



Quakers in Yorkshire Newsletter

News, views and events
from meetings in Yorkshire

CORONAVIRUS CLOSES FRIENDS HOUSE AND SWARTHMOOR HALL

APRIL MEETING OF QUAKERS IN YORSHIRE CANCELLED

Easter Settlement Cancelled

Junior Holidays Cancelled

Alternatives to our normal meetings for worship

Quaker worship doesn't need to happen at a particular place or time. We can sit at home at a prearranged time (not necessarily on Sunday morning) and worship with each other at a distance.

We can meet via telephone conferences that all could join: details here: <https://www.quaker.org.uk/resources/free-resources/outreach-materials>

Woodbrooke is hosting online meetings for worship via the Zoom platform, accessible via computer, pad or smartphone. Here's the link:

<https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/about/online-mfw/>

Quakers in Yorkshire Newsletter April 2020

Welcome to the April edition of the Newsletter. It is with regret that we must confirm the cancellation of our meeting planned for 18 April in Sheffield in response to the threat posed by the spread of the Coronavirus epidemic.

April Newsletter only available online

Since Friends are now prevented from visiting meeting houses, we have decided not to produce a paper copy of this newsletter. If you know of someone who would like a hard copy and you can get it to them safely, please could you print off a copy?

Reminder

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

Normally, hard copies of the newsletter, including the programmes for the quarterly gatherings, are sent to all local meetings. The newsletter is sent electronically to AM and LM clerks. Please could you ensure that Friends without Internet access receive copies? If you have difficulty making hard copies, please inform the co-clerks.

Deadline for contributions to July issue: 14 June 2020

Quakers in Yorkshire Website quakersinyorkshire.org.uk Please let the co-clerks know if you see any errors relating to your meeting or if there are additional items 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 regulations QiY cannot receive personal details from other parts of the Religious Society of Friends. This information must come from you individually, so please let us know.

We have heard that sometimes emails have been circulated to deceased Friends. Every effort has been made to keep our lists up to date, but it's possible that communications from QiY are forwarded by area or local meetings – so please check that your lists are accurate!

Next meeting of QiY - Deep Adaptation

Our July meeting of Quakers in Yorkshire will be held at Pickering Meeting House, if circumstances permit. Our meeting will be led by Jilani Cordelia Prescott, one of Jem Bendell's Deep Adaptation Advocates. She is a musician, a leader and teacher-trainer of the Dances of Universal Peace, and a Sufi guide. She was born into a Quaker family and attended Meeting for Worship regularly throughout her childhood and young adult life. Jilani later found her spiritual needs were met by a path of singing and dancing. She will help us explore some thoughts about the Deep Adaptation work, including discussion and sharing, some experiential practices and some heart-warming connection through chant and movement, if time allows.

QiY Nominations

There are vacancies on the Governing Body of Breckenborough School owing to illness. If you know of Friend who would be interested in taking on this work, please contact the Clerk of QiY Nominations Committee, gilskidmore@waitrose.com

Airton LM

Airton Friends Meeting are seeking to replace two large tables with smaller ones. Two rectangular tables are offered to any Meeting in Yorkshire which has a need and will be available once replacements have been acquired. The existing tables measure 160x80cm, each mounted on a metal frame with four wheeled feet splaying from a central vertical framework. The tops swivel into a vertical position for storage. Interested Meetings are invited to contact Simon via airtonbarn@gmail.com or on 01729 830263.

Cancelled Meeting

The cancellation of April's meeting of QiY has denied Yorkshire Friends of a chance to hear about some interesting activities in Sheffield. We are grateful for the short contributions that follow about what we will be missing. We hope we may revisit these topics at a future date.

Sheffield Quaker Tapestry

In 2016-2018 Margaret Lawson followed the Equipping for Ministry course at Woodbrooke. As part of the course, she undertook a project inspired by the History Group's work and her love of the Quaker Tapestry embroidery style. She decided to do a panel for and with Sheffield Meeting. She will tell us how she went about the task, and about the stories depicted on the panel.

Pen and Pencil Society

In 2015 Sheffield Friends formed the Sheffield Quaker History Group (SQHG) and surprising things resulted. In 2016 they were informed about the Pen and Pencil Society, a collection of documents held by Sheffield City Archives. The group agreed to investigate these 40 bound volumes containing poems, photos, paintings, drawings and writings. Written and illustrated by a group of Sheffield Quakers over 40 years around the turn of the 20th century, each volume reflects a year of the Society's existence. Subjects such as *Sheffield Meeting, its position and prospects* and *Charles I vs Oliver Cromwell* are included. We hope Linda Hoy will tell us more another day.

