
Quakers in Yorkshire Newsletter

News, views and events from
Yorkshire Quakers

and

Programme for QiY quarterly meeting

To be held on Zoom internet platform

Saturday 17 October 2020

10.00 – 16.00

EVERYONE WELCOME

Quakers in Yorkshire Newsletter October 2020

Welcome to the October edition of the Newsletter. Paper copies of this will be available for Friends who have difficulty accessing the internet. Please let arthurpritchard@gmail.com have the name and address of anyone you know who would enjoy receiving a hard copy. The newsletter will be printed in A5 format, but an A4 copy can be produced if specially requested.

QiY Quarterly Meeting

Our meeting planned for The Mount School York on 17 October 2020 will now be held via the conferencing website Zoom. It will also be possible for you to follow the meeting by telephone. Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwucOihrz4jHNE39-yxFmz5jsREoKDG28CG>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. The link is the same for both morning and afternoon sessions.

Newsletter reminder

All Yorkshire meetings are invited to send news for inclusion in the newsletter, published four times a year. 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 January issue: 12 December 2020

Quakers in Yorkshire Website

www.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.

Changes of clerks

Please let QiY clerks know of changes in clerks so that we can keep our lists up to date! 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.

Beware of doubtful appeals – a note from Barbara Windle

I have been in correspondence recently with Gretchen Castle, the General Secretary of Friends World Committee for Consultation – which makes her the international go-to person for information about Quakers worldwide. The work of FWCC is well documented and many of us know Gretchen personally through World Conferences and through our own European and Middle East Section of Quakers.

I wrote to check out with her a funding appeal which may have reached some of you, as individuals or meetings, from Pastor Ruhasha Fresiano Dickson on behalf of the Friends Orphanage School (FOS) in Uganda. It is difficult if not impossible for those of us who are thousands of miles away and have no personal contact with an organisation to judge whether or not it is wise to respond.

Gretchen's advice about unknown new organisations, unsupported by established Quaker relationships was as follows: 'We have been getting the same – and persistently! It is not an organisation or a person known to me. I would kindly say no, as we have done several times. He is very persistent. As FWCC, we would not give to any single organisation without going through the Africa Section.'

Virtual Holiday School 2020 Epistle

Since the founding of Yorkshire Friends Holiday School in the year 1933, it has taken place in Yorkshire for young Quakers every single year. Until this year. Due to the global outbreak of Covid-19, it was with heavy hearts that Holiday School in York had to be cancelled. However, a Zoom equivalent was held during the same week, from the comfort of our homes. This was Virtual HS!

Starting on Sunday the 16th of August, Virtual Holiday School began with fun introductions and the classic Gum Tree dance, before moving into Zoom breakout rooms in our nest groups for the quiz. This was a great ice breaker for the nest groups, as well as an excellent opportunity to talk to old friends again.

The following morning began with Meeting for Worship at ten o'clock. Then came the session, held by HD and Abigail. We split into small groups, first with four people, then six, then ten, and each time, we had to find one thing in common between everyone and one thing that was different about us all. It gave us a unique perspective on everyone and we got to know one another throughout the process.

Activity groups were held in the afternoon, where we had a choice of various fun filled activities organised by the Stu Hels and the staff. The groups included video group, games, craft, drawing, a talk by Jac, The Rag online newspaper, and the classic Room 42, which became Zoom 42. For an hour in the afternoon, we either drew pictures with Elspeth, made music videos over Zoom or asked philosophical questions ranging from “should the world go vegan” to the most important question of all: “which ice cream flavour is superior.”

Each evening we held epilogue over Zoom. This gave us the opportunity to reflect on the day and to unwind before bed. After epilogue, there was unstructured time for chatting and games and a small group stayed on to chat and play games during this time.

On Tuesday, actor and writer Yasmin Khan-Cheema joined us for the session, showing us her short film, *Letterbox*. The film follows a young Muslim woman who is determined to go to the Glastonbury Festival, even after her mother refuses to let her. It gave us an insightful view into how we perceive and interact with people by our first impressions of them. It also featured the strong bond of friendship, something that all of us at HS identify with.

The final session, on Wednesday, was run by Elspeth, where we wrote a small piece about what Holiday School meant to us. These are going to be compiled into a booklet that will be available at HS. Some of us described our first time going to Holiday School, anxious and nervous. Others talked about their favourite memories of HS. Each of us had a unique memory of what Holiday School means to us, but all echoing the loving and accepting community that it is.

