

# Quakevine

News, Views, Venues and Dates for Quakers around York

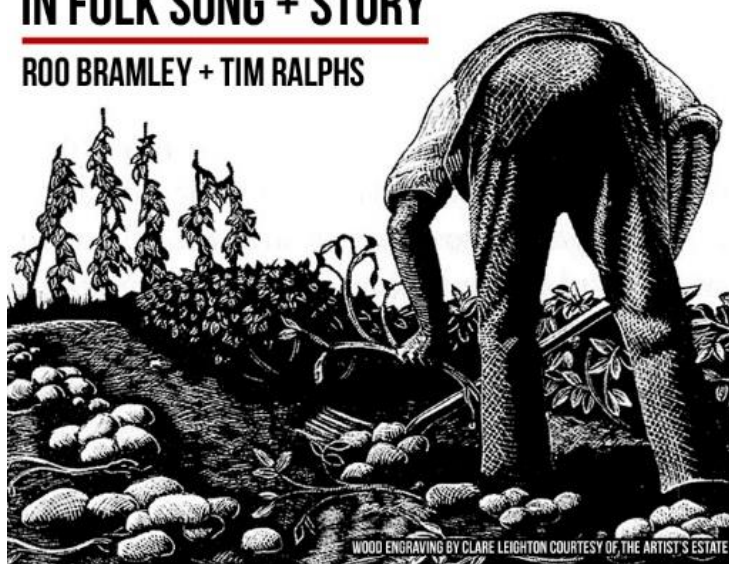
Issue 172

September 2018

## 3 ACRES + A COW

A HISTORY OF LAND RIGHTS + PROTEST  
IN FOLK SONG + STORY

ROO BRAMLEY + TIM RALPHS



**SUNDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER**  
**2PM // SHARED LUNCH 1PM**

**ENTRY BY DONATION // FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, HARROGATE, HG1 5PP**

*Thirsk Friends invite you to this special performance at Harrogate [see p 2]*

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## *Editorial*

I hope you will enjoy the variety of materials in this Quakevine. You're being offered an excellent drama production and two opportunities to follow up our 'responsibility as citizens' as advised in both our extracts from *Quaker faith and practice* this month. And more besides. Barbara Windle

## *Three Acres and a Cow*

This is an invitation to all Friends [and friends of Friends, of course] to come and see a terrific performance, last seen at Britain Yearly Meeting Gathering in Warwick over the summer of 2017.

I know that a number of people who were actually at Yearly Meeting Gathering didn't get to see it as there was so much going on that it was impossible to see and do everything one wanted. So for everyone who was frustrated about that last year - and for all those who weren't there (and even for those who did see it and will be keen to see it again!) here is a chance to experience an engaging, entertaining, enlightening and enjoyable performance at Harrogate Quaker Meeting House, as part of Quaker week outreach.

This group presenting it have performed all over the country, frequently at Quaker venues, but all manner of people will find it interesting. Don't miss it!

(Harrogate Meeting is providing some of the finance and we have also been awarded a grant from Quakers in Yorkshire Outreach Projects, but we are also asking those who come to make a donation to help cover the fee and travel costs of the group. Don't be put off by cost however. Participation is the important thing!)

## *Quaker faith & practice: two extracts of the month*

Remember your responsibility as citizens for the government of your town and country, and do not shirk the effort and time this may demand. Do not be content to accept things as they are, but keep an alert and questioning mind. Seek to discover the causes of social unrest, injustice and fear; try to discern the new growing-points in social and economic life. Work for an order of society which will allow men and women to develop their capacities and will foster their desire to serve.

**Advices, 1964** [Qf&p 23.01]

True godliness don't turn men out of the world but enables them to live better in it and excites their endeavours to mend it... Christians should keep the helm and guide the vessel to its port; not meanly steal out at the stern of the world and leave those that are in it without a pilot to be driven by the fury of evil times upon the rock or sand of ruin. **William Penn** [Qf&p 23.02]

## *Dream Workshop: access resources hidden in your dreams!*

Would you like to know how to find helpful resources hidden in your dreams? This method works well with all kinds of dreams - the nice, the nasty and the plain puzzling! You only need to be able to remember a snippet or two in order to find something helpful there.

Carol-Ann Hooper and Madeleine Kay are facilitating a **one-day workshop at Friargate Meeting House on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> November (10.00 - 3.30)**. Numbers are limited to 12 participants.

