

Quakers in Yorkshire

Newsletter

including

News, views and events from local
and area meetings in Yorkshire



Annual QiY Calendar



Programme for QiY meeting

at

Oxford Place, Leeds

Saturday 21 January 2017



Activities for children and young people;
childcare available for infants if notified
in advance

Quakers in Yorkshire Newsletter January 2017

All Yorkshire meetings are invited to send news of their interests and activities for inclusion in the QiY newsletter. The newsletter is published four times a year, ahead of QiY quarterly meetings.

NB Deadline for April issue 13 March 2017

Paper copies of the quarterly newsletter, including the programme for each meeting of Quakers in Yorkshire, are sent to all local meetings. Please let the co-clerks know if your meeting needs more or fewer copies.

The newsletter is also sent electronically to AM and LM clerks. Please could recipients ensure that hard copies are made available to Friends who do not have Internet access? If any Friend would like to receive personal copies directly, please inform the co-clerks.

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Please let the clerks know if you see any errors relating to your meeting or if there is any item you would like to include here.

Have your meeting's contact details changed? We always need up-to-date email and telephone details of local and area meeting clerks. Under Data Protection QiY cannot receive personal details from other parts of the RSOF. This information must come from you individually, so please let us know.

The Quakers in Yorkshire calendar for 2017 forms the centre pages of this newsletter. It will not be circulated separately but if you need a paper or email copy please contact QiY clerks.

QUAKERS IN YORKSHIRE (AND BEYOND)

Diana Sandy's piece in our last newsletter and her article in The Friend (8 July 2016) are the basis of January's discussion on the future of our Society. We reprint here her article and a reply by David Rubinstein

FROM HERE TO WHERE?

A Friend recently wrote, in a book review of *A Man that Looks on Glass* by Derek Guiton, that 'The Society of Friends is in crisis'. Is it? ...and in what way? A few years ago an elder commented to me: 'If you ask 30,000 Quakers what the Society of Friends is all about you will get 30,000 different answers.' Is that the 'crisis' then? That we don't know what it is for and what it is about. If so, how has this happened?

There are still a few Quakers who grew up in the Religious Society of Friends – not many now. A few more joined before 'The Grand Change' of 1970 and together they hold the few remaining strings to the Society's origins and traditions that they inherited. Since the 1970s members and attenders, I feel, have been free to make it all up as they've gone along – hence, perhaps, the potential 30,000 different answers!

As one of those who grew up in a Quaker environment – meeting, school and Young Friends – I imbibed Quaker things rather than studied them. I also made assumptions that I later had to challenge. As I made my way along in the Society I was obliged to explore the background to the Quaker enterprise from its beginnings.

The time has come for us to revisit those early Quaker insights and revelations, both in the context of their time and in the context of our own. Are they still relevant and manageable in today's world? I am no historian, nor am I an intellectual researcher. My understandings are just that – mine. It seems that our Friend George Fox was born – nearly 400 years ago – into a world that was in many ways very similar to our own. It was a world that was expanding its horizons, challenging its hierarchies, increasing knowledge through the printing press (our IT!) and finding some religious and political rules unacceptable. People were also fearful for the future. In that world, though, the notion of a 'God' was normal. The concept of a superior guiding – sometimes controlling – figure has been around for millennia in one form or another: ever since the human species has started to ask the questions 'Why?' 'How?', and 'When?' and found answers only in the supposed existence of 'something other'. It seems, too, that humans were more at one with their natural world then; 'spirituality' was fundamental and normal.

Little, if any, of that would be universally accepted in today's world. Indeed, many challenge these concepts as delusions. Our modern world is taken over by science and technology. Creation can be explained in their terms very well and there are now explanations for almost everything. We have no need for a supernatural 'Creator' – a God by whatever name one chooses to use. Had there ever been a God on a throne up there on 'Cloud Nine' one of our rockets would have brought him [her or it] down to earth long ago! What about 'spirituality' though? Does that still exist? Or is that just another delusion? Everything happens in the human brain, I'm told, so we are all capable of inventing and interpreting experiences in ways that make us happy or fearful or 'guided'.

