

YORK AREA QUAKEVINE

Quaker News, Views, Insights and Reports

Issue 3

February/March 2019

Britain Yearly Meeting and Immigration

Our Recording Clerk, Paul Parker, was one of 17 religious leaders to write to all MPs at the start of the current parliamentary session expressing the need for a completely different approach to immigration and asylum. Read the full text on quaker.org.uk.

"We are dismayed by the current debate...The immigration white paper is misguided and disjointed...Urgent action is needed to create a more humane system. Refugee families must be kept together, and close family members allowed to join their children in the UK. The right to work after six months should be extended to all people seeking asylum. There must be a time limit on immigration detention, an end to the detention of vulnerable people, and a genuine discussion about the often impossible standards of proof required by the immigration system. The first reaction to those arriving in boats should not be to disbelieve... let us help you transform the hostile environment, not into a compliant environment, but into a culture of sanctuary."



Behind the unwelcoming wire photo: quaker.org.uk website

A quotation worth remembering

With thanks to Meg Hill (Kendal Friend). This comment really spoke to your editor

My point once again is not that these ancient people told literal stories and we are now smart enough to take them symbolically, but that they told them symbolically and we are now dumb enough to take them literally.

John Dominic Crossan (1934 -) Irish American New Testament scholar, ex-RC priest

An Australian Quaker Meeting

It's good to get a sense of the worldwide family of Friends. Many of us have spent time with Quakers outside BYM – and all of us would like to hear about it.

Please do share with us your experiences of worship or fellowship elsewhere.

Since our son Will moved to Perth over ten years ago, we have visited three times, staying about 25 miles out in the 'Hills' which form part of the very ancient granite Darling Mountain Range which runs parallel to the stunning western seaboard.

This year was the first time I had met with Quakers at Mount Lawley, a meeting house in a rather smart suburban bungalow with a large veranda and small car park. Opposite is a Jewish synagogue. Well maintained houses with beautiful gardens dominate this highly desirable area; sadly, it is unaffordable to most younger people.

I managed to attend meeting twice and enjoyed a refreshing period of worship and a delicious home-made mince pie with about 15 Friends and attenders. Their

meeting is very similar in format to Friargate. Worship lasts about 50 minutes and the last 10 minutes are spent in 'worship sharing' where everyone is invited to say a few words. Over tea I met a young man from Seattle visiting his partner and an attender who plans to visit Friargate soon. A major discussion topic was the time meeting for worship should begin. Informally I suggested that their website should advertise any change at least three months



before implementation to avoid confusion for distant visitors. I was very impressed by the elegantly sociable way that refreshments were served round a help-yourself octagonal serving table.

My second visit began much more stressfully as I became lost and arrived rather flustered ten minutes into worship. I assumed I was too late, but a white-haired lady patiently led me in and I was soon feeling calm and enjoying a somewhat truncated meeting. My welcomer turned out to be Jo Vallentine, a well-known Quaker and former senator who had represented the Greens in Canberra. Jo is a formidable campaigner on a wide range of topics and knew several family members through the Greens. I also met a young Canadian with Presbyterian roots; she admired the Quaker approach to the world's challenges, finding Quakers 'less dark' than others.

In sum, I found Mount Lawley, Perth a small friendly welcoming meeting, with a number of well-established Friends and a relatively large number of visitors from many corners of the English-speaking world.

Bone Jones (Friargate)

February Meeting for Sufferings: short version

James will be at March Area Meeting and able to add detail to this brief account

Two concerns provoked most discussion: Southern Marches AM on truth and integrity in the public sphere, and mid-Wales AM on our commemoration of WW1.

30 Area meetings had sent minutes about truth and integrity, including York. These showed mixed views. In the meeting, some Friends spoke strongly in favour of the concern, but it was decided not to adopt it as part of our centrally managed work. We were reminded that Britain Yearly Meeting is already working with others to reform the Transparency of Lobbying Act so that civil society can speak out more freely.

On the mid-Wales concern, Friends were persuaded by a strong appeal from Gethin Evans that we should ask Friends House Library to place on record all Quakers who died in WW1, irrespective of their status as COs, civilians or members of armed forces.

Caroline Nursey introduced herself as our Trustees' new clerk, and Linda Batten as the new Yearly Meeting treasurer. A good number of trustees were present. There is a relaxed and open relationship between Sufferings and trustees.