Madeleine & Carol-Ann also facilitate a regular Focusing with Quakers group, open to all in York Area Meeting. [It meets at Friargate] If you would like to know more about the Dream Workshop or the regular group meetings, please contact **Madeleine Kay** 01904 791919 or **Carol-Ann Hooper** 01904 639542.

## *York Area Meeting Matters*

### *September Area Meeting*

When we meet in Thirsk on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> September we shall cover the usual essential business matters before concentrating on the question of the erosion of truth in civil society. Meeting for Sufferings has asked all Area Meetings to consider this concern, brought to them by Southern Marches AM, and to send responses in time for these to go on the November Sufferings agenda. In readiness for September's discussion we have two substantial items [see reports pp 3-5] summing up the main thrust of the special preparatory meeting held recently. We are very grateful to Martina Weitsch, with Liz Scurfield, for their detailed work in advance of that meeting and for guiding us through it. The reports printed here will give us the basic framework for September's discussion, so please digest them beforehand, use them to think about your own response and bring them with you to Area Meeting itself. Our aim will be to agree a brief statement which we hope will be helpful to Sufferings.

### *York Area Sanctuary Meeting*

Dear Friends

Following our recent decision to become an Area Sanctuary Meeting we would like to invite you to the first **York Area Sanctuary Planning Meeting** for Friends from all local meetings on;

**Thurs Sep 27<sup>th</sup> 6-8pm at Friargate Meeting House**

The aim of the meeting is to bring together all Friends who are involved or interested in working with Refugees and Asylum Seekers [RAS], to share information, hear about what other initiatives and activities are taking place in the York area and start to build the **York Quaker Sanctuary Plan** and programme of activity for 2018/19.

The planning meeting will include a short introductory talk by **York City of Sanctuary** on the current situation for Refugees and Asylum Seekers, an update from the **York City Council RAS** multi-agency meeting and individual contributions from local Friends.

We would very much welcome and indeed need your help with this first meeting, so that we can start to build a complete picture across the whole of York of the important and necessary work that is happening to support Refugees and Asylum Seekers here and in neighbouring towns.

Light bites and refreshments will be available from 5.30pm.

Look forward to seeing you there!

For further information please contact Wendy Bennett [wendybnntt@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:wendybnntt@yahoo.co.uk) or Ruth Dance [ruthdance32@gmail.com](mailto:ruthdance32@gmail.com)

### *Special Meeting: 'Erosion of Truth in Civil Society'*

*Loretta Earle of Acomb Meeting sums up her overall impressions:*

Attendance at the meeting so far exceeded expectations that we had to move twice into bigger rooms to accommodate all 27 people. It was heartening that each of the York LMs was represented and Martina Weitsch gave a clear introduction to the issues before the floor was opened for individual contributions. Everyone who spoke was heard in that respectful silence which allows for differing ideas to be expressed without the contradiction and angry debate which is so often prevalent on social media.

A wide range of concerns was voiced: how we as individual Quakers can uphold the Truth in our daily lives; whether there is a unique Quaker contribution to be made; the problems caused by propaganda and the difficulty of knowing what is true; the

need for education and the skills of logical argument. Overall, it was clear that, with our long tradition of integrity in business dealings, Friends do have a positive message to share - even when demonstrating against Donald Trump, where so much of that protest descended to personal abuse.

It is not easy to balance the need to stand up for Truth while retaining the humility to “Think it possible that you may be mistaken” yet this is an essentially Quaker path if we are to live up to our name as ‘Friends of the Truth’.

***Alison Clarke of Thirsk Meeting specifies the major issues that arose. We shall need to have them in mind ready for September Area Meeting***

On 17<sup>th</sup> July twenty-seven Friends attended a Meeting held at Hartrigg Oaks to consider the “Erosion of Truth” and living in a “Post-Truth Society”, following initial consideration of this topic at Meeting for Sufferings earlier this year. The matter will come back to Sufferings after Area Meetings have responded this autumn.

The meeting was introduced by Martina Weitsch, who outlined possible areas for discussion, including the unchecked and unfiltered involvement of social media, deliberate falsehoods propagated by media and politicians, an over-supply of information and an expectation of immediate responses.

It was hoped that the meeting would explore whether and how BYM could be a champion of truth, and to take ideas to York Area Meeting in September. It was agreed that two people attending the meeting should independently provide reportage on the discussion to take to Area Meeting. I recorded comments by twenty-one of those present; all five local meetings were represented and it was a wide-ranging discussion, so I have tried to extract themes rather than recording every individual contribution. We began with a period of silence.