Our mathematicians and scientists have worked out when the universe began and when it will end. In George Fox's day it was the earthly horizons that just got bigger. Today, it is those of the universe. Individually we appear to have become much, much smaller. Does that mean we have all become more insignificant? If we still maintain an awareness of 'something other' has that something – 'God' if you will – just got bigger and more transforming? Or is it just more out of reach?

George Fox established the Society of Friends of Jesus in the 1660s in order to focus the many revelations born out of the challenges of the day. This became the Society of Friends of the Truth (eternal Truth) as revealed to his followers. ('Quaker' was a derogatory nickname.)

Fox preached the potential for all to receive guidance from the Spirit, but this had to be channelled and tested in a disciplined, accountable way. The system he and Margaret Fell devised to enable this was set up in 1666 and lasted exactly 300 years – until 1966 – when its breakup was started. His structure enabled all Friends in all Meetings to be guided by the Spirit and for that guidance to empower the Society as a whole. Unfortunately, that structure no longer exists. The Religious Society of Friends in Britain has, I feel, lost its most important source of guidance – its members' insights. For many, our Society has become a friendly society, a sort of Sunday Club. Does that matter?

So, what still exists from those early days? Can we still call ourselves 'Friends of the Truth' – God's Truth; Eternal Universal Truth; and Spiritual Truth? How do we now discern what is 'Truth'? Perhaps, though, we are deluding ourselves – there is no Truth. What about this word 'religious'? What does that mean now? Has the concept of spirituality become lost in space? Are we deluding ourselves that it ever existed in the first place? Does our intellect determine that our insights are delusions brought on by fatigue or fear or loneliness?

All this questioning and searching is not confined to the Society of Friends. The world has thrown us into turmoil and the way ahead is frightening and far from clear. The traditional Quaker Way would have been to centre into the power of the Holy Spirit, searching and waiting. Is that way still open to some, if not all, of us? If not, we need to search out the obstacles that now exist in our gatherings that have diminished our understanding of our faith.

If there is a crisis, it might just be a crisis of confidence in our traditional way of dealing with issues. Early Quakers were not afraid to tackle issues head on. We are naturally averse to hurting each other and there is fear that groups of Friends will leave the Society, although others might become members instead of attenders. Many find it difficult to commit to becoming members – including some who have grown up in the Society – because they are unclear about what the Society of Friends is for now.

It is time for us all to find out. It is time for us all to start addressing the issues that have been diminishing us for half a century and more.

Diana Sandy

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In and Beyond Yorkshire: Quakers Today and in the Future

Quakers in Yorkshire and the wider Quaker community are in debt to Diana Sandy for her article in our October newsletter and for her earlier article in *The Friend* about the future of our religious society in our county and nation. Complacency or unthinking satisfaction with the status quo are not signs of health. Nor do I view sympathetically the possibility of our society becoming or being, in Diana's words, 'a friendly society, a sort of Sunday Club'. Twenty years ago a member of my last meeting deplored, in a conversation, people who merely wished 'to be quiet on a Sunday morning'. I agree with this analysis.

At the same time I do not find myself in complete agreement either with Diana's diagnosis or her prescription. The main point to be stressed in my view is that, as Diana herself points out, we live in a different world from that in which I – and later, Diana – grew up. We live in a particularly secular country in a secular world, in which religious denominations have been in numerical decline for a matter of decades. This is particularly true of the Religious Society of Friends, which has never since numbers began to be counted systematically at the start of the 1860s, been other than a small body. Our numbers have fallen less in percentage terms than other denominations but we were much smaller than the average to start with. It is essential that all of us do what we can to reverse our own decline in numbers. There were 1,645 members in Yorkshire in 2005, 1,482 in

2015. Falling numbers make advisable, may even necessitate, revision and rationalisation of organisation. I do not want to become enmeshed in controversy over the status of attenders, but a society which in 2015 had fewer than 13,500 members (and half again as many attenders) must in my view grasp most potential members to its bosom with cries of joy.