'One of the sounds of heaven': German Interfaith Conference

A recent interfaith conference in Vallendar, Germany, was an exercise for representatives of the Abrahamic faiths to meet, worship and live together. Lectures, workshops and discussion groups form the spine of the conference, each year on a different theme, this year's being 'Religious Responses to Terror and Trauma'. Whilst understanding that not all Friends are comfortable with 'God language', I must admit that *Laudate Omnes Gentes*, with a German-Turkish Muslim woman singing soprano and a Jewish Londoner providing baritone backing, is one of my sounds of heaven. The conference is annual; if anyone interested in attending, please contact: monikajonathan1@gmail.com.

Jonathan Doering, Barnsley LM

A Visit to the Bamford Community

On a rainy day in March I travelled to the Quaker Community in Bamford for a spiritual retreat. This was a new venture for me. I've visited many times in the past eight years to take part in their Working Weeks, usually doing clearing, planting, harvesting, cutting and stacking wood in the twelve acres of land. But in my 70s I want to try new experiences and so for the first time I signed up for a retreat.

The residents are small in number but give a big welcome. Rooms are warm and comfortable and the meals delicious. We were led through sessions looking at significant events and people in our past and imagining our spiritual journey as a river. There was a wide range of books and art

materials to dip into and experiment with. On the second day the sun shone and we went outside into the glorious scenery to communicate with nature and be still.

There were challenges. Between eleven people there are eleven ideas of God but we also share a lot of principles as well as the Testimonies. The retreat offered a safe space away from the troubles of life in 2020 and I came home refreshed and inspired. The peach tree in the poly tunnel seemed to speak of better things to come.

Pauline Leonard



GRASP

The QiY Group to Reinvigorate and Simplify Structures and Processes produced an interim report and consultation in January. This is on the website at <http://quakersinyorkshire.org.uk/grasp/> together with background information. Area meetings have given the report initial consideration and it is now being discussed by local meetings. Quite a few have already done so and produced helpful minutes. Area meetings will again discuss the

GRASP options as they are responsible for making decisions on simplification.

An online survey has been created to help Friends think about the issues. There is a link to the survey on the above web page. Friends are encouraged to take part in the survey, whilst remembering that it is only area meetings who will discern the options for re-invigoration and simplification.

David Olver, Convenor of GRASP

A Year in Poems

The unique atmosphere and environment of Airton Meeting House and Malhamdale have drawn Friends and visitors for generations. Airton Friends are celebrating these qualities by inviting local residents, guests and Friends to submit poems for display on our website and noticeboards, perhaps inspired by a visit to the area or the meeting house. Each month in 2020 we are displaying a new poem drawn from any submitted. Topics have included history, climate and even the act of writing. Contributions from people of any age and with any experience are welcome. To submit a poem, send it to airtonbarn@gmail.com Poems must be free from copyright restrictions for us to display them - please confirm this in your email.

Administrative Support

York AQM has just appointed an administrative assistant, to help both the clerks of AM and AM Trustees. They will look after many of our documents and records of who does what. We are hoping to make it easier to persuade Friends to take major roles in the future by reducing the amount of secretarial work that falls to them. John Guest, Clerk of YAQM Trustees, has compiled a list of area meetings who employ administrative assistants, and what they are being asked to do. He would be happy to share this with anyone interested. Email: green.lane@phonecoop.coop

Roots of Resistance

Campaign to end ties between Huddersfield University and Bahraini police.

'In the name of God, as a political prisoner I am deeply in debt to all human rights activists who have rallied against murderous security practice in Bahrain in which the university of Huddersfield is implicated. I cannot thank you enough'.

Quakers in Huddersfield and beyond are campaigning to halt the University's MSc in Security Science, currently being delivered at the Bahraini Royal Academy of Policing. Roots of Resistance is allied with the London based Bahrain Institute for Rights & Democracy (BIRD).

Sam Walton (former manager of QPSW's Peace and Disarmament programme) works on human rights issues with Bahraini activists at BIRD, He initially requested Robin Bowles and Ann Bettys of the Huddersfield-based Roots of Resistance group to take action.

The Roots group had continued to meet following the successful No Faith in War day in September at the DSEI arms fair in London, so a local Quaker group was already prepared for action. On Susan Clarkson's suggestion, a book group was set up, reading George Lakey's 'How We Win: a guide to nonviolent direct-action campaigning. It became our guidebook!

The campaign gathered momentum when BIRD collected testimony from prisoners who had been tortured by the Royal Bahraini Police in the facility where the course is taught. The Times, Independent and Yorkshire Post have covered this story and the BBC World Service plan to do so.

We're asking the University to suspend the MSc course pending an independent investigation into allegations of human rights abuses, including torture of political prisoners, and the implementation of a thorough human rights due diligence. It follows from a request made by BIRD in 2019 by Paul Scriven (Lib Dem Peer) to the Vice Chancellor Bob Cryan which received media attention earlier this year. Roots started by sending letters to the Vice-chancellor and to the president of the Student Union, requesting a meeting to discuss the concerns.