There was widespread acknowledgement of the size, difficulty and complexity of the issues. The commercialisation of the media, the echo chamber effect, the fact that polarised and polarising opinions get the most attention and propaganda is widespread were all mentioned. On a personal level, it was suggested that it is easy to generalise and embellish, thus eroding the truth. Some felt that it may not be for BYM to take this on, that we should “pick our battles” (!) more carefully and concentrate on areas where we could be effective.

This strand of thinking led to questions about cooperation; were any other organisations, particularly religious groups, tackling these issues? Should we be looking for partnerships and if so with whom? Does it have to be us? Is there a particularly Quaker viewpoint?

The impartiality of the BBC was questioned, with some feeling that there was a high degree of bias, while others felt they were doing their best and that we should appreciate the degree of independence they do have. Alternative points of view and sources of information could be used to counteract any perceived bias. Truth is not black and white. David Laverick contributed a useful comment on his time as an ombudsman, when he encountered opposing views of what the truth of a situation was, each of which view was genuinely believed by the opposing parties. It was suggested that using the word truth was unhelpful because of this, and “truthfulness” or “integrity” were better terms.

On a more positive note, there were many suggestions on how to avoid despair! Personal integrity and honesty in our own business dealings can have a positive effect and make a difference. Positive messages, such as those highlighted on a placard held up by Quakers at a Trump demonstration (truth and integrity) can help to reinforce our commitment to the truth. Education is important, and we should be teaching

children (and adults?) how to discern truths and untruths, how to use logical argument rather than assertion and to use academic rigour. We should look for alternative sources of information and a range of opinions. We were reminded of the passage in *Advices and Queries* where we are asked if we are honest and truthful in word and deed. We should seek out the truth and celebrate it: a “Quaker Accolade of Truth”. We are, after all, the Religious Society of Friends of the Truth (though I think the early Friends were talking of a religious or spiritual truth {AC})

Finally, an important relevant question was raised; have Young Friends (JYM & YFGM) been involved in this discussion? As young people are more likely to be using social media as their main source of information, it would seem sensible to ask for their thoughts and suggestions.

Liz Scurfield summarised our discussion and a period of silence followed. Liz thanked everyone for the level of interest shown and suggested that more thought and prayer is needed. Barbara Windle (York AM clerk) agreed that it had been a useful meeting, providing a strong basis for discussion at Area Meeting.

It was hoped that LMs would have a chance to raise the issue before AM in September.

## ***A Quaker Declaration for Equality and the Common Good***

*You may have seen in The Friend a cover photograph of Kendal & Sedbergh Friends arriving in London at the end of their cycle ride from Swarthmoor to London. This is a substantial extract from the full text of why they were there and what moved them to this action.*

In 1660 the Quaker Margaret Fell rode on horseback from Swarthmoor, in the county of Westmorland, to London to meet with the King and deliver ‘A Declaration and Information from us, the People Called Quakers’. At that time, Quakers were being ‘stigmatised and persecuted’ by the State for their religious beliefs, causing deep suffering. This declaration made clear that Quakers stood against all strife and were committed to fostering peace and unity. It claimed the right of Quakers to be permitted to live in peace.

Just over three hundred and fifty years later, inspired by the spirit of our Friend, Margaret Fell, we have been moved to leave our homes and families to ride from Swarthmoor to London and lay this Declaration before you. We give witness that we do not ‘bow to nor own’ the actions of Governments in promoting the marketplace narrative that people are only of value if they have economic value. We hold it has made permissible the stigmatisation and persecution of those who require the support of the Welfare State at times of need and made possible its systematic dismantling.

### **We challenge the false religion of the Market**

Margaret Fell challenged the follies and deceptions of the religion that drove the stigmatisation and persecution of the ‘People called the Quakers’. In our time now, we challenge the false religion of the Market, which is driving the dehumanising narrative that people only have value in our society if they have economic value. This has obscured the world where each of us has worth because we are human, holding the ‘spark of the divine’ within us. So much in our world that is good, beautiful and true is being broken because it fails the final judgment of the Marketplace. We hold that we can afford to care for each and every person.

### **A warning about persecution**

In the face of persecution, the Quakers who came before us spoke truth to power. ‘Now that you are in power, we caution you to act justly and with mercy and to prevent the persecution of innocent people’\*. Oppression diminishes us all.

