



Quakers in Yorkshire Newsletter

**News, views and events
from meetings in Yorkshire**

**Including PROGRAMME for
QiY Meeting**

16 JANUARY 2021

To be held online via Zoom

**Reports from Under 19s Co-ordinating
Group, Junior Holidays,
Easter Settlement
and
Yorkshire Friends Holiday School**

**Responding to
BLACK LIVES MATTER**

Quakers in Yorkshire Newsletter January 2021

Welcome to January's edition of the Newsletter, and best wishes for a healthy, happy new year. As we continue to navigate the choppy waters of the pandemic, our next meeting, possibly our next two, will be held online. With meeting houses occasionally open, we will send hard copies of the annual calendar there or to the named contact, and a few copies of the newsletter for those without internet access. Please could you see they are sent to Friends without email connection?

Our calendar image from the Quaker Tapestry is the Slave Trade panel, a reminder of some of the issues and history behind our Black Lives Matter reflections which will form our afternoon session in January.

Reminder

All Yorkshire meetings are invited to send news of their interests and activities for inclusion in our newsletter, which is published four times a year, ahead of QiY quarterly meetings. **We also appreciate receiving in advance the names of AM representatives to QiY.**

Deadline for contributions to April issue: 15 March 2021

Copies of the newsletter, including the programme for QiY quarterly gatherings, are normally sent to all local meetings. We plan to print a full allocation once our meetings are able to return to normal.

The newsletter is sent electronically to AM and LM clerks. If you know of anyone who would like a personal copy, please contact us.

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 some 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

April's meeting of QiY was planned to be held at Sheffield Central

Meeting House, but ***it is now clear we must use Zoom again***. The agenda will be as for 2020: we will hear about the work of CRESST (Conflict Resolution Education in Sheffield Schools Training) which aims to enable young people to handle conflict, and about the Sheffield Pen and Pencil Society, an archive with which Sheffield Friends are engaged. Finally there will be a contribution about the Sheffield Quaker Tapestry panel.

Yorkshire Friends Holiday School 2020

In August around 80 Young Friends gathered online via Zoom for YFHS 2020. A strong sense of community was established as friendships developed and everyone was warmly welcomed into the group.

The theme was 'Creative Action', and sessions provided the chance to discuss what creativity means and how it can solve problems. External speakers included documentary film-maker Miriam Lyons, founder of The Swan Song Project Ben Slack, and Community Theatre practitioner Abi Horsfield. Each shared their experiences of using creativity to make positive changes in people's lives.

Meeting for Worship and evening epilogue provided time to reflect on Holiday School and our lives outside of it. Nest Groups, Activity Groups, evening Socials and free time activities provided a lot of fun and laughter. YFHS 2019 was thought-provoking, inspiring and uplifting, providing friendships that will be maintained throughout the year. (For more see YFHS Epistle on QiY website.)

GRASP Nominations Workshop

GRASP (Group to Reinvigorate and simplify Structures and Processes) held an online workshop in November 2020 for Friends involved in nominations. It was limited to 25 Friends took part so all could be seen on one Zoom screen. There were at least three Friends from each area meeting in Quakers in Yorkshire. The workshop was very successful and generated considerable sharing of ideas with a willingness to work together to enhance the nominations process.

See the GRASP page of the QiY website for a summary of contributions: <https://quakersinyorkshire.org.uk/grasp/>

Job opportunity: Yorkshire Local Development Worker

Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) is recruiting four new Local Development Workers, one of whom will be based in Yorkshire. For details see:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/job-opportunities/jobs>

The deadline for applications is 25 January 2021.

In the words of BYM 'We are seeking enthusiastic, pragmatic, optimistic people who are excited by what spirit-led growth might mean in a faith context. Our expanding Local Development Team is a key part of our plans to reinvigorate Quakerism and to help Quaker communities thrive.'

Aim and purpose

Local Development Workers are a once in a generation opportunity to have paid support to help reinvigorate Quakerism. The aim is for the Local Development Worker to help Quaker communities become inclusive, welcoming and all-age. The areas supported will include worship, community, organisational management, social action, collaboration with the wider community, and outreach.

The Yorkshire Local Development Worker will work with Quaker communities in Yorkshire to enable them to thrive in a way that meets the aspirations of *Our Faith in the Future*.

The support given will aim to be flexible, responding to the needs and circumstances of Quaker communities. This is likely to include a mixture of spiritual, practical, pastoral and facilitative approaches, as well as offering opportunities for community development and learning either provided directly by the worker or by others.