We hold a weekly term-time vigil outside the university. Quakers from Huddersfield, Bradford, and Wooldale have been joined by members of Amnesty International and others and we hope that by raising awareness in this way, students will add their voices. Our contact with several student groups greatly strengthens the impact of the campaign. We've also been targeting our local MPs and have been encouraging them to meet with us. We're helping gather signatures for an open letter to the University from academics around the UK backing the campaign. Lyndsay Burtonshaw at Turning the Tide has offered advice and support.

The vigil is very important to human rights prisoners in Bahrain. Their messages have brought the campaign alive and convinces us of the spiritual impact and value of what we are doing. We act not only on the prisoners' behalf, but also in solidarity with them through links with BIRD.

Our non-violent action is grounded in our Quaker peace testimony. We aim to encourage the university to contribute to peace making in Bahrain, but this cannot be our priority whilst human rights abuse and torture carries on with impunity. Our campaign continues and is growing.

'The peace testimony is about deeds not creeds; not a form of words but a way of living... We pray for the involvement of the Spirit with us, that we may work for a more just world.' QF&P 24.11



Woodbrooke: A Message from Martina Weitsch

As a Woodbrooke Trustee, I would like to inform Friends that Woodbrooke is facing serious consequences from the Coronavirus outbreak. Please see the statement on the website: <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/statement-19-march-2020-covid-19-impact/>

Woodbrooke will experience a significant loss of income; income that will be irrecoverable. It will also face a significant cash flow problem as regular outgoings will have to be covered even if there is no income.

I am writing to invite members and attenders to consider:

1. Making donations as individuals to help Woodbrooke through this unprecedented and unforeseen period. Donations can be made via Woodbrooke's website: <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/about/support-us/>
2. Urging your meeting to make a donation to Woodbrooke at this time.

I appreciate that Meetings also face serious issues especially with the loss of lettings income. but any support now would help Woodbrooke enormously.

I don't want to sound alarmist, but given what the government are doing to support business (and there has been no suggestion that this will cover charities, although if it does, no doubt, Woodbrooke will see what can be obtained by way of support) you can see that economically there is storm raging which an organisation as small as Woodbrooke will be hard pressed to weather without support.

Quaker Congo Partnership UK

Report of visit to DR Congo, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda.

Three trustees of Quaker Congo Partnership UK visited our partners in DR Congo for nine days in February 2020. I went with Alick Munro and Paul Simon. We were accompanying our partners in their work to improve health, build peace and to tackle poverty. We are accompanying them in their lives and aspirations. After the time in DR Congo I went to Burundi and Rwanda and met with Turning the Tide staff and community resource volunteers.

It was a journey and a pilgrimage and we hope our donors and supporters will continue to support the work there, and us on that journey. The visit was very positive with many constructive conversations and meetings. It has reinforced our long-term commitment to working in South Kivu and hope it will strengthen the partnership between QCP UK and CEEACODRC.

We were warmly welcomed: There is a local Swahili saying that a house without visitors is not blessed. A theme that emerged was the importance of taking things slowly. **Haraka haraka haina baraka:** There are no blessings in working quickly.

Among many vivid and colourful memories one of the strongest images is not a photo and it is sad. On the Sunday in Abeka a young woman with four children died in the hospital. The sight of her grieving and disconsolate husband lying on the ground outside the hospital being comforted by his friends and family will stay with her for ever.

As well as images there are always sounds: singing, traffic in town, crickets in the village at night, laughter as well as tears, children's welcome and cries, the occasional helicopter overhead. There had been rain, so everywhere was very green and journeys were affected by mud. We were aware of the extent of people's need, of inter-ethnic conflict, the impact of perpetual war, insecurity and militia, and especially in high plateaux, poverty/subsistence economy, DRC is the rape capital of the world, with high levels of domestic violence, poor access to clean running water, health issues of malaria, malnutrition, waterborne disease, cholera, obstetric difficulties, anaemia, poor child health, trauma, access to health for the poor. Internal displaced people and refugees, education levels from illiteracy to expense of higher education to little vocational training especially for women. It's hard to get stuff to market. There is poor infrastructure: state of roads; potholes, impassable in wet weather, unreliable internet, very few people have electricity. There are of course many similarities and connections.

There are hopeful signs: a new president, Etienne Tshisekedi and government, and new officials in South Kivu; rain so crops grow; more people have mobile phones; security is better at lakeside level; energy from young population; no new Ebola cases recently, reduction of waterborne disease in Abeka.