At the end of the session, the Stu Hels announced the dress up theme for the evening social: Holidays! With the use of virtual backgrounds, we could be creative by adding snowy mountains or sandy beaches to our bedrooms. At the social, we joined the Zoom call to find a group of tropical sunbathers, a handful of skiers, some lost tourists and a banana. The last social of Virtual HS went very well, with games and dances organised by the Stu Hels.

While we couldn't meet in person this year, Virtual Holiday School still allowed us to reunite online and to enjoy a few days together. It was a new experience for everyone, and the staff and Stu Hels stepped up to this expertly, providing an action packed couple of days, adapting dances and games to suit an online platform. A huge thank you to all of them for organising and running it so well this year among all the unknowns.

Now, at the end of Holiday School, we must say goodbye to our HS family again, but we know that we will always be part of this loving community. Goodbye, until next year.

JUNIOR HOLIDAY ONLINE – a note from Bronwen Alty

As you will understand we are unable to run the junior holiday we had planned for this October at Barmoor. However I am very pleased to say we are able to provide another online junior holiday. This will take place over the weekend of 23rd-25th October via Zoom.

Although not quite the same as our usual face to face junior holiday, it is a very important way for children and young people to meetup with friends old and new and to try and recreate some of the atmosphere and fun of the typical weekend holidays. The holiday will be supported by Lee Lester, our Yorkshire Quaker youth development worker, who has experience of running Zoom groups with young people and also a group of our regular junior holiday volunteers. We ran a holiday online in June this year and it surpassed all our expectations with lots of fun and laughter as well as some moving spiritual moments!

The holiday we are planning in October will involve some games and other activities, epilogue, stories, crafts, group meal times, the traditional talent show and maybe one or two surprises! The theme for the weekend is "Safe Harbours". There is no charge for the activities.

At this stage I am just wanting to get an idea of numbers so if you think you child(ren) would be interested in taking part in some or all of the weekend, please can you let me know ASAP. In your reply please could you let me have the name and age of your child. Children can come to one or all the sessions as fits in with their other activities and family commitments.

Once we have a better idea of numbers we will send out a final timetable for the weekend as well as a consent form which will need to be completed before your child can join the zoom video conference.

The weekend is aimed at children aged 7-12 but if your child is slightly outside these ages and you think they would enjoy and be able to take part in the activities then please get in touch.

If you have any questions about the weekend, the activities or the process, please do not hesitate to contact me by email or phone (07843 485645). If anyone knows a child who would like to attend but may be prevented due to lack of access to equipment or an internet connection, please let me know and we will see what we can do.

The Retreat

The Board of the Retreat, led by the Clerk David Robson, are preparing to make some announcements related to the development of the Retreat Mental Health offer and the impact of this on the plans for the Site at Heslington Road, York.

The release relating to the progress of the Retreat is expected to go out on 5 October and the announcement relating to the impact on the estate will be released the week following.

The aim to provide as much information as we can relating to both the new and existing offer at the Retreat, together with the impact these will have on the estate in the coming months. We will be sign-posting interested parties online for updates and current news – please could you make sure that local Quakers are made aware of the where to look for news and further information.

<https://theretreatyork.org.uk/>

The Retreat is looking forward to an exciting phase in its long history, supported by the Quaker-Led board and a long list of interested and supportive stakeholders.

Ian Holborn , Chief Officer – Corporate Matters , The Retreat,

What kind of society are we building? - a note from Paul FitzPatrick (Doncaster Conversation Club Newsletter)

During August it has been difficult to keep up with the range of incidents surrounding potential or actual applicants for international protection living in the UK or seeking to reach these shores. Many of the responses have not helped to promote understanding or compassion. The Prime Minister thought out loud about changes to the legal framework, the Home Secretary promised to make the Channel crossing unviable, some Tory MPs complained that the environment was not hostile enough, and the media dutifully highlighted the language of 'invasion' and 'illegality', with ominous references to the Dublin Conventions.

Priti Patel tweeted that 'When the British people say they want to take back control of our borders – this is exactly what they mean' thus confusing the Brexit referendum with the separate issue of the right to seek asylum. A Government website quietly announced in July that the UK's Maritime and Coastguard Agency awarded Elbit Systems UK, a subsidiary of Haifa-based Elbit Systems, a contract worth almost £1 million to demonstrate and develop unmanned aerial vehicles – or drones – to enhance coastal surveillance operations. The contract was awarded last February.