The Yearly Meeting clerk designate told us that the theme of YM 2019 is privilege. We appointed the Book of Discipline Revision Committee which will, over a number of years, write the next 'Quaker Faith & Practice' The committee is taking suggestions, which you can offer via the link below (which also gives the committee's names).

This was a good Meeting for Sufferings with constructive and searching discussion.

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

<http://www.quaker.org.uk/news-and-events/news/quakers-revise-their-book-of-discipline>



The High Wolds

A Photo Essay by Simon Palmour

High Wolds - A Photo Essay by Simon Palmour

Photographer (and Friargate member) Simon Palmour has recently had his book 'The High Wolds – A Photo Essay' published.

Over 100 high quality images are combined with informative text covering historical, geographical and social contexts to create a record of the wondrous dry valleys and lonely hills that lie between York and the sea. Photographic techniques used to catch the elusive beauty of the area are also covered.

If you would like to order a copy or would like to have a look at it, please contact Simon on palmour@gmail.com or order direct from Amazon.

March Area Meeting – what shall we be doing?

York AM takes place on Saturday 9 March, 1.30 pm at New Earswick QMH

13.00 hot drinks

13.30 Area Meeting regular business – membership, sufferings, trustees - and
Looking ahead to Yearly Meeting: its theme is Privilege
York AM of Sanctuary – so far
Activity & discussion – all are welcome here - outreach

16.00 Area meeting concludes

January's Area Meeting - What did we do?

The short answer is – a lot! Here are three examples:

- 1 We supported Harrogate's application to Quaker Peace & Social Witness for a grant that will help 12 Syrian families (all supported by Harrogate's Sanctuary movement) to have a short holiday this summer in Wensleydale.
- 2 We agreed that all our Local Meetings will audit their progress in activating the Yearly Meeting's Sustainability commitment by answering a questionnaire, ready for further work at Area Meeting in May.
- 3 We recorded our own upholding support for a Friargate Attender whose employment has suffered from her commitment to Quaker meeting and we minuted Meeting for Sufferings on the matter, asking it to reconsider the current limits on what actions are recorded as 'suffering for conscience's sake'. We expect the minute to form part of Meeting for Sufferings' agenda, either in April or July.

Young Friends General Meeting (YFGM) in February

We usually hold YFGM at meeting houses so being at Kibblestone Scout Camp near Stoke, brought the challenge of communicating across a large site and the excitement of countryside to explore and the comfort of beds and showers! We enjoyed our surroundings - time walking through the woods, singing around a campfire and considering how our connection to nature is part of our spirituality. The fine weather meant we could even hold closing worship outside - it was lovely to finish the weekend sitting together in the sun and listening to the sounds of the forest around us.



In business sessions we considered restructuring our roles, reviewed our concern for mental well-being and recorded a memorial minute for our Friend, Becky Garnault. We heard a report from our 2018 trans- and non-binary inclusion weekend, adopted a values statement and considered how to communicate our convictions about this issue outside YFGM. We enjoyed sessions on developing peace-

making skills, getting involved with Extinction Rebellion, discussing philosophy and feeding into a research project. Outside sessions we enjoyed each other's company and conversations, welcoming newcomers and reconnecting with old friends. **Jane Booth (Friargate)**

Sharing Spiritual Experiences across Area Meeting

Where can you explore and share your spiritual experiences and questions with others beyond meeting for worship? Here are some present possibilities in our Area Meeting. All are welcome at all of them. Do contact Ann Holt beforehand re Bishophill.

Acomb

March 17th 12 noon Bite-sized learning followed by shared lunch.

Discussion of the centrally managed work of BYM led by James McCarthy, followed by a short presentation on the work of the Quaker Housing Trust by Jenny Brierley.

Friargate

Friday 8th March 12.30 – 3.00 BISHOPHILL GROUP at Theodore Bacon's home

We welcome all meetings. After cake & sandwich lunch, we read short books on religious topics aloud; spontaneous responses may wander from the text but we learn a lot about ourselves & one another. Please contact Ann Holt 01904 638431. Current book is 'God, Words and Us' edited by Helen Rowlands.

Sunday 10th March 9.00- 10.15 EXPLORING QUAKERISM at Friargate

Exploring Quakerism, a responsive, open-ended discussion sometimes using 'Becoming Friends' as a resource. Facilitated by Barbara Windle.