Local development support is a critical component of BYM and Woodbrooke's integrated support for meetings strategy. The experience of Local Development Workers will help to shape and identify themes and priorities within this strategy, ensuring that it is 'meeting centred'.

All aspects of the work will be embedded in Quaker testimony and practice; guided by the aspirations of *Our Faith in the Future* and underpinned by the strategic priorities of Britain Yearly Meeting and Woodbrooke.

GRASP is acting as a link between Friends in Yorkshire and the Local Development Team at BYM. If anyone has questions, comments or concerns you are welcome to email David Olver (david@olver.plus.com)

BYM staff hub in Leeds

BYM and Leeds Area Meeting have agreed that office accommodation in Carlton Hill Meeting House will be the venue for a staff hub outside

London. The hub will be the base for a number of BYM staff from early 2021. This is the first time that BYM staff who serve the whole yearly meeting will be permanently located outside London. The aim is to complement the work at Friends House and Woodbrooke in order to build better connections between Quaker communities. It will also reduce the carbon footprint because the staff who are based in Leeds have homes in or near Yorkshire.

Book of Members and Attenders

The 2021 Book of Members and Attenders, covering Quakers in Yorkshire is on schedule to be printed in January. If everything goes according to plan, the Books should be available in February. The compilation has been a big collaborative effort between local meetings and myself. So, a very warm thank you to the local contact Friends who have carefully compiled the lists whilst ensuring that the Friends included have given consent for the use of their data.

David Oliver

Happy Christmas

Deeply conscious of traditional Quaker discomfort with secular distractions and man-made religious observances, your newsletter editor is hesitant to offend the purist Friends in our readership with something as mundane as 'Seasons Greetings'. But as there's a gap to fill, and as I'm bit late with the circulation of this edition of the Newsletter, you will perhaps be tolerant of my straying from quietist orthodoxy and pass on my warmest wishes for the Saturnalia and other pagan rites associated with the shortest day, as well as the more familiar star-fabled event.

Now that I've got that off my chest, let me express my sincere additional hope that that you all enjoy a well-vaccinated New Year.

Event for Young Friends

Lee Lester is planning a separate Zoom even to run concurrently with QiY's virtual gathering on 16 January. Contact Lee on

LeeL@quaker.org.uk



Quaker Tapestry



Quaker Tapestry will be OPEN through the winter. After closing during the November lockdown, Quaker Tapestry has reopened again. It is now planned, Covid permitting, to stay open through the winter months, Wednesday to Saturday In December, January and February. with only a short break 20 Dec to 5 Jan.

The Museum and Kendal Meeting House are COVID secure for visitors. Please do visit and encourage others to visit during 2021. It would be very helpful if visitors can book online via the Quaker Tapestry website www.quaker-tapestry.co.uk or phone in advance to let us know you intend to visit.

The shop is open and you can also buy by mail-order. QT 2021 calendars are still available and there are some new embroidery kits too. Next best to visiting, view the new virtual tour on the website Museum page.

Please also support the current Quaker Tapestry Revive, Survive & Thrive Appeal. Quaker Tapestry is very grateful for the donations already received from individual Friends and Meetings around the country but would appreciate continuing support in 2021, while still recovering from the effects of the pandemic.

[Revive-Survive-and-Thrive-Fundraising-Leaflet-OCT-2020-LOW-RES.pdf \(quaker-tapestry.co.uk\)](#)

You can also help by:

- Joining creative writing or embroidery workshops in 2021
- Staying in our 2-bedroom self-contained Kendal Courtyard Flat via Airbnb
- Becoming a Quaker Tapestry Annual or Life Member

Quaker Tapestry – working for Outreach for over 25 years from Kendal Meeting House.

Could you be a governor of a very Special School?

Breckenbrough near Thirsk is a Quaker School with seven of its

Governors appointed by Quakers in Yorkshire. Different from the majority of Quaker Schools, it is a Non-Maintained Special School (NMSS) approved by the Secretary of State, entirely funded by local and central government, rather than fee-paying parents. All students have an Education, Health and Care Plan and the running of the school is underpinned by the Quaker ethos.

Breckenbrough offers day and residential placements for boys with complex needs, including Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC), Asperger's Syndrome (AS), Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA), Tourette's Syndrome (TS) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Each Breckenbrough student needs to satisfy their local authority that it is the right place for them in order to be funded.

