

Quakevine

News, Views, Venues and Dates for Quakers around York

Issue 91

October 2011



*Quakers make their presence known on Acomb Green (see p 2)
photo: Simon Palmour*

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Editorial

Listen to them breathing was a Radio 4 programme about Quakers and poetry. Although I had been alerted to it, I still managed to miss it. Here's what the Radio Times had to say about it: 'Sibyl Ruth is a poet who is also a practising Quaker. For many years she thought her poetry had little to do with her Quaker background. But then, after a meeting with the poet and Quaker Dorothy Nimmo, she began to see connections between her Quaker beliefs and the poetry that spoke most clearly to her. In this programme she goes in search of other poets who are Quakers, to try and find out if there is a relationship between their belief in the Quaker ministry and their writing. She talks to Rosie Bailey about her late partner UA Fanthorpe; to publishers Anne and Peter Sansom about the writing workshops they organise which draw on many of the principles of Quaker meeting; to Gerard Benson, the co-founder of Poems on the Underground, who became a Quaker quite late in life; and to Philip Gross, a line from whose poem 'The Quakers of Pompeii' provides the programme's title.'

So here's my appeal. Does anyone have a copy of it? I'd love to hear it.
Barbara Windle

Peace demos with a difference!

13th September 2011: Facing Parliament some 150-200 people, more young than old, many with banners, placards, models of missiles. Why? To show their opposition to the Government's strong support for the sale of arms.

The Campaign Against the Arms Trade had organised demonstrations around London: at Docklands, at BAE Systems and some other big arms manufacturers' headquarters – and near Parliament.

The huge Defence & 'Security' Exhibition had just opened at Docklands. Every two years the Government sponsors this enormous arms fair to display deadly military hardware. Invitation only, it brings buyers from governments around the world, many of them well-known for their repressive and brutal actions.

Amongst the crowd were Ros Batchelor, her brother and myself. After a late meeting, she and I had a free day before coming home. What better than this opportunity! Most demonstrators would later be moving on to Docklands, but for these 2½ hours we could be part of the experience.

Quiet vigil it was not: singing, clapping, short speeches, interviews (BBC, ITV, Al Jazeera and other media – but was it reported?!) and a 'Die-in'. This meant two people at a time lying on the kerb next to the heavy traffic, banner behind, model drone nearby. Cue for this oldster to stand with them, poster in hand.

Just for once dressed in neat suit and tie, I was at least twice asked if I was an M.P. (real M.P.s had been over to us)! No, but it gave the chance for a recorded interview, comparing the WW2 terror of flying bombs with the far worse drones that are now becoming normal.

Our vigils near the Minster are not like this!

Theodore Bacon (Friargate)

A Presence on Acomb Green

As part of Acomb's outreach efforts, we try to take part in the events on Acomb Green. The Summer Fair is now an annual event, supported by York City Council. Following on from the success of last year we ran a second-hand book stall. Once again, as soon as we had set it up we were besieged by people wanting to browse and buy. Sandwiched between a small steam train and an exhibition of falconry, we did brisk trade until the weather took a turn for the worse at the end of the afternoon and then we ourselves and the remaining books too got very wet!

Many thanks to all the Friends from the York area who donated books and DVDs. We made £155 for the Alternatives to Violence Project and kept our presence on Acomb Green in the public eye.

John Guest (Acomb)

Our Peace Testimony - 8

Too long have wrongs and oppression existed without an acknowledged wrongdoer and oppressor. It was not until the slave holder was told 'Thou art the man' that a healthy agitation was brought about. Woman is told the fault is in herself, in too willingly submitting to her inferior condition, but like the slave, she is pressed down by laws in the making of which she has no voice, and crushed by customs which have grown out of such laws. She cannot rise therefore, while thus trampled in the dust. The oppressor does not see himself in that light until the oppressed cry for deliverance.

Lucretia Mott, 1852

Quaker Phrases Clarified

... by backbencher

Testing a concern

Most of us have a bee in our bonnet about something or other. That is not the same as having a 'concern' in the Quaker sense. A Quaker concern starts as an individual's deeply held sense of being led or impelled by the spirit to take a course of action. Over the centuries, Friends have developed a process of providing support for a concern. The first step is to share or 'test' the concern in the worship of a business meeting, to find the right way ahead. If the Local Meeting recognizes the matter as a concern, there is then a procedure for sharing it within the wider Society. An individual's concern can lead to a change of view in the Society about an issue (e.g. the holding of slaves). Quaker concerns have been behind local, national and indeed international pressure groups and movements. And on occasion they have ultimately brought about a change in laws and attitudes.