We had many conversations with individuals and small groups, meetings with CEEACO management and project leads. We travelled throughout Kivu, but stayed most of the time in Uvira. We were able to see all the projects we support first hand and to hear of the difference they make, and discussed plans for the future. The projects are:

Centre Hospitalier d'Abeka (CHA) – a community hospital in Abeka
Centre for Education, Peace and Psychological support
Women's Action for Integrated Development changed from Women's 'Microcredit' during the visit.
Clean running water to CHA, and Abeka

Together with our partners CEEACO and the head of the health authority in South Kivu we agreed ways for the Centre Hospitalier of Abeka to become a recognised hospital, a big challenge for us all requiring new buildings and improved equipment. In Bukavu we met with the DR Congo Minister responsible for health, children and young people and communities for Kivu in order to confirm our commitment. In DR Congo access to health for the poorest is very difficult. There are many diseases which are preventable, and a need for strong health messages.

Since our return Coronavirus has spread alarmingly across the globe. In a country like DR Congo with poor health infrastructure this will be disastrous. Strict measures limiting most travel and all gatherings including church services were implemented on 19 March.

We heard stories and vivid testimonies of the extent of the need and the impact of the projects: young people in peace committees in the high plateau now living in peace alongside those who had attacked them; women who had been raped supporting through counselling; women now able to earn a bit of money for themselves through growing vegetables or making and selling baskets, or raising poultry or goats. One of us carried out a survey so that the water supply can be extended to two neighbouring villages to Abeka.

During the visit I joined in Friends church services in DR Congo and in Rwanda: singing, prayer, community, children, challenge from Bible readings. It would take another article to describe the Friends Churches, all part of the worldwide family of Friends.

So much more to tell you: dancing into the night, roads nearly impassable because of mud and queues of lorries buried over their axles, amazing views over Lake Kivu...It was a positive life changing visit for us all and we hope for our partners in Abeka, Uvira and Kikongo in South Kivu in DR Congo.

I also had time in Burundi and Rwanda hearing about the work of Turning the Tide supported by Quaker Peace and Social Witness (so us!). They work to build peace, to challenge injustice and structural violence. It was a privilege to hear at first hand the work, the achievements and the challenges of people in TTT programmes. The commitment and

enthusiasm were very evident. I was very impressed by the range of campaigns and the achievements.

I ended my visit with two days in Uganda staying with the clerk of Ugandan Yearly Meeting and his family on the outskirts of Kampala. Sharing a room with their daughters, latrines outside with a view of the moon, praying together and travelling on motorbikes.

I would love to have the opportunity to tell people more face to face, but that will probably be a while off. In the meantime, let me know if you would like a copy of a more detailed report when it is ready. We are always happy to hear from people who would like to get more involved with the work and of course to receive donations towards the work of Quaker Congo Partnership UK.

<http://www.quakercongo.org.uk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/25641418099/>

Address: Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount St. Manchester, M2 5NS

Account: 08-92-99 65725825

DIY meeting for worship in Barnsley...

Being Luddites, my wife and I agree to have silent MfW with Noah, our son, without an online presence, so settle in our living room for 45 minutes (compromising with restless Noah). It is a blessed time: I read *QF&P* 21:21; Monika, Psalm 22; Noah, a Bible story and other books, setting a new record for being still of 30 minutes before starting to squirm. Through our living room window, I watch the small wood by the church: the trees' branches stretch like arms, the small branches like hands, the twigs like fingers, towards the sky. There are rumblings on the horizon but we will, somehow, get through. Noah moves to where Monika sits on a prayer stool to admire the view and, as the 45-minute point comes into view, whispers, 'Mum, I want to *jump!*'

- Jonathan Doering, Barnsley LM

CORONAVIRUS

Since I started compiling this issue of the newsletter we have experienced an extraordinary transformation to our way of life. We are as a nation and

individuals overwhelmed by our changed normality. I hope we can all celebrate the amazing efforts of workers in the health and social services obliged to continue working in dangerous conditions, and also those who keep us provided with food and other necessities. As far as the newsletter goes, I am grateful to have had the opportunity to include a great deal more material in this newsletter than is usual, and even though the two pages dealing with the quarterly meeting arrangements have gone it is several sides longer than usual.

I hope you enjoy the content, most of which was prepared long before the crisis, but if you find a lot of typos, please be patient: my scheduled appointment for cataract surgery has been postponed, and the text is a bit too blurred for me to ensure that all is completely accurate.

The final page was sent to me by James McCarthy and dates from the late 19th century. By chance, my son, an ophthalmologist who has tested positive for Covid-19, and is appalled to learn that he will have to work in MEDICAL wards (are they crazy or what?) has sent me the same piece.

"And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently. And the people healed. And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal. And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed."

- Kitty O'Meara

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