A letter to Priti Patel from 100 prominent refugee and human rights campaigners, warned that the 'pattern of ignoring expert advice, failing to engage with civil society and branding migrants as criminal' replicates the failings that caused the Windrush scandal. As the *Windrush Lessons Learned* review put it, the Home Office 'must change its culture to recognise that migration and wider Home Office policy is about people, and whatever its objective, should be rooted in humanity'.

Airton Barn

There has never been a better or more appropriate time to stay at Airton Barn. The ancient Meeting House recently having been assigned Grade II* listed status by Heritage England in recognition of its key role in the early history of Quakerism in the area means this is a place of renewed interest for Quakers. With the present social distancing regulations, any group staying at the Barn is guaranteed sole occupancy on any one night, whether an individual or a group of up to 6 people. And since the lockdown drastically cut Airton Meeting's revenue from this source, Airton Friends need the support of Quakers to help us manage this period of reduced income. Finally, visitors are welcome to contribute to our 'year in poems' - short, new poems for display on our website and outdoors, relating to the Meeting House, the area or any current topic. In exchange

for your custom you will be richly rewarded by the tranquility and beauty of this unique location, experienced from the simple but comfortable and spacious environment of our bunkbarn. See more at <https://airtonbarn.org.uk> or get in touch with the Friend in Residence, Simon Watkins, via airtonbarn@gmail.com / 01729 830263 for details and to book a visit.

Two books are now available of interest to historians of Quaker history relevant to Airton and its surroundings: *Roots of Radicalism in the Yorkshire Dales, Airton Friends Meeting and its Antecedents* by Laurel Phillipson, and *Hidden in Plain Sight, History and Architecture of the Airton Meeting House* by L. Phillipson and Alison Armstrong are published by Quacks Books at £8.50 and £9.50 respectively. Obtain your copies from Airton Friends Meeting by emailing Simon: at airtonbarn@gmail.com. Electronic payments preferred - details will be supplied.

Huddersfield Garden Meeting

A Meeting for Worship has been held in the garden of Huddersfield Meeting House each Sunday in August. The weather has varied as have the clothes of the participants. Only once have we needed full waterproofs and umbrellas. On that occasion we decided on only 30 minutes of silence but then sat talking for a further 30 minutes! It was so good to be there. So far there have been between 6 and 9 Friends present on any one Sunday. We had to split into 2 groups to comply with regulations when there were more than 6 of us. I have found the meetings to be wonderfully sustaining and peaceful despite the noise of passing traffic which has become louder each week. The sound of the church clock chiming the quarter hours has been a pleasant background noise and the sound of chattering rooks made a delightful and amusing conclusion to our first meeting. It is wonderful to see and hear real people despite the strict social distance we are observing. Friends have brought their own chairs though I bring some extras for anyone coming on foot. Friends may wish to bring a hot drink as weather gets chillier, there will be access to a toilet in the building from next week.

Thank you to all who have helped to keep our Special Way of Worship Alive. Remember there is no bad weather only the wrong clothes!

Janice Alloway 28.08.20

EASTER SETTLEMENT 2021

Many of you have asked for your Easter Settlement 2020 bookings to be held over until 2021. In view of the current situation we have agreed with Cober Hill to hold these bookings over until 2022 unless a miracle happens – Cober Hill is open for conferences by January 2021. Consequently, we are planning to hold Easter Settlement 2021 by Zoom. More details will be published by QiY in January. Anyone wishing to change their booking should contact the Treasurer.

Chris Petrie

Responses to lock-down and closure of meeting houses

The Group to Reinvigorate and Simplify Structures and Processes (GRASP) conducted a survey in August of how meetings in Yorkshire had coped with the lock-down and closure of meeting houses. This is a summary of responses.

There has been a wide range of actions, driven by the strong desire to enable worshipping communities to continue to worship. Most Local Meetings have organised virtual meetings for worship, generally with the Zoom platform. The rate of uptake has depended on the level of technical experience available. The near ubiquitous availability of smartphones, tablets and laptops has made it easier to arrange Zoom meeting for worship. Now that many meeting houses have reopened, some meetings have run blended worship which combines physical and virtual meeting for worship.

The advantages of virtual meetings for worship include: enabling geographically dispersed participation; multiple meetings in the week; easier for those with hard of hearing or sight; reduced travel; and enabling participation by those who are unable to come to a physical meeting. The disadvantages include the exclusion of those without the technology and the lack of socialising before or after worship.

Virtual meetings have been used for many other purposes, such as committee meetings, poetry groups, online courses, and epilogue worship. All with the aim of cementing the community together. Children's meetings have been run virtually in some meetings. Virtual meetings have been particularly successful with young people and attendance has gone up compared to physical meetings.