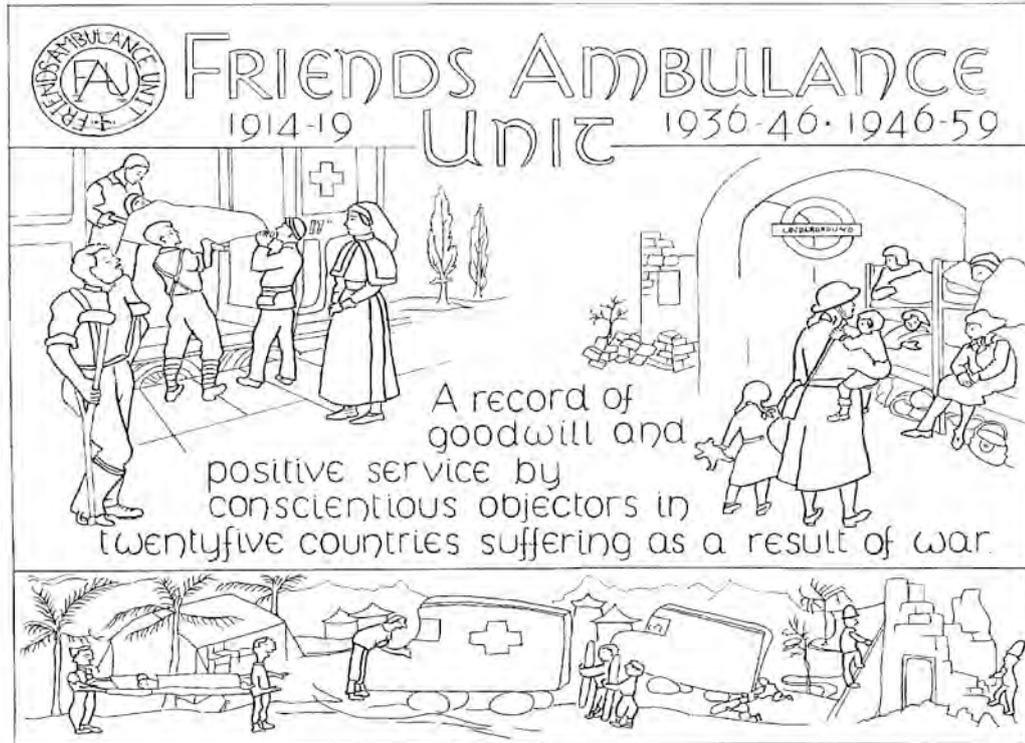
Our strength lies in our diversity. If orthodox Christians are made to feel unwelcome amongst us, as is sometimes alleged, such attitudes lie beyond my – by now extensive – experience. We (that is to say most of us) like to think that we are open-minded. We believe that there is something sacrosanct about every human being. We oppose war. We value and practise truth beyond the white lies sometimes involved in answering questions like: ‘Do you like my new hat?’ We appreciate silent worship and the absence of paid clergy, though it is not always easy to find or coerce enough volunteers to do all the jobs which have to be performed. We believe, at least theoretically, in equality. We do not gamble. As Diana herself writes in our newsletter: ‘Concerns exist among us all relating to education, poverty and inequality, immigration and the environment as well as those relating to Quaker disciplines and right ordering.’ That seems to me to be enough in common to be getting on with. We are few in numbers; we have never been an insignificant force in British life.

I have read and re-read Diana’s articles. She may well tell me that I have not understood the nature of her dissatisfaction. If so, I apologise. But I do not think that re-ordering our organisation will resolve the problems which Diana feels that we face. I would be happy to live without renewed organisation provided that we could enrol 5,000 new members within a short space of time.