The school aspires to build in its students respect, tolerance, equality, understanding and forgiveness. Punishment and forced discipline are deliberately avoided in the belief that resolution of conflict can come about through behaviour modelling and restorative practice. The school aims to nurture and sustain the intellectual, social and emotional development of students, helping them achieve a fulfilling and independent adulthood in an inclusive, caring community that offers empathy, trust and respect for all its members. The Quaker approach is discernible in the use of silence for reflection, especially in assemblies.

The school maintains a deliberately relaxed, calm atmosphere, to reduce anxiety levels and the risk of conflict, yet remaining safe and purposeful. Each residential, and some day students have their own room as a secure personal space. Day students are encouraged to participate in evening activities when possible. There is no fixed uniform policy and individual needs and preferences are supported.

A low turnover of staff allows for the formation of purposeful, effective relationships with students, in a stable, nurturing environment. The curriculum reflects the ethos of the school in both content and delivery. The students understand and appreciate this, though some experience considerable barriers to learning and often struggle to progress. A holistic student-centred approach allows students to address their problems and progress through flexible, individualised schemes of learning.

The teaching and residential environments are supported by a full-time psychologist whose strategies include cognitive behaviour therapy. An occupational therapist delivers interventions to meet sensory processing

needs and in developing a greater degree of regulation. Speech and language therapy is also delivered onsite by an experienced therapist.

At present, Breckenbrough requires two Quaker Governors to bring the school up to its full quota. While the Quaker ethos is actively supported by the Head and all the staff, a strong Quaker presence among the Governors is crucial in holding the school to account in the way it operates. They visit regularly to monitor the running of the school, as well as attending committee and full Board meetings. A wide range of skills and experience can be useful, not necessarily in the field of education (the current chair is a retired archaeologist!)

If you feel you might be interested in joining the Board, please contact Alison Clarke on 01609 776501 or by email at alisonclarke2@gmail.com. See also the school's excellent website at www.breckenbrough.org.uk.

Alison Clarke, chair of governors
Ruth McTighe, deputy chair of governors
Simon Bannister, head teacher





Creative Events at Centre Quaker de Congénies, South of France 2021

Escape to the sun and gain inspiration in our historic meeting house and beautiful garden located in a village between the Cévennes Mountains and the Mediterranean. Our events offer experienced Quaker facilitators to support and encourage you as well as space to rest, reflect, explore and develop your creative ideas

Writing Retreat

Saturday 29th May to Monday 7th June

Writing (or planning) a novel, a script, poetry, non-fiction or memoir? We offer a writing retreat for 5 to 8 days. 595 euros (475 euros shared occupancy) includes 5 nights accommodation, meals, with writer and drama teacher Kim Hope

Art Retreat

Saturday 18th to Monday 27th September

We invite you to join us for 6 to 9 days of creative art and friendship in a variety of lovely locations. 695 euros (575 euros shared occupancy) includes 6 nights accommodation, meals, local transport, with artist and teacher Kate Hale

Music Week

Saturday 9th to Monday 18th October

We invite you to join us for 5 to 9 days of musical exploration to lift your spirits and make music with new friends. 595 euros (475 euros shared occupancy) includes 5 nights accommodation, meals and music sessions, with musician and teacher Mike Adcock

Extend your stay either before or after the events

Additional days 92 euro (68 euro shared) including meals and transport to local sights

Details and Bookings:

www.maison-quaker-congenies.org

centre.quaker.congenies@gmail.com

+33(0)4 66 71 46 41



Black Lives Matter

Ahead of our January meeting your newsletter editor thought it might be useful to provide some material on changing Quaker attitudes to slavery. Some of us have participated in the Woodbrooke Course *When Quakers got it wrong – and where do we go from here?* We are reminded of the dangers of supposing that all members of our society in the past were without fault. Our thanks to Helen Meads and Mike Casey for the following items.

Is the term ‘Overseer’ our statue of Edward Colston?

I am sure that everyone would say we care very much about becoming more diverse, that Quakers are on the right historical side of slavery, but the eighteenth and nineteenth century abolitionists, first energised by John Woolman, are only part of the Quaker/slavery story; the rest is buried and there are still signs and signifiers of that bleaker side today.

George Fox encouraged Quaker slave owners in Barbados to allow their slaves to attend meeting for worship, to marry and to be religiously educated, but he did not advocate abolition of slavery. When William Edmundson, who was with Fox in Barbados in 1671, returned there in 1675, he did advocate abolition, but I’m fairly sure only scholars know Edmundson’s name. William Penn not only bought and sold slaves, but also revoked a term in his will granting his slaves their freedom on his death (and at Huddersfield Meeting we have a room bearing Penn’s name). Have we fully considered the implications of some of our current practices? What about the term ‘Overseer’? For those who are not Quakers, its connotations can be grim. Put the term into a search engine and what comes up, more often than not, is “Plantation overseer,” often in the context of forced labour or slavery. Another connotation is “Overseer of the poor,” an official who administered relief for poor people. A further meaning given is “supervisor; someone who keeps watch over and directs the work of others.” All have implications of power wielded over others, often in brutal or judgemental ways.