Over the past eight years particularly, we have seen how the policies of government have led to a re-orientation of structures, powers and resources to empower and enrich those who already have economic wealth, at the same time disempowering and penalising those who are without. In honouring the creed of competition, we have seen how the safety net of the Welfare State has been unravelled, thread by thread, leaving our neighbours who are hit by 'the contingencies of life' to fall without the 'tender hand' of support. The fruits of this creed are manifest.

We have seen our friends and neighbours with disabilities stigmatised and denied the support once freely given; people coerced by hunger into the charitable arms of food banks; those in mental anguish struggling to navigate the maze of bureaucracy for the means to survive, only to fail and die alone and in distress; people sleeping in doorways speaking of being invisible and dehumanised and children exposed to the brutality of poverty. We declare that we are against these actions. They visit violence and havoc on people's bodies and minds at times of their greatest need. We give testimony and witness that we are against the narrative that lies behind it; that encourages our neighbours to be seen as 'Other', persecuted and cast-off. We hold that we can afford to care.

## *Friargate Miscellany*

### *Social Committee invites you*

Earlier this year, social committee distributed a questionnaire to gauge what social activities are most valued within Meeting and to consider future events. 25 people responded and all suggestions were very much appreciated. The survey highlighted that people value opportunities for shared food and talents, especially the yearly Midwinter party, soup plus, craft gatherings - and overseers' cake! Although incomplete, the results did indicate future social activities that appeal to members.

44% like communal gatherings (including talent sharing or craft making)

24% like outings (including places of Quaker significance)

20% like walking or cycling

10% like a discussion group or shared activity

2% like a miscellaneous activity (work gardening group)

A wealth of ideas was generated including Singing after Meeting, Dancing (folk, circle), Theatre trips, Desert Island Discs, a Book Group, visits to other Meetings, Zobmondo\* and other card games. Please excuse us if we have overlooked anyone's favourite suggestion. In response, the social committee is inviting anyone with a specific interest to talk with us to see if we can help arrange a particular activity.

Based on the survey, we have put together a calendar of events for the coming year and hope it reflects needs and interests within Friargate. If you would like to join in or can offer any support, then please contact the person in brackets.

30 September Picnic Walk (Jacquie )

October. Book Group (Jacquie)

17 November Theatre Outing ( Julian )

18 November Crafts after Soup Sunday (Cath)

20 January 2019 Midwinter Party (Cath)

19 July 2019 Bloom week outing ( Julian)

**Jacquie Coule Bleakley, Cath Harvey and Julian Pattison** (The Social Committee)

*\*I confess I hadn't heard of it either - it's always good to learn [Ed]*

## *Friargate Volunteers*

Sunday 9 September, after meeting: We hope all volunteers will come together to chat about how it is going and what we could do better after a full year of the rota. We aim to start at 12 and shall finish by 1 at the latest. Bring a sandwich, if you like. Cake will be provided! All are welcome! It would be nice to see new faces – and old hands can reassure you that whatever your talents or calling, there will be something you can do to help. For more information, contact **Cath Harvey** (at the Meeting House) or **Julian Pattison**, the volunteer co-ordinator.

## *A lonely bike - whose is it?*

An unidentified bicycle has been living in the garage on Friargate for some time (months? years?). If you are the owner or know who the owner is, please could you pass on this valuable information to Cath Harvey or to staff on reception at Friargate?

## *Come to hear Janet Dean*

**Saturday 29 September, 2-3pm. York Explore**

*The Peacemaker: How Family History Wrote My Novel. Janet's York Explore research for The Peacemaker drew on family history, newspapers and other archive material. Janet shares how York Explore Library and Archives helped her add fine detail to her compelling story. Admission, £3.*

## *Picking up your Quakevine*

Friargate Overseers have noticed that quite a few copies of labelled Quakevine are not being picked up from the pigeon holes in the foyer where they are placed following the Sunday of publication, which is always the last Sunday of the month. Overseers use Quakevine to keep an eye on Friends who may not have attended Meeting lately due to illness or some other problem. However, some uncollected copies belong to Friends who are attending regularly! So if you have asked for a paper copy, please try and remember to pick it up. If you no longer wish to have a paper copy, do contact the Editor, Barbara Windle, who will arrange for it to be sent to you by email.

