. He was arrested in London in 1662 for holding an 'illegal meeting.' The authorities ignored Charles II's signed order for his release and he died in Newgate Prison in February 1663, aged 29.

We are not for names, nor men, nor titles of Government, nor are we for this party nor against the other ... but we are for justice and mercy and truth and peace and true freedom, that these may be exalted in our nation, and that goodness, righteousness, meekness, temperance, peace and unity with God, and with one another, that these things may abound.

Edward Burrough, 1659

Hope Grants

These are small grants [up to £750] to improve the quality of life of Quaker members and attenders who are affected by long term unemployment or unable to make a living wage. Please note that the application process can take up to a few weeks. These grants should therefore not be relied on for emergency funding. You will need the support of a local overseer or equivalent when making the application. See quaker.org.uk or contact Ann Pfeiffer Grants Programme Officer grants@quaker.org.uk

Quaker Quicks

A series of small books on big topics

These are all available from Friends House Bookshop or from Woodbrooke

- **What Do Quakers Believe?** Geoffrey Durham.
- **Quaker Roots and Branches.** John Lampen.
- **Telling the Truth About God.** Rhiannon Grant.
- **Why I am a Pacifist.** Tim Gee.
- **Practical Mystics.** Jennifer Kavanagh
- **Money and Soul.** Pamela Haines
- **The Guided Life.** Craig Barnett

Friends may be interested in...

York Historical Society talks on Wednesday 1st April in New Earswick. Topics include: The Rowntrees, local Quakers and others: new ideas about working-class housing. York between the Boer Wars and The Great War. Religion and the residents of New Earswick. Details are at www.York1900.eventbrite.com

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)

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

Contributions to Barbara Windle (barbwindle@outlook.com 01904 481977)

and all dates information to Julia Terry (jhterry10@gmail.com 01904 656634)

The editor may select & edit all contributions.

Deadline for next issue: Sunday 19 April