The Editor comments: two examples may be pertinent. Susan Hartshorne's concern - equality for same sex couples - went through a very long process indeed. She took it to her Area Meeting (Manchester & Warrington) then to Meeting for Sufferings in 1977. This undoubtedly influenced attitudes, but the Yearly Meeting was not yet ready to make the concern its own. 22 years passed before the 2009 Yearly Meeting in York's decision on same sex marriage. My second example comes from Yearly Meeting in Canterbury 2011. Its commitment to becoming a low carbon community was also the outcome of individual concerns, widely shared within Quakers over some years, finally reaching that point where the whole Yearly Meeting felt called to act. What will our next prophetic voice be saying?

The following item was recently produced by elders at Friargate, where copies have been made available at meeting for worship. It is hoped it might also be useful to print it in Quakevine for ease of reference. Anyone wishing to have the actual leaflet in its intended layout is welcome to ask the editor for a properly formatted copy.

Finding our way into meeting for worship

Tried and tested Quaker practice

Quaker worship, where so much is undefined or assumed, may be baffling to relative newcomers. Every meeting for worship is a new and different holy experiment, where we wait on the spirit. That means there can be no hard and fast 'rules'.

Even so, 350 years of worship have created a strong body of Quaker experience and we ourselves have found that some of the customs and practice developed over time do help to deepen worship and draw the worshipping community together. Elders have tried, however imperfectly, to outline some of this practice below.

Our hope is that this may enable everyone to feel more confident in making their own contribution, spoken or unspoken, to our experience of worship together. We would welcome your suggestions and additions.

from Quaker faith & practice 2.01:

Silent worship and the spoken word are both parts of Quaker ministry. The ministry of silence demands the faithful activity of every member in the meeting. As, together, we enter the depths of a living silence, the stillness of God, we find one another in 'the things that are eternal', upholding and strengthening one another.

- ❖ Beginning worship with an extended silence usually helps the Meeting to 'centre down' and free ourselves of distractions. The spontaneous ministry of babies and young children is always welcome.
- ❖ While occasional silent reading, e.g. *Quaker faith & practice*, can help us settle into worship, habitually reading for a significant time may separate us from fellow-worshippers and thus lessen our contribution to the centring down.
- ❖ We are asked to listen to all vocal ministry in an open and accepting spirit and to allow it to settle deeply into the worship before contributing anything new.
- ❖ Spoken ministry is very welcome. *Advices & Queries* reminds us: 'do not assume that vocal ministry is never to be your part'. Even a few hesitant words may be of great service and may also call out helpful ministry from others.
- ❖ Before rising, we may want to ask ourselves inwardly: is my message for the meeting or given for me personally? Does my leading come from the spirit or reflect a more secular concern, however important and passionately held?

- ❖ Books for spiritual reflection available in the meeting are often spontaneously and helpfully used in ministry. Experience suggests that it is not easy to integrate a ready prepared reading into the spirit of meeting for worship.
- ❖ Under the pressure of speaking, it is easy to forget to be audible. We all need to think of our listeners and consciously try to speak clearly, without haste, and loudly enough for everyone to hear us easily. Don't speak twice.
- ❖ We are asked to resist engaging contentiously with earlier ministry. When referring to earlier vocal ministry we are asked to try to avoid naming Friends as this can unintentionally exclude those who do not know the person named.
- ❖ It can be helpful for the last part of Meeting to settle into renewed silence. It can also be helpful to draw the threads of the meeting together into a whole.

'These things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by but that all, with the measure of light which is pure and holy, may be guided; and so in the light walking and abiding, these may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not from the letter, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.'
Elders of Balby Meeting, 1656

Area Meeting

Membership Matters

We were very happy to receive into membership **John Anderson** (Harrogate)

Meeting Dates for 2012

The year's schedule was agreed and is now available from all Local Meeting clerks.

AM Minutes The clerks are happy to send a full copy of the minutes on a regular basis to any member who wishes to receive them.

Quaker Week Activities

There will be a stall in Parliament Street, York on Saturday 1st and 8th October. We shall be handing out information about Quaker Quest and answering any questions we may be asked about Quakers.

Quaker Quest in October

Many people are looking for a spiritual path that is simple, radical and contemporary. Maybe you're still looking or perhaps you've already found it in Quaker worship. If the former, do come to the open-to-all Quaker Quest evenings being held at Friargate on five Wednesday evenings in October and November. If the latter, do tell your friends about these sessions and give them the details. There are plenty of programmes in all the York meeting houses.