Sunday 10th March 11.55 – 12.30 AFTERWORD

Having shared worship, all are welcome to share responses to (or questions about) the meeting – or their own 'nearly ministry' - what they almost said. We start with 'creative listening' and discussion then gives everyone an opportunity to speak.

Sunday 24th March 12 noon – 12.45 ATTENDERS GROUP every fourth Sunday

Open to all, but especially to attenders, enquirers and newcomers to Friargate /Quakerism. Get to know people in a smaller group, ask questions, and join an informal discussion about Quakers/ism. Contact: Terry Kay 01904 791919

April dates:

Friday 12th 12.30 – 3.00 BISHOPHILL Group (as above) venue to be confirmed

Sunday 14th 9.00- 10.15 EXPLORING QUAKERISM (as above)

Sunday 14th 11.55 – 12.30 AFTERWORD (as above)

Sunday 28th 12 noon – 12.45 ATTENDERS GROUP (as above)

Harrogate Spiritual Visiting *see page 6*

Saturday 2nd March 'A day with Geoffrey Durham'. FULLY BOOKED.

New Earswick

A new initiative **Time to Reflect Together: Early Quakers, their vision and how they might speak to us today** This Saturday morning activity is currently restricted to New Earswick Friends, but may be opened up more widely in the future.

Thirsk

Springboard Talks *Sundays monthly at 7 pm*

10th March Women with Altitude - trekking in Bhutan, Ann Banks and Val Bone

7th April How and Why I paint the way I do, Jane Burnley

Every Monday Discussion Group 10am – 12 noon

York Area Meeting Trustees

The February meeting of Trustees covered the major topics of safeguarding, finance, and property. This last item brought a report from the new Property Committee, which is now taking responsibility for major works on all our Meeting Houses. The report demonstrated that it has made a very good start in collecting both money and information from Local Meetings, with an overview of work needed in the next few years and a spreadsheet of potential works in the future with projected costings. We hope that this important development will help to relieve the burden on individual meetings and will help to bring us all together as one Area Meeting.

We also considered the archiving of sensitive material and reviewed the areas of oversight for which different trustees are taking the lead this year.

Clerkship of trustees remains a significant issue which requires further consideration.

We may need to refer back to Area Meeting if it cannot be resolved within the current membership of trustees.

All Friends wishing to know more may like to refer to the minutes of the meeting, available on the website or from your local meeting clerk.

Alison Clarke (Thirsk) “Not-the-clerk-to-trustees”

York Friends Central Adult School Trust

This small charity with a long name makes modest grants to voluntary groups which offer adults opportunities for personal development that were not available to them earlier in their lives. Please apply to me as clerk of the trust c/o Friargate Meeting House.

Our income comes from the interest on the sale of premises originally devoted to the York Quaker Adult School movement, an ongoing concern of local Quakers in the later nineteenth and early twentieth century. Needless to say, property prices were low at that time and the capital has since then been greatly eroded by inflation, so the amount we are able to distribute each year is small. The Trust offers support to organisations within a ten-mile radius of York whose charitable objectives meet our criteria. These include providing opportunities for self-development that were not available in childhood; opportunities for basic education or to open horizons, develop confidence or allow people to examine their beliefs and ideas; opportunities to develop ideas of community and concern for others and to put these ideas into action.

We are particularly committed to supporting smaller voluntary organisations with precarious funding – something that would surely be approved of by those who founded and taught in the York Quaker Adult Schools.

John Harris – clerk, York Friends Central Adult School Trust

Intervisitation deepens our sense of Area Meeting

Here we come - Look out for Harrogate Quakers at your Meetings for Worship as we resume our intervisitation in the interests of deepening our spiritual community. Friends from Harrogate Meeting have been doing this for the last couple of years and we have benefited from sharing in the worship at the Meetings in York Area, and talking over coffee, visiting all our Meetings more than once.