I do not share Diana’s lifelong immersion in a Quaker environment. My experience of our religious society and of Yorkshire Friends is much shorter than hers. I have never belonged to any other religious denomination or attended its meetings. I am proud to be a Quaker. I am proud to belong to the same denomination as Diana Sandy and all the other people with whom I may disagree on this or that issue but with whom there is a basic agreement on goals and methods of achieving them, I believe firmly that Quakers have still much to offer this country and the world. Quakers are needed. Do not lose heart!

David Rubinstein

Quakers in Yorkshire Calendar 2017



Quarterly meetings will be held on

Saturday 21 January 2017

Oxford Place Methodist Centre, Leeds

Saturday 22 April 2017 Harrogate QMH

Saturday 15 July 2017 Malton QMH

Saturday 21 October 2017 Bootham School, York

For information on Quakers in Yorkshire activities together
with links to other Quaker websites and details of local
meetings in Yorkshire

www.quakersinyorkshire.org.uk

email: enquiries@quakersinyorkshire.org.uk

Quakers in Yorkshire is a registered charity number 1139514

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Outreach

Outreach Projects Committee (OPC) 2017

If you, your Local or Area Meeting are planning an outreach project in the coming year - a Quaker stall at a local fair, an exhibition, an enquirers workshop, or anything else, Quakers in Yorkshire have funds set aside to support outreach and inreach projects. The Outreach Projects Committee warmly welcomes applications: see the QiY website for details, or contact Annabel May, Clerk to Outreach Projects Committee *happyquaker2015@gmail.com*

The Outreach section at Friends House in London has a wealth of resources available for outreach. They also sponsor Quaker Week in October.
www.quaker.org.uk/outreach

Peace Resources in Yorkshire

Northern Friends Peace Board was founded in 1913 to “advise and encourage Friends in the North...in the active promotion of peace...” See nfpb.org.uk for events and information, or phone 01204 382330.

The Peace Museum Bradford (10 Piece Hall Yard BD1 1PJ, 01274 780241) is the only peace museum in the UK. Now open Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays 10-4. www.peacemuseum.org.uk

Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford is the largest university peace studies centre in the world.

www.brad.ac.uk/social-sciences/peace-studies

Commonweal Collection, University of Bradford is an independent specialist library concerned with non-violent social change. See www.brad.ac.uk/library/sites-and-collections/commonweal-collection

Activities sponsored by Quakers in Yorkshire

Easter Settlement 2017 14-17 April 2017

Towards Quaker views of education

The speakers will include Paul Parker and Jeff Beatty. Lynne and David Morris from Journeymen Theatre will perform 'Over the Top' about militarisation in schools.

Easter Settlement is a gathering of Friends of all ages at Cober Hill Guest House, Cloughton near Scarborough, over the Easter weekend, with the option of staying on until Tuesday 18 April. Further information: Chris Petrie 01729 822677 chpetrie@btinternet.com

Junior Holidays (7-12 years)

A weekend at Barmoor is planned for 23-25 June 2017.

A weekend is planned for Autumn 2017. Further details and booking form will be available in the early spring.

Yorkshire Friends Holiday School (13-18 years) 20-27 August 2017 at Bootham School York. YFHS is an annual, week-long residential gathering for around a hundred 13 to 18 year olds. The aim is to build our vibrant, respectful Quaker community and organise a mixture of activities, both fun and thought-provoking. For further information see yfhs.org.uk, also accessible through www.quaker.org.uk/other-quaker-groups, or contact Mark Rymer at yfhssecretary@gmail.com

A YFHS Reunion weekend has been booked for those who attended last August's Holiday School. It will take place from 17-19 February in Huddersfield.

Available to Yorkshire Friends

GLENTHORNE - SPECIAL INTEREST HOLIDAYS 2017

Glenthorne, the Quaker guest house near Grasmere in the Lake District has just published its special interest holidays programme for 2017.

<http://www.glenthorne.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Special-Events-2017.pdf>

Yearly Meeting Gathering 2017 To be held 29 July - 5 August 2017 at the University of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL. BYM website for info.