My argument, Friends, is that it is time we stopped having barriers to understanding and, whatever our reasons for historic usage, we now use terms that are plainer. Central Yorkshire AM considered the question last autumn. One Friend explained how shocked her Sikh son-in-law was when she told him she had been appointed an Overseer. He told her: “I forgive you.” But maybe people come to our Meetings for Worship, hear the term and instantly feel such subliminal terms of power mean that Quakers are not the right group for them.

CYAM sent a minute to Meeting for Sufferings, which consequentially minuted:

MfS/19/12/14 Use of the term 'overseer'

We receive minute 11 of Central Yorkshire Area Meeting held on 10th September 2019, regarding the use of the term 'overseer' to describe those in our meetings who hold responsibilities for oversight (paper MfS 2019 12 09).

Central Yorkshire AM notes that there are differing views.

We reflect today that the term 'overseer' carries some unhelpful connotations, particularly in relation to slavery, in industry, in psychology and in religious contexts. Looking at this term may prompt us to consider other words we use in our organisation.

We forward this minute to QLCC [Quaker Life Central Committee] asking it to return to us with advice when it is ready. We also forward this minute for information to the Book of Discipline Revision Committee.

So the matter is under consideration nationally, which means slowly. But that does not prevent our becoming more flexible locally. What shall we, in Brighouse West Yorkshire AM do now?

References:

William Frost article:

<https://web.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/speccoll/quakersandslavery/commentary/people/fox.php>

Katherine Gerbner new research:

<https://www.friendsjournal.org/slavery-in-the-quaker-world/>

Helen Meads, Huddersfield Meeting

Quakers and slavery: the journey to abolition

Recent attention has been paid to the past involvement of British and American Quakers in slave ownership, as part of the social and economic fabric of society in the British American colonies and the sugar plantations of the West Indies. Helen Meads' links (above) to the recent work of William Frost and Katherine Gerbner provide more context.

It may be worth noting that historical Quaker involvement in the slave trade has been a concern for some time. As recently as 2010 an International Conference was held at Swarthmore College which aimed to examine the history, literature, and culture of the Quaker relationship with slavery. *It was, however, by no means inevitable that Quakers would embrace antislavery. In the seventeenth century, and most of the eighteenth century, Quakers were divided on the issue, particularly in the British American colonies, with some denouncing slavery, and others owning slaves...three centuries of Quaker debate and activism over the problem of slavery that would ultimately see Friends taking key roles in abolition and emancipation*

movements on both sides of the Atlantic.

A short overview of the Quaker journey to abolition.

In eighteenth century America, Benjamin Lay, Anthony Benezet and John Woolman were active in arousing fellow Quakers to the evils of slavery.

Benjamin Lay (1682-1759) was born to Quaker parents near Colchester. In 1718, encountering slavery in Barbados, he began his work for abolition. His legacy continued to inspire the abolitionist movement for generations.

John Woolman (1720-1772) spent much of his life seeking to persuade Quakers to give up slaveholding, travelling throughout colonial America condemning slavery and advocating emancipation.

In 1772 he came as a traveling minister to England, walking everywhere.

He died of smallpox in York and is buried there. In his journal he noted: *I have felt great Distress of Mind since I came on this Island, on Account of the Members of our Society being mixed with the world in various sorts of business and Traffick, carried on in impure Channels. Great is the Trade to Africa for Slaves...*

‘...more than any other man, Woolman aided the English-speaking nations to throw off the disgrace of slavery.’ (Rufus Jones, Quaker historian)

Anthony Benezet (1713-1784) born in France, he became a teacher and anti-slavery campaigner in America. He wrote several books and pamphlets opposing slavery. One such, *A Caution and Warning to [Great Britain](#) and her Colonies on the Calamitous State of the Enslaved Negroes* (1766) was used by the Anglican abolitionist Granville Sharp in his first legal battle against slavery in 1767. Another Anglican, Thomas Clarkson, was greatly influenced to begin his fight against the slave trade by another of Benezet’s books *Some Historical Account of Guinea* (1772).