Come and meet with us in Harrogate - We live in hope that Friends from the other Meetings will be inspired to reciprocate as we believe this is a wonderful way of sharing our spiritual journeys across the Area Meeting. We in Harrogate look forward to visits from our Friends from other Meetings. **Barbara Penny and Gilly Charters (Harrogate)**

Calling young/formerly young Friends to Airton

In the 1950s, Yorkshire Young Friends maintained The Barn attached to Airton QMH, which was their base for enthusiastic holidays and work parties. Peter Leadbeater



recorded: *Five cyclists arrived after 4 hours pedalling [from Leeds]...Spud peeling and wood gathering filled the morning...appetites satisfied, we began lighting the bonfire....Returning at 9:30 (moonlit evening) to dance down supper, we forgot fatigue and blisters...until 12:45...Never was so much breakfast consumed by so few in such a short time...Rain!! table tennis & dancing & frequent brews of tea...Sunday, after meeting, we set off for*

Settle, eating at Scalber Falls. Young Friends continued their event-filled weekends at Airton until twenty years ago. Were you there? If so, Airton invites you to a reunion at our Meeting House on Saturday the 28th of September. This invitation includes your companion and younger relatives, who might themselves become enthused to join Young Friends.

Please contact Laurel Phillipson

(dw.l.phillipson@btinternet.com or by post) for more information and to assist our planning. Lunch will be provided if we know in advance that you will be coming.

Laurel Phillipson 11 Brooklyn, Threshfield BD23 5ER



photos: Andrew Carter

Quaker Faith & Practice – extract for this issue

Those of us who cannot yet personally witness to the experience of direct encounter with the living Christ can only at our peril deny the truth of the experience to which others testify; just as those who do feel this experience are on equally dangerous ground when on account of it they claim that they alone possess the sole route to that God whom Jesus of Nazareth defined as spirit and whose kingdom he once likened to a house with many mansions. Respect for the validity of personal encounter with the spirit of God, subjected to the check of corporate discipline, is part of the essence of our Quaker witness. Thus, though both our practices of worship and our theological understandings now differ widely, these variances may be accepted as elements within the direct, continuing development of the spirit of Jesus, the sensing of which was at the heart of the original Quaker experience.

Richard Rowntree, 1987 (QF&P 26.60)

York Area Quakevine - deadline & contact details

Contributions to Barbara Windle (bwindle@waitrose.com 01904 481977)

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

The editor may select & edit all contributions.

Deadline for next issue: Sun 28 April

Bootham School ecobricks project (you could join in)

Ecobricks enable us to take responsibility for our own plastics. An ecobrick is a reusable building block created by packing clean, dry used plastic into a plastic bottle to a set density. Weight guide is approximately 175g for a 500ml bottle & 500g for a 1.5 L bottle.

Although I do not know of a depot in York, Bootham School is encouraging its students to make ecobricks out of cylindrical 500ml or 1.5L bottles. These will be made into a structure. It took me six weeks to pack one 1.5 bottle! If you want to bring ecobricks to Reception at Bootham School prior to the end of June, you are most welcome. Those of us who are creative may think of ways to make our own structures. If you do, it would be lovely if you would take a photo and send it in to the newsletter. **Sarah Allen (Friargate)**

Making an EcoBrick

1. Choose a clean, dry bottle

We recommend starting with a simple-shaped bottle as it won't have any tricky areas (which if left un-stuffed leave weak air gaps). It must be clean and dry because any organic matter left in the bottle may decay, which could make the brick unstable and compromise the integrity of the build, likewise for your filler plastics.

2. Collect your filler materials

Any clean, dry, unrecyclable plastics can go in. Use soft plastics at the bottom as they will fill any uneven surfaces and prevent air gaps. It is wise to cut up harder plastics into smaller pieces so you won't be left with gaps (and they fit through the opening!). Please do not put metal, glass, paper or biodegradable/compostable plastics in your bottle, or any organic materials.

3. Grab a stick and start stuffing!

We recommend squashing the plastic down as you go with your stick (wooden spoon handle, broom handle, etc.) as it's much easier than doing so once the bottle is full. Mix hard and soft plastic as you go to avoid air gaps. Try squeezing your bottle; you shouldn't be able to if it's packed tight enough!

4. Weigh your bottle

As a rule of thumb, the minimum density should be about 0.3g/ml. Divide the ml of your bottle by 3 to find your target weight. If you haven't reached it, squash more plastic in! Then look for a building project in your area to donate it to.



MIDWEEK QUAKER MEETINGS IN YORK AM

- ❖ Hartrigg Oaks 11.45 Tuesday
- ❖ Acomb 11.30 Wednesday
- ❖ Friargate 13.15 Wednesday (lunch/chat 12.45)
- ❖ Knaresborough, Gracious Street 10.45 1st Thursday
- ❖ Harrogate 12.30 3rd Thursday
- ❖ Heslington West Campus 12 noon Friday (contact qsoc@yusu.org)