BAMFORD QUAKER COMMUNITY 2107 RETREATS PROGRAMME

The Bamford programme of Retreats and Working Weeks has been circulated to meetings. Here is a summary:

- 20 - 22 January: Exploring Community
- 24 - 26 February: 'When my time is up . . . '
- 24 - 26 March: Green Spirituality
- 28 April - 1 May: Hun Yuan Qi Gong
- 9 - 14 May: Quaker Voluntary Action: Spring Planting Retreat
- 26 - 29 May: Meditation
- 2 - 4 June: Singing in Nature
- 14 - 20 August: Mowing the Meadow (and summer tasks on the land)
- 26 Aug - 4 Sept: Family Summer Camp
- 5 - 8 October: Meditation and Qi Gong
- 13 - 19 November: Woodland Working Week
- 1 - 3 December: Exploring Community

Working Saturdays the third weekend each month: 21 Jan, 18 Feb, 18 Mar, 15 Apr, 20 May, 17 June, 19 Aug, 16 Sept, 21 Oct, 18 Nov, 16 Dec; apart from 22 July, (fourth Saturday).



Kindlers' Workshops at Leeds Carlton Hill in 2017

Sat 28 Jan **TURNING POINTS: CHANGE, CHALLENGE and LETTING GO**

A workshop based around Advices & Queries 28. Led by Ann Banks, Val Bone and Zee-Zee Heine.

Sat 25 February **PRAYER - CHERISHED BY GOD**

Exploring Advice number 3. Led by Ruth McCarthy and Angela Sansam.

Sat 25 March **UNDERSTANDING LOVE AND POWER**

Changing the world one step at a time. Led by Angela Sansam and James McCarthy.

Sat 22 April. **OUR LIFE IS LOVE AND PEACE AND TENDERNESS**

Nurturing our Meetings. A workshop based on Advice 18. Led by Ann Banks and Val Bone.

Sat 20 May **LET YOUR LIFE SPEAK**

Using your gifts in the service of God and the community. Led by Zee-Zee Heine and Michael Hennessey.

ALL WELCOME - NO BOOKING REQUIRED

To be held at Carlton Hill Quaker Meeting House, 188 Woodhouse Lane, Leeds LS2 9DX

10:00am arrival, workshop 10.30am to 4:30pm | Cost: min. £10 per day |

Bring your own lunch

Email: memberquakerkindlers@gmail.com

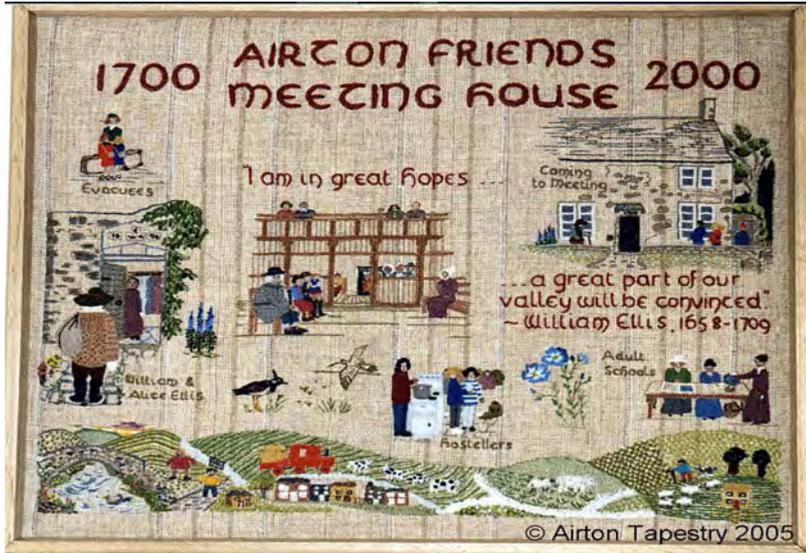
Essays in Quaker History

David Rubinstein recently published seven of his Quaker essays under the title *Essays in Quaker History*. Contents include the building of Hampstead Meeting House in 1907 and the early history of that meeting; the development of Quakerism in Yorkshire; the impact on Quakers of the South African War and the two world wars in the twentieth century. Also included are accounts of the lives of two outstanding Yorkshire Friends, James Backhouse and Edna Annie Crichton.

