

# A Quiet Word

The Leeds Quaker Newsletter

2010 Issue 3



## Rawdon Amnesty Concerts

All at Rawdon Meeting House at 7.30pm.  
Admission free.  
Donations to Amnesty International.

### *Young Artists Concert ~ Sunday 13 June*

Take a musical journey from Bach to Prokofiev with two talented young students: **Adrian Cheng Un Chan**, piano, and **Alastair Kwan**, violin. Alastair will be joined by pianist **Miaoyin Qu**, who makes a welcome return to our series.

### *Four hands, twenty fingers ~ Sun. 27 June*

We are privileged to present **Rene Waterman**, concert pianist and well-loved teacher, with her gifted pupil **Catherine Leather**, in a programme to include music by Haydn and Brahms, and the great Fantasia in F minor by Schubert. Highly recommended.

### *The Merchant of Venice ~ Sunday 11 July*

Once again we welcome **Theatre of the Dales** to chase the clouds away with their performance on our lawn of Shakespeare's tale of love and revenge. Some seating will be available, but you are welcome to bring a cushion, blanket, or deck chair.

### *Juliet Welchman and Annette Saunders ~ Saturday 18 September*

It is a great pleasure to welcome this brilliant 'cello and piano duo again for a programme which will include the Arpeggione sonata by Schubert. Don't miss the opportunity to hear this superb work.

### *Ristretto. ~ Sunday 3 October at 7.30pm*

**Colin Honour**, clarinet, and friends from Opera North (**Martin Pickard**, piano; **Liz Wyly**, viola; **Claire Sadler**, double-bass) have prepared an autumn soiree of light romantic music to warm the cockles of your heart.

### *Opera in a Nutshell ~ Sunday 24 October*

Always a popular offering of magical scenes from the world of opera, presented by Jane Anthony and some of the best students from the **Leeds College of Music**. Come and hear more stars of the future.

### *Three Cheers for Christmas ~ Sunday 12 December*

Nobody invokes the spirit of Christmas like **Theatre of the Dales!**

### *Bradford Music Club ~ Sunday 19 December*

Members of the **Bradford Music Club** continue their tradition of inviting us to share their last meeting of the year in aid of Amnesty. Come and hear their talented music-making. You might even be tempted to join the Club!

## INSIDE..

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No place for Children*
- ◆ *The Spirit Level:  
Why more equal societies do better*
- ◆ *Worship at Swarthmore*
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Giving and Receiving*
- ◆ *Quails: Leeds Friends & AI get together*
- ◆ *July 4<sup>th</sup>: Independence FROM America*
- ◆ *"Diamonds of Life":  
Poetry inspired by Lake District tragedies.*
- ◆ *The Sermon on the Mount: in "Tweets"*



## *Detention of children in the Asylum System*

**T**his has been taken up by Meeting for Sufferings as a concern.

Susan Seymour, Clerk of Mtg for Sufferings, has already sent along with other denominations a letter to the Daily Telegraph expressing her dismay and concern about the conditions of children held in detention centres.

She has written a similar letter to Jack Straw.

The political parties are all keen to be seen as tough on asylum seekers. Now that the election has been called what can you do?

You can sign (and encourage others to do so) the election pledge on the Liberty and Refugee Council websites.

[www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/campaigning](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/campaigning)

You can also contact your candidates by letter or going to election meetings and raising the matter.

### **Points to make**

(in no particular order!)

- At any one time there are 30 to 40 children in the UK Borders Agency Immigration Centres – around 1000 children were detained in 2009
- It costs £130 a day or £20,000 to detain a family for 6 weeks.

- In the recent European Court of Human Rights (January 2010) finding the Belgian government's detention of Chechens in Belgium unlawful.

- Sir Al Aynsley Green the Children's commissioner renewed his call for an end to child detention in March 2010.

- Overwhelming evidence offered by the Royal Colleges of Psychiatrists, Paediatricians and GPs in their recent report of the harmful effects of such detention.

- UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has expressed concern that asylum seeking children continue to be detained.

### **Questions to ask**

- What is your view on the various reports from the Children's Commissioner and some of the Royal Colleges claiming that the present arrangements are unsatisfactory and damaging to the children? What steps will you take to follow this up?

- What steps might be taken to strengthen the judicial oversight of detention?

### **Alternatives**

- Less onerous forms of detention e.g. supervised hostels

- Electric tagging at the end of the process.

Eileen Fowler

**Afterword:** *Regardless of the fact that this issue of the Quiet Word comes after the Election, the campaign for a fair, humane and effective asylum system continues. You can still use the hyper-link mentioned in this article to inform yourself, or get involved, in the Refugee Council's Campaign to give protection and help to people fleeing war, torture and persecution.*

## "The Spirit Level: why more equal societies do better"

A free lecture by Richard Wilkinson  
10 June, 12-1pm at Leeds University.

More details and registration information at  
[www.health.leeds.ac.uk/lihs/images/2010Thackrah-SpiritLevelLecture.jpg](http://www.health.leeds.ac.uk/lihs/images/2010Thackrah-SpiritLevelLecture.jpg)

The above title of of this lecture is also that of a recent book written by Richard Wilkinson (with Kate Pickett) . Richard is a researcher in social inequalities in health and the social determinants of health. His work has shown that societies with more equal distribution of incomes have better health outcomes than ones in which the gap between richest and poorest parts society is greater.