Wed 12th October at 7 pm, will start with three Friends speaking informally about 'Why am I a Quaker?' and the evening will end at 9 pm. A light supper, to which everyone is invited, is available before each session from 6.15 pm. The remaining sessions, finishing on Wed 9th November, will focus on Quakers and God; Quakers and Peace, and Quakers in today's world.

Please pick up a leaflet for more information and / or speak to **John Guest**, **Paul O'Kell**, **Debbie Wright** (all at Acomb), **Morris Robinson** (New Earswick), **John Batchelor** or **Barbara Windle** (Friargate).

Open Afternoon: the Peace Testimony 350 years on

From 1.30 – 5 pm on October 8th, Friargate main meeting room will host some dozen displays and interactive materials from different organisations working for peace. In the Library there will be a display of archive material. Refreshments will be available in the Penn room, while the Fox Room will be a Quiet Space.

Please advertise the event and, if you are able, bring cakes on the day and perhaps stay on to help with refreshments. Please contact: PEACE 350 YEARS ON via **Brenda Tyler** Tomtecards@btinternet.com tel 01904 630055

The Mount School walks for charity in Quaker Week The Rowntree Walk, Wednesday 5 October

As part of their Quaker week activities and to fundraise for this year's school charities, students from The Mount are walking part of York's 'Rowntree Walk'. Local Friends are very welcome to join the students and walk with us. If you would like to walk, please arrive at reception at The Mount by 12:30 pm, when the first group will be getting ready to start. You may like to bring a packed lunch; we shall stop for a drink and biscuits along the way. We expect the walk to take 2-2½ hours. If you are unable to join us, but happen to spot the walkers when you are in the city, please give the students a wave! For further information, please contact Linda Moore at the Mount School (667500).

AM Miscellany – items, dates, events

Suggestions / entries from all meetings for AM Miscellany are welcome

Can you help? York Quaker women a century ago

I am a second-year Ph. D student at the University of York. I am researching Quaker women in York in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, with a particular focus on the life and work of Lucy Harrison (1844-1915), The Mount School, and York Friends Sewing Meeting.

If you have any stories or information that you would like to share about any of these, or indeed about York Quakers during the period more generally, then I would be delighted to hear from you!

Sarah Shaw email, sri500@york.ac.uk; telephone 01904 675806.

Dilemmas of a peacebuilder - talk at the Bar Convent

On Monday October 10 at 7.30 pm **Peter Jarman** (New Earswick) will give an open talk to the Ecumenical Justice and Peace group on *The Dilemmas of a Peace Builder* based on experiences in war-torn regions of the Caucasus and the Balkans. He is completing a broader account for a book for Quakers on *Encounter and Discernment: Quaker Experience in Former Communist States*.

Come and celebrate One World Week!

York residents from around the globe will again gather for an international night of food and fun on Saturday 29 October in the Central Methodist Church Hall, St Saviourgate. Set up by the Bah'ai community in 1985, this is part of a series of events held annually. The Bah'ai now organise the events with York Racial Equality Network and with York Interfaith Group.

One World Week is an international movement which organises local events to celebrate being part of our diverse world and to raise awareness and act on issues of global justice. The aim of the International Shared Meal is to bring together people from as many nations as possible.

Everyone is welcome and is invited to bring a dish from their country or tradition, or simply a personal favourite, to share. There's always lots of variety and plenty of vegetarian and some vegan options. Children under 16 can come free of charge and everyone else is asked to contribute £2.50 at the door towards the cost of hiring the hall and other facilities.

The evening starts at 6.00 and guests are asked to please bring food by 6.15. Dancing led by a live ceilidh band follows the meal and the event closes at 9.30pm. I hope to see you there!

Ginnie Shaw (Friargate)

Solar / Energy Efficient Open Home 16 Oct 2-4 pm

Solar electric panels, solar hot water, solid wall insulation and more. Free. No need to book. Discount vouchers. 24 Grange St, York YO10 4BH has cut its energy use by half. Call 07979 800063 to view another day.

City of Sanctuary

On Sunday 16 October there will be a meeting at Friargate from 12-1pm (soup provided) to share ideas about specific actions for York City of Sanctuary. Contact **Felicia McCormick** fmccyork@yahoo.co.uk for more details.