The book was published at the end of September and copies will be on sale at the January meeting again at the reduced price of £10.

Book Launch at Airton

Airton Friends invite us to attend a book launch for *Hidden in Plain Sight*, the history and architecture of the Airton Meeting House on **Saturday 8th April 2017**. Please note this date and pass the word to anyone who might be interested. Laurel Phillipson of Airton Meeting says, 'It will be worthwhile coming: Airton has quite a startling history.'



Paul Parker, Recording Clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting (the nearest thing Friends have to a national leader) will speak in the afternoon on: **"Who are the Quakers and why do they matter today?"** Further details of the programme will follow.



Airton Meeting House

Photo: Laurel Phillipson

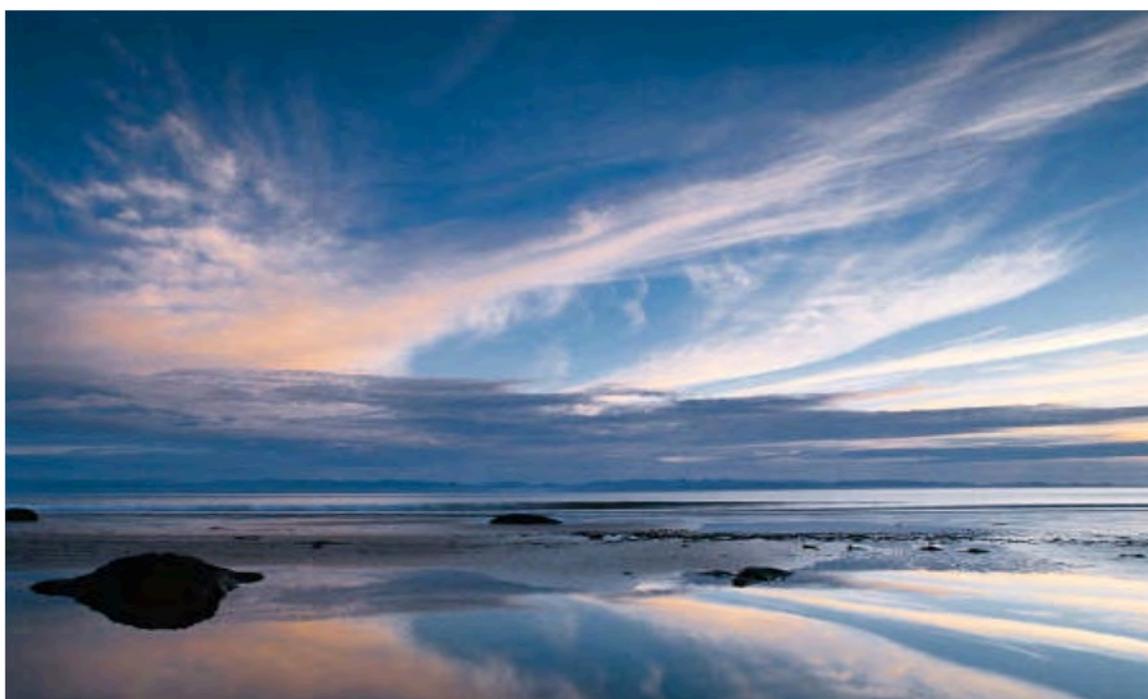
Heathrow Expansion

Friends will recall that fifteen people were arrested in November during a protest near Heathrow against airport expansion. They were part of a small group who ran on to an M4 spur road and caused disruption by lying down in front of oncoming traffic.