**Julia Terry** (co-convenor Overseers)

## *Friargate House Groups – first of an occasional series*

Although every month we advertise in the page 8 diary details of what Quaker groups who meet in each other's homes are doing, it seems that many Friends still wonder if these are closed groups, confined to local or well-established little gatherings. So Friargate Miscellany will take the opportunity to say a little more about these informal groups from time to time in the hope of encouraging more people to feel really welcome to put a toe in the water. Do come along if the topic for the month interests you or you would like to get to know Friends in a more informal setting.

## **The Knavesmire Group**

This Group is interested to hear about Friends' interests, lives, activities and journeys and to share their thoughts about their faith and values. Topics are totally eclectic and have included beekeeping, working with refugees, our heroes and heroines, Friends' work and passions, sailing and building boats. In September we have no fixed programme so can simply enjoy catching up with old friends - and making new ones.

We hope that Friends interested in coming along will join us for a social evening on 19<sup>th</sup> September at Julia Terry's home (13 Belle Vue Terrace) at 7.30 pm.

Contact Julia Terry (656634) or Anna Baldwin (637196).



## Friargate September Diary

2nd	Sun	Local Meeting	Friargate	After MfW
2nd	Sun	Carecent Collection: Food and Toiletries	Friargate	After MfW
9th	Sun	Exploring Quakerism <i>all welcome</i>	Friargate	9.00-10.15
9th	Sun	Area Meeting <i>see page 3 onwards</i>	Thirsk	1.30 - 5.00
9th	Sun	Afterword	Friargate	After MfW
9th	Sun	Volunteers Meeting <i>see page 6</i>	Friargate	12.00 - 1.00
14th	Fri	Bishophill Group: page 10 of "God, Words & Us" edited by Helen Rowlands	6 Portland St (Ann Holt & David R)	12.30 (bring own lunch)
16th	Sun	Soup and Rolls	Friargate	12.00 noon
16th	Sun	Gardening Group	Friargate	After MfW
17th	Mon	Days For Girls	New Earswick MH	10.00-12.30
19th	Wed	Knivesmire Group: Getting to know each other. Newcomers very welcome.	13 Belle Vue Terrace (Julia Terry)	7.30 pm
23rd	Sun	Attendees Group	Friargate	12.00-12.45
27th	Thu	York Area Sanctuary meeting <i>see p 3</i>	Friargate	6 – 8 pm
29th	Sat	Clifton Group: A Place I should return to	40, Rawcliffe Lane (Graham & Alison R)	10.30 am
29th	Sat	Days For Girls	New Earswick MH	2.00-4.00
30th	Sun	Picnic Walk – to Rowntree Park	From Friargate	12 noon start

**10.30 Notices:** 1st, send to Huw Still 07915 607903 [huwstill@gmail.com](mailto:huwstill@gmail.com) or David Laverick.(see below)

**Remaining Sundays:** send to Keith Knight 01904 658482 [kk@deanknight.c0.uk](mailto:kk@deanknight.c0.uk)

**Breakfast Meeting:** Notices to: David & Margaret Laverick 01904 798 050 or [hobgate39@gmail.com](mailto:hobgate39@gmail.com)

**Collections:** 7th,14th, World Land Trust; 21st, 28th, Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases

## Sunday Worship in York Area Meeting

Time	Location	Frequency
10.30-11.30	Acomb, Friargate, Harrogate, New Earswick, Thirsk	Weekly
9.15 – 10.00	Friargate <i>worship is preceded by breakfast at 8.30</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday
10.30-11.15	Lamel Beeches	weekly
11-11.30	The Oaks	Weekly
10.30-11.30	Knaresborough	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday
8 pm	Eastern Villages:	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday

## Weekday Worship in York Area Meeting

Tues	11.45	Hartrigg Oaks	Weekly
Wed	2.00	University Quiet Place, Heslington West: <i>all welcome</i>	Termtime
Wed	12.45 -1.45	Friargate: bring your lunch, followed by MfW at 1.15	Weekly
Thu	10.45	Knaresborough, Gracious Street Centre <i>1<sup>st</sup> Thu, for 30 mins.</i>	Monthly
Thu	12.30	Harrogate <i>3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month, for 30 minutes</i>	Monthly
Thu	9.30	The Retreat	Weekly
Wed	11.30	Acomb	Weekly

## Contacting Quakevine

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**Local Contacts:** Anna Baldwin, Louise Brown, Sally & John Bourton, John Abbott, Meg Forrest

Please send items in Word, Trebuchet 12. The editor may select & edit all contributions.

**Deadline for next issue: 12 noon, Sunday September 23rd**