Woodbrooke - some courses in November

Our Quaker Spiritual Roots: for elders and overseers Tues 22 - Thu 24. For elders and overseers who wish to feel more rooted and confident in Quaker spiritual understandings and practice. We will look at what we mean by right ordering, discernment and leadings, and Quaker religious understandings of leadership and much more. Board & Tuition **Fee: £174.00 (Ensuite £184.00)**

Understanding Islam & Muslims *with the Reflection Network* Fri 18- Sun 20
An exceptional opportunity to hear from members of the Muslim community about their faith and how it forms their lives. This acclaimed course is being offered at Woodbrooke for the third time. The programme will not avoid difficult issues but will also give a taste of the spirituality and cultural richness of the Muslim tradition in the UK and beyond. If you are struggling to understand the truth about Islam in contrast to distortion and prejudice, this is for you.

Fee: £184.00 (Ensuite £194.00) incl. travel to local mosque & Sufi gathering.

To learn about other courses contact Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre

Quaker faith & practice: extract of the month

Evils which have struck their roots deep in the fabric of human society are often accepted, even by the best minds, as part of the providential ordering of life. They lurk unsuspected in the system of things until men of keen vision and heroic heart drag them into the light, or until their insolent power visibly threatens human welfare. **William Charles Braithwaite, 1919 (Qf&p 23.05]**

Friargate Local Meeting

September's extended Local Meeting considered important issues about the right use of our buildings and financial reserves. Friends are encouraged to email raymondwilliams@mac.com for their own paper-free copy of the minutes. These include a thoughtful report on the direction of future developments of our meeting house. Because of the wide interest and implications of these discussions, some additional printed copies of the minutes are also available in the meeting house foyer. (The minutes are of course available for reference in the library as usual.)

Raymond Williams co-clerk

Contact details for all Local Meetings www.yorkquakers.org.uk

Acomb	The Green, Acomb	01904 769563
Friargate	Friargate, York	01904 624065
Harrogate	12a Queen Parade, Harrogate	01423 563391
New Earswick	Top of Folk Hall car park	01904 470808
Thirsk	Kirkgate, Thirsk	01609 780881

Sunday Worship in York Area Meeting

Time	Location	Frequency
10.30-11.30	Acomb, Friargate, Harrogate, New Earswick, Thirsk	Weekly
9.15 - 10	Friargate <i>worship is preceded by breakfast at 8.30</i>	2 nd & 4 th Sunday
10.30-11	Lamel Beeches	Weekly
11-11.30	The Oaks	Weekly
10.30-11.30	Knaresborough	2 nd Sunday monthly
8 - 9 pm	Eastern Villages <i>for locations, ask the Editor</i>	3 rd Sunday monthly

Weekday Worship in York Area Meeting

Tues	11.45	Hartrigg Oaks	Weekly
Wed	1.15	Friargate <i>preceded by lunch at 12.45 (bring your own)</i>	Weekly
Thu	9.30	The Retreat	Weekly

Friargate October Diary

1	Sat	Quaker Week begins	Parliament St	10 am – 1 pm
2	Sun	Local Meeting	All meetings	After worship
5	Wed	Retired Friends Coffee <i>1st Wed of month</i>	Friargate	10.30 am
7	Fri	Bishophill Group: to continue ch. 12 The case for God [Karen Armstrong]	8 Manley Close (Theodore Bacon)	12.30 pm [bring own lunch]
8	Sat	Peace 350 years on: Open Afternoon	Friargate <i>see p 7</i>	1.30 – 5 pm
9	Sun	Afterword: reflections on worship	Friargate	After worship
15	Sat	Quakers in Yorkshire: Israel/Palestine	Ackworth	All day
16	Sun	Soup and rolls	Friargate	12 noon
18	Tue	Knavesmire Group: John Hopton will speak on stonewalling; with slides	16 St Georges Place (A & M Cooper)	7.30 pm
22	Sat	Justice & Peace Vigil	St Michael le Belfrey	11 - 12 noon
23	Sun	Attendees Group: all are welcome	Friargate	After worship

10.30 Meeting Notices to: 01904 Anne Reynolds 01904 416840 or anne.reynolds@uwclub.net

Breakfast Meeting Notices to: David & Margaret Laverick 01904 798 050 or hobgate@aol.com

Friargate Collections: 2, 9 Schools for Streetkids; 16, 23 EAPPI; 30 Friargate Funds

Contacting Quakevine

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Please send contributions in Word, Verdana 11.5 (just type 11.5 into the ‘font size’ box).

The editor reserves the right to select & edit all contributions.

Deadline for next issue: 12 noon, Sunday 23 October

Quakevine is available by email - just ask the editor to add you to the list