One of the Friends arrested was Ian Bray of Huddersfield Meeting who awaits a court hearing in late December. Friends may wish to uphold him and reflect on the following passage:

Peace is not just about the absence of conflict; it's also about the presence of justice... But true peace does not exist until there is justice, restoration, forgiveness. Peacemaking doesn't mean passivity. It is the act of interrupting injustice without mirroring injustice, the act of disarming evil without destroying the evildoer, the act of finding a third way that is neither fight nor flight but the careful, arduous pursuit of reconciliation and justice. It is about a revolution of love that is big enough to set both the oppressed and the oppressors free.

From: *Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals.*



LOOKING AHEAD

Quarterly meeting of QiY: at Harrogate QMH on Saturday 22 April

The theme of our April gathering at Harrogate will be **Sustainability**. Our Friends Chayley Collis, Pete Redwood and Sheila Kaye have been asking how Friends have progressed since the Canterbury Commitment of 2011 and are planning a full day on the theme. **Jonathan Dale**, of Manchester and Warrington Area Meeting has agreed to attend and will be the key speaker. Jonathan was the Swarthmore Lecturer at Yearly Meeting in 1996 and has a lifelong personal commitment to greener, more sustainable lifestyles.

LOOKING BACK

Project Lifebags

During the QiY meeting at the Mount in October Friends heard from students about their project, Lifebags. Janet Naudin told Ilkley Meeting about it and suggested they might like to try and put together one bag! 'So,' Janet writes, 'imagine my excitement and pleasure when Alice Hamar (from our Meeting) drove me to York to The Mount where I met up with Annabelle Hill and about eight other students to hand over FIVE Lifebags, put together by various people in Ilkley Meeting! We had a collection at Meeting, which gave me cash to buy items on the list like underwear, socks, neck pillows etc.'

A great positive outcome inspired by the Mount girls' talks at QiY!

Ravensworth Lodge

3 Belgrave Crescent, Scarborough, North Yorkshire, YO11 1UB (01723) 362361

QiY co-clerks receive the Ravensworth Lodge newsletter and we can send it on to anyone interested. We heard a talk about it in 2013 and a group of Friends visited and saw recently completed building work at the home when we met in Scarborough in 2015.

QUAKER HOUSE FLATS IN LEEDS

Una Parker (0113) 244 5454 would still welcome any expression of interest from prospective residents. For further information please see QiY Newsletter for October p 4.

MEETING OF QUAKERS IN YORKSHIRE 21 January 2017

Oxford Place Methodist Centre, Leeds LS1 3AX Tel. 0113 2453502

PROGRAMME FOR THE DAY

10.00 **Coffee or Tea** on arrival

10.30 **Meeting for Worship**

11.00 **Welcome to Oxford Place**

11.05 **'Reaching Out' Reports from:**

Under 19s Co-ordinating Group, Junior Holidays, Holiday School and Easter Settlement, Outreach Projects Committee

12.40 **Notices**

12.50 **Lunch** (bring your own, drinks provided)

There will be a **Bookstall** for you to browse and buy.

14.00 **Appointments and releases**

14.10 **Considering our Future.**

Diana Sandy and David Rubinstein will introduce our afternoon session and invite us to address a number questions for discussion in groups. The session will conclude with feedback from groups and a plenary session.