Virtual business meetings have also been successful, helped by the circulation of draft minutes. Some local meetings have held more, shorter, business meetings. Area Meetings have met using zoom.

Clerks have found virtual meetings to be challenging. Sensing the wishes of the meeting is more difficult. Discernment is different and there is a danger that the Quaker business method may be diluted. So far, controversial issues seem to have been avoided by clerks.

Re-opening of meeting houses has happened slowly. Some meetings met in their garden during the summer. Issues for the Local Meeting include the need to be confident that reopening can be done properly and sensitively to the needs of Friends who must self-isolate. Area Meeting Trustees need to be assured that all regulations and local health and safety measures are in place. The large number of old premises in Yorkshire makes social distancing a real challenge.

Local meetings have started to grapple with how to continue Quaker witness which necessarily has taken a back-seat during the lock-down. Looking ahead there are issues as to how to do outreach and how to maintain Quaker networking. Zoom meetings are not being widely advertised and this may make it more difficult for new enquirers to find us.

A digital divide has emerged between Friends who are confident with new technology and Friends who do not have access to technology, or do not wish to use new technology. This has created a new diversity among Friends. Meetings are dealing with this diversity sensitively and are aware of the importance of maintaining and enhancing inclusive Quaker communities.

David Olver

Glenthorne update from Roy Love, Co-Clerk of Trustees

Glenthorne Quaker Centre in Grasmere opened again on 7 August with monthly occupancy figures for the remainder of the 2020 season ranging from 58% to 76%, with much of it coming from the mid-week and weekend courses. The staff are implementing a strict anti-virus regime throughout the premises together with extra cleaning of rooms, public spaces and kitchen.

With these figures the financial estimate for the end of the season at September's Management Committee meeting was that we should have just sufficient reserves by the end of January to see us through the early months of the 2021 season beginning in February. This also depends on certain obligations being carried over. There are many uncertainties, of course, between now and then, including the possibility of a major national resurgence of COVID-19, a lock-down of the Lake District, an infection occurring at Glenthorne itself, or with a guest who had recently visited. It is

not out of the question, therefore, that we may still have to seek short-term external financial assistance to cover this period.

Meanwhile, we are pleased to be operational and welcoming guests again. Please check our website <https://glenthorne.org/> for more information, including (under 'Events') the list of remaining short tutor-led courses for this year and for 2021. Or just come to relax and enjoy spiritual renewal in the special ambience of Glenthorne in the glorious surroundings of the Lakeland fells. In that connection do you recognise the summit in the photograph below? Answer in the next issue!



Temporary Warden for Roundhay Meeting

A north Leeds Quaker Meeting seeks temporary warden to reside in our Meeting House. As a consequence of the Covid pandemic there is minimal activity at the Meeting House so the wardenship work is greatly reduced. Hopefully when the pandemic resolves the Temporary Warden will wish to apply for the post of Warden. The Temporary Warden has the use of a three-bedroom flat and is paid for 3 hours work per week.

Outside employment or studies is no obstacle to serving as our warden.

Information and application pack available from Martin Schweiger on 0113 4400736 or by e-mail to roundhay@quaker.org.uk

Closing date for applications 14 October 2020.

Programme:

Quakers in Yorkshire – Saturday 17 October 2020

To be held online via the Zoom platform

**Friends will be asked to register their intention to participate
The link to the meeting is shown on page 2 above.**

10.00	Meeting open for login
10.30	Meeting for Worship
11.00	Welcome from QiY co-clerks. Explanation of how the meeting will be run
11.05	Presentation by students from Bootham and The Mount Schools
11.45	Reports from The Mount: Clerk of the Committee, Margaret Bryan; Principal, Adrienne Richmond; Head of Junior School, Rachel Capper
12.05	Reports from Bootham: Clerk to Governors' meeting; the Head, Chris Jeffery; Head of Junior School, Helen Todd
12.25	Question Time, followed by minutes of the session
12.50	Representatives and Notices
1.00	Lunch – The clerks will enable chatrooms for Friends to converse
2.00	Appointments
2.15	Quaker Chaplaincy in Yorkshire Universities and Prisons We hope to hear from Robin Fishwick, Emma Roberts and Tricia Griffin on their roles, experiences and challenges in Quaker ministry.
4.00	Close of meeting

It is hoped that it may be possible to run an online event for Young People concurrently with our quarterly meeting but details are not yet available.