

YORK AREA QUAKEVINE

Quaker News, Views, Insights and Reports
Issue 19 November/December 2021



A wild dolphin leads Rainbow Warrior towards Glasgow

Quaker faith and practice: Area Meetings

The area meeting is the primary meeting for church affairs in Britain Yearly Meeting. Its role is to develop and maintain a community of Friends, a family of local meetings who gather for worship and spiritual enrichment. It should provide that balance between worship, mutual support, administration, learning, deliberation and social life which can make its meetings enjoyable occasions and build up the spiritual life of its members. Area meetings act as facilitators and co-ordinators, ensuring that their constituent local meetings have access to opportunities for Area meetings fellowship, spiritual development, and spiritual and pastoral care, including the care of children and young people. They also provide mutual support through the shared testing of concerns. 4.02

**Your suggestions to help us grow a little closer to this ideal
would be / are greatly welcomed.**

Quakers & Quaker roles: the Nominations process

How much do we know about how people get to do all the jobs that are needed to keep our Meetings functioning? It is often a rather secret process, with names considered at Nominations committees and then individuals asked if they would undertake particular roles. This is how it has been done for many years, but it has become increasingly difficult to get individuals to agree to be involved.

Why is this? When Area Meeting Nominations Committee recently discussed this, we wondered if part of the problem is that many people are unaware of what might be involved, and that there might be a lack of understanding of how Quakers work.

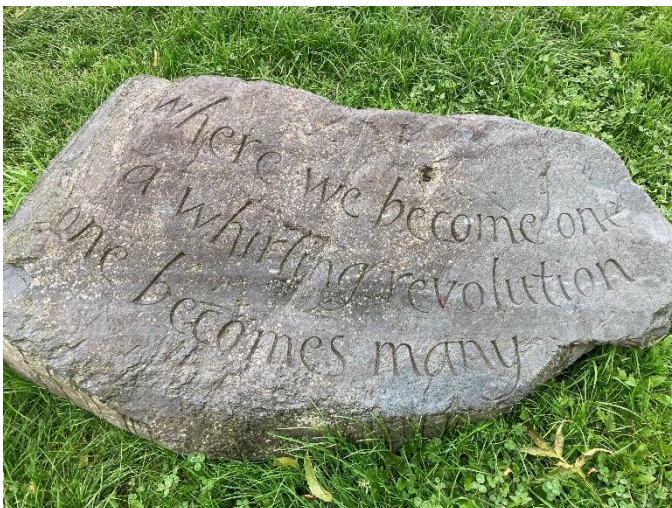
What does it mean to be a Quaker? What is involved in keeping Meetings and our Quaker way of worship alive and thriving?

Premises do not look after themselves, nor do children, nor do our finances. We need to make sure that all the members of our community are cared for, that our spiritual life is upheld, that we maintain our links with the wider Quaker community and with other faith groups. We are a “do it ourselves” organisation, so we can all contribute in our own ways, which may be in silent prayer, or in financial contributions, or in service on one of the committees and groups that help to run our Meetings.

Perhaps we need more information about what it means to be a Quaker, and what is involved in the various roles? Could Elders in Local Meetings think how to facilitate this? Some of our local meetings run workshops for new and recent members and attenders very successfully; their model could be taken on by others. There is help available from Woodbrooke, via a range of online courses both general and specific about Quaker roles. Local Development worker, Bridget Holtom, might help set up local workshops.

The hope is that this could lead to a deeper understanding of Quakerism and a fresh awareness of how we can all help to make sure our Meetings thrive. We may even find different ways of doing things that lighten the load for us all!

Alison Clarke [Thirsk] *on behalf of* York Area Meeting Nominations Committee.



This inscribed stone is one of several beside the River Cocker, each with different words. The series forms a striking memorial of Cockermouth's disastrous floods of 2009 and 2015. The interdependence of the one and the many moved me - 'where we become one, a whirling revolution, one becomes many' – and vice versa too, we trust.

Our wider Quaker Family: Southern Africa Yearly Meeting 2021

While living in that region, Chris and I attended Southern Africa Yearly Meeting (SAYM) several times and have visited since we left, most recently in 2016. Zoom enabled us to join it this year. It was a pleasure to find Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge also present. We first met her at SAYM 1989 and she delivered the Salter lecture during Britain YM 2020. It was while living in Southern Africa (Botswana) that I was accepted into membership.