Some notable dates:

1772 The London Yearly Meeting Epistle stated: *It likewise appears, that the practice of holding negroes in oppressive and unnatural bondage, hath been so successfully discouraged, by Friends in some of the colonies, as to be considerably lessened.*

1787 The Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade was formed. Of the twelve founder members, nine were Quakers.

1807 The Abolition of the Slave Trade Act was passed by Parliament, making it illegal to trade in slaves throughout the British colonies.

1834 The Abolition of Slavery Act made the purchase or owning of slaves illegal in most parts of the British Empire. The government borrowed £20 million to pay compensation to the slave owners. The former slaves received nothing but were forced to work on as apprentices until 1838. This £20 million was only recently paid off in 2015.

1838 Joseph Sturge was a Quaker who founded the British and Foreign [Anti-Slavery Society](#) (now [Anti-Slavery International](#)). He worked throughout his life supporting [pacifism](#), [working-class](#) rights, and the universal [emancipation](#) of [slaves](#).

1840 The first World Anti-Slavery Convention was held in London, organised by Sturge and the [Anti-Slavery Society](#).

Mike Casey, Huddersfield Meeting

Time for Quakers to tackle racism

Racism exists among Quakers in Britain and must be tackled at all levels, individually, in their committees and structures and in the church, say their Trustees whose proposals were discussed in December.



In Wales, standing together for racial justice. (Photo: Ben Robinson)

Although Quaker commitment to racial equality and racial justice is well recorded, there has been little focus on this in recent years and some language (in minutes and other writings) is outdated.

Acknowledging and addressing racism is a spiritual imperative of this time. During this summer issues of racism have come into sharp focus in public life. The killing of George Floyd by police officers in the United States led to widespread protests both there and around the world, and the Black Lives Matter movement came to the fore.

Meanwhile, Quakers have been responding to racism. Meeting for Sufferings, the standing representative body for British Quakers, is exploring the barriers to inclusion and diversity in Quaker structures. Some programmes like Sanctuary Everywhere and national diversity and inclusion gatherings, are working with allies on race issues.

Key questions are being considered. For instance, might a room in Friends House currently named after William Penn be renamed? He was a significant Quaker in the 17th century, a pacifist and human rights advocate. He spent time in prison for his faith – and he owned enslaved people. Quakers today are working to understand how early Friends reconciled their Quaker values with benefitting from the barbaric slave trade. Considering renaming the room acknowledges that understanding evolves.

Next steps for this focus on racism might include such areas as education and training, being accountable, becoming an anti-racist employer, ensuring anti-racism is built into the design of all programmes and activities for Quakers in Britain, and continuing to support work with Quaker meetings and communities on diversity and inclusion as a priority.

Edwina Peart, Inclusion and Diversity Coordinator for Quakers in Britain, ran an event this week which posed the question, 'Should Quakers apologise for their role in the Atlantic slave trade?' Edwina Peart said, 'I think this is an important moment, nationally and globally and there is an appetite, spiritually and politically for discussion and learning on the issue of racial inequality. The question provides a way in to exploring the roots of institutional racism.'

Graham Torr, Assistant Clerk to Trustees for Britain Yearly Meeting (the formal name for Quakers in Britain) said, "It is time for Trustees to show visible leadership on this issue – within BYM and more widely – and to be publically accountable for what we do".

Item from BYM website, 20.11.20

MEETING OF QUAKERS IN YORKSHIRE 16 Jan 2021 PROGRAMME

To be held online via Zoom. Friends are asked to register their intention to participate. Please use the following link to register in advance for this meeting:

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJllc-6prz4pGtEZ0zdCaMy2B1Qw7r74pA0u>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

10.00 Meeting open for login

10.30 Meeting for Worship

11.00 Welcome from Clerks

Explanation of how the meeting will be run

11.10 'Reaching Out' We will hear from the Under 19s Co-ordinating Group Junior Holidays and Easter Settlement .

12.10 Outreach Projects Committee

12.20 Yorkshire Friends Holiday School

Holiday School staff and helpers will share with us their experiences from the 2020 online event.

12.50 Notices

13.00 Break for Lunch

14.00 Appointments and releases

14.10 Black Lives Matter We have asked clerks to invite Friends from our region to share with us some of the ways in which individuals and meetings have been affected by the emerging movement and the possibilities it offers for change in society.

15.50 Closing minute

Note: a young people's event will be held concurrently on a separate Zoom link. If you know of anyone who might be interested they should contact Lee Lester for more information: LeeL@quaker.org.uk