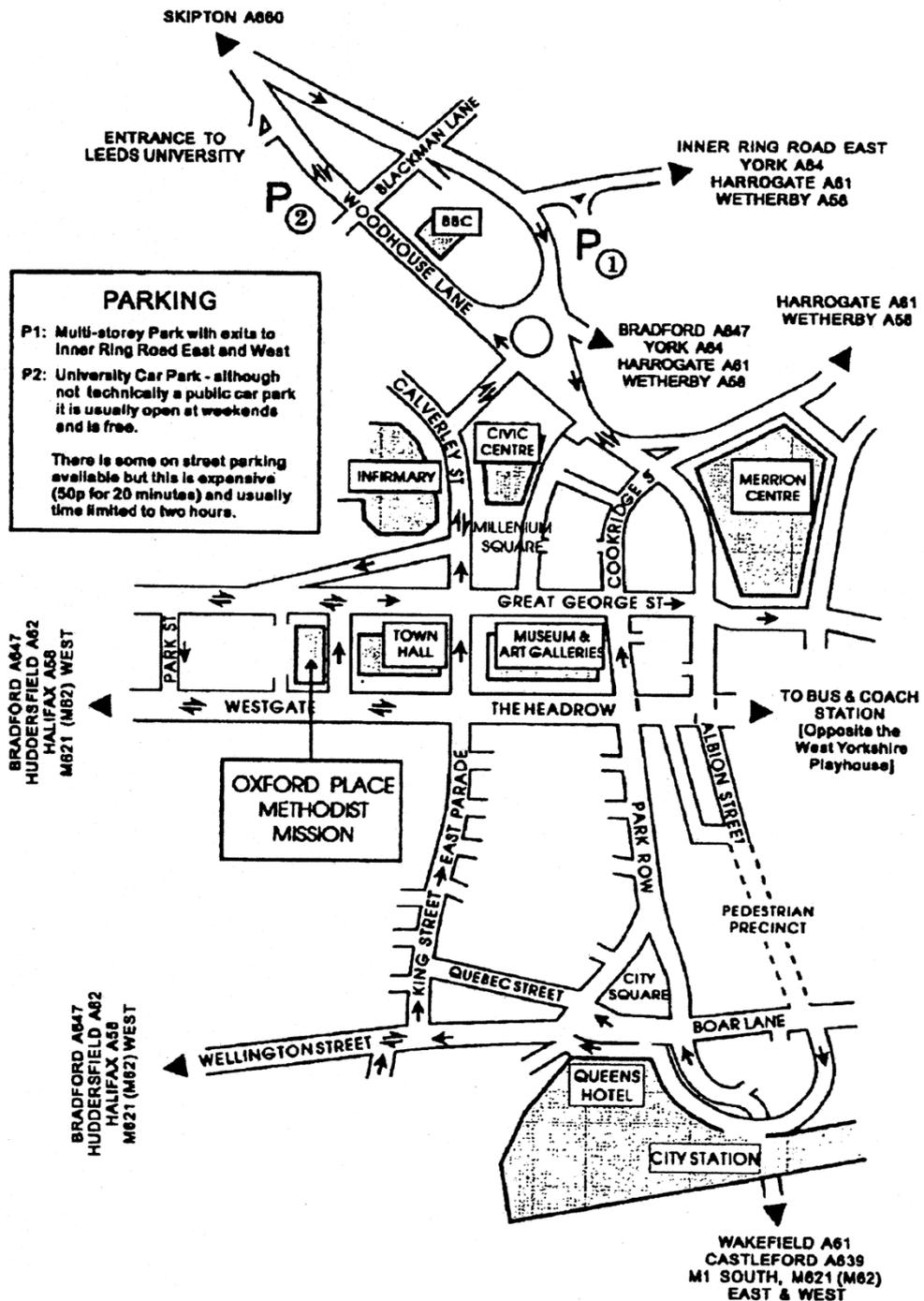
16.00 **Tea and departures.** We thank Leeds Friends for their hospitality and all the arrangements for the day.

Name badges: There will be sticky labels for you to write your name on. If you have a name badge, please bring it and remember to wear it.

Children and young people under 19 are most welcome to attend Quakers in Yorkshire meetings. Carlton Hill Local Meeting is offering a programme which will follow a short period of time in meeting for worship 10.30-10.45. Bring a packed lunch and bus fares.

Please contact Robert Keeble 0113 2422208 or email robertkeeble@hotmail.com by 11 January to reserve a place

Directions to Oxford Place Methodist Centre



Oxford Place is next to the Town Hall. Parking in the area is limited, but there are a number of car parks throughout the city.

The Leeds City Bus (50p flat fare, free with a metro card) goes every 15 minutes to the Town Hall from the rail station (stand S8) and the bus and coach station (stands 1 and 2).