An African sky as shown on the website of Southern Africa Yearly Meeting

SAYM began in June, the 45th anniversary of the 1976 student uprising in Soweto, Cape Town and elsewhere, with the Richard Gush Memorial Lecture given by Marie Odendaal of KwaZulu-Natal Meeting. Marie grew up in an Afrikaner household and told how her early innocence of ‘racial’ inequalities gradually gave way to questioning, her eventual marriage to a black African and subsequent disownment by her parents. Involvement in peace work and Alternatives to Violence (AVP) projects in a multiracial context brought her by chance to Quakers. In conclusion she quoted Nelson Mandela: “*No one is born hating another person because of the colour of their skin, or their background, or their religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.*” The lecture can be viewed on the [Quaker Community in Southern Africa YouTube channel](#)

The meeting’s second weekend was in July at “*a time of vulnerability, uncertainty and heightened awareness of continuing poverty and inequality, while the Covid19 pandemic was raging ... and South Africa was experiencing rioting, looting ... attempted insurrection in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal*” (YM Epistle). The meeting released a public statement. In the meeting itself, they “*missed hugging and touching, shared meals, early morning yoga, walks, children’s laughter, and yet met in a spirit of love, hope and joy as we greeted and shared with each other from Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.*” The business sessions emphasised faith as an impetus for social witness and two key projects emerged: (a) Participatory Action and Research Groups (PAR Groups) on Poverty, Inequality, Peace, and Quaker Bible study, to be taken up by meetings; and (b) an ambitious Peace Education programme to include nonviolent parenting, a peacebuilding programme at the University of Lesotho, restarting the KZN-AVP peace education programme and extending it further. Later, Young Friends shared a video of their Drakensberg camp. They were keen to be nurtured to take on meeting responsibilities and to get into community work and AVP.

For Chris and me it was good to be among so many familiar faces, including those dating back to our first SAYM in 1989. Becoming aware of the extent of faith-based and other opposition to apartheid within South Africa had been, for us, a humbling experience. Now, some thirty-three years later, it was again inspiring to see Southern African Friends’ continued faith-driven witness, in a gathered togetherness, to the many challenges of the post-apartheid world throughout the region.

Roy Love [Friargate]

York Area Quaker Meeting (YAQM)

**Saturday 13th November 1.30 pm – 4 pm, at Friargate:
Please note this new timing. Drinks available from 1 pm**

- Membership matters and 2022 nominations/appointments
- Sue Crosfield:* Ecumenical Accompanier on the Israel /Palestine border
- Jane Gaukroger* shares what struck her at Quaker Life Rep Council
- John Bourton's* first experience as a Meeting for Sufferings rep
- The Retreat: Martin Ford (Leeds AM) updates us & answers questions
- Northern Friends Peace Board and us

*Background material for these three items is circulated with Quakevine

This is a richly varied agenda. Do come along. Friargate meeting room is very large and well ventilated and all covid precautions are in place. It will be good to 'see one another's faces as we were wont to do'.

Possible Dates of Area Meetings in 2022: LM comments?

With the exception of January, all proposed dates follow our usual schedule.

Tuesday January 11 at 7 pm by Zoom Harrogate

*The usual 'second Saturday' would probably precede Local Business Meetings – not a good idea.
An evening Zoom Meeting cuts out the need for evening travel in January – a good thing.*

Sat March 12 New Earswick

Sat May 14 Friargate

Wed July 13 at 7pm Acomb

Sat Sept 10 Thirsk

Sat Nov 12 Friargate

Unless otherwise stated, meetings start at 1.30 pm, with drinks provided beforehand

Join a Meeting for Sufferings Interest Group

Barbara Penny & John Bourton, your Area Meeting representatives on Meeting for Sufferings [MFS], are keen to hear from Friends who are interested in engaging with the business of MFS through an email correspondence group with us. All the MFS papers are available online to all Friends, so those taking part would have just the same access as we do. We do hope some of you will be interested. To let us know your interest and/or ask for further clarification, please email: barbaraepenny@gmail.com & johnsallyb@hotmail.co.uk

York Area Quakevine (YAQ)

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

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The editor may select and edit all contributions.

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