*"Societies with more equal distribution of incomes have better health outcomes"*

Joanna Dales

## Worship at Swarthmore

There is a Meeting for Worship at Swarthmore Education Centre on the first Wednesday of each month during term time.

The next will be on 6 July, at 12.30.

Audrey Acton

## The Robin Hood tax

This new initiative is supported by Church Action on Poverty and many churches. It calls upon the leaders of the UK's political parties to support a global tax on the banks to help repair the human damage caused by the global economic crisis, protect public services at home, fight poverty at home and abroad, and help foot the bill for climate change.

Visit: [www.robinhoodtax.org.uk](http://www.robinhoodtax.org.uk)

## Friends Action on Poverty Fund Giving and Receiving

Leeds Area Quaker Meeting Trustees are keen to increase interest in our Action on Poverty Fund. You can help in two ways:

- By identifying Yorkshire organizations or individuals who would benefit from receiving a grant, via the application form (paper, or online at the LAQM website [Grant funding](#))
- By contributing to the fund, especially as harder times lie ahead for those in need. Standing order or single donations can be made to the CAF Bank account:

Name: Friends Action on Poverty  
Sort code: 40-52-40  
Account number: 00017156

(Please let us know if giving under the Gift Aid scheme.)

To guide you, here are a few examples of recent grants:

£1,026 to SPIDER-Y  
for taxi fares for a disabled Iranian basketball player, who is seeking asylum

£1,200 to SIMON on the Streets, Leeds,  
towards the salary of a Homeless Support Worker

£1,000 to Braithwaite and Guardhouse  
Community Association (Keighley)  
towards cost of seated exercises and  
complementary therapy for older people

£500 to Musical ARC,  
for help in making or adapting instruments for a  
group of musicians with physical and sensory  
disabilities

Any enquiries to [Nicolas Hawkes](#) (Ilkley)

## Quails



### Quakers + Amnesty International Leeds

On 20th May 2010  
Carlton Hill  
Quakers gave a presentation to Amnesty International (AI) in which they outlined Friends' work

for criminal justice reform and for peace. The idea was to explore the possibility of working in 'partnership' with AI Leeds on matters of mutual concern.

This came about as a result of Carlton Hill's audit which highlighted our desire to work with other groups in the community. It was agreed that a Working Party of people from AI Leeds and Leeds Friends will meet on 14th June 2010 at 7.00 pm at Carlton Hill meeting House for a 'brain storming' session on what and how we can work on this together.

**Do come; your voice is important in this new and exciting venture.**

Phil O'Hare

*a Working Party  
of people from AI Leeds  
and Leeds Friends will meet  
on 14th June 2010  
Do come along!*

The Lake District, a most beautiful part of our country, has seen two tragedies recently. One was the coach crash in which I believe at least one teenager was killed and also the horrific shooting spree which unfolded over these last few days. Young children and elderly people killed and lost for ever in these situations. It's difficult and it remains one of life's unanswered questions as to why these type of events take place. However I do feel the following poem really speaks of the urgency to protect our youth and uphold and respect our old people.

#### ***Diamonds of Life***

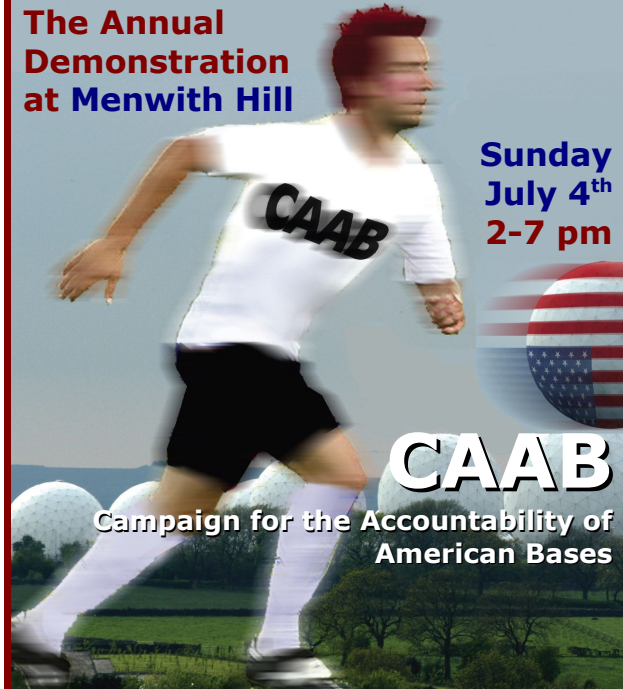
*The innocence of youth  
And the wisdom that comes with age  
Are both precious diamonds of life  
That we should treasure and protect  
With all our being  
For once gone  
The world is a poorer place without them  
And we stumble in the darkness  
Bereft of the beautiful light  
That they once shone for the world*  
Paul Martin Emery

**The Goal is...**

**...Independence FROM America**

**The Annual  
Demonstration  
at Menwith Hill**

**Sunday  
July 4<sup>th</sup>  
2-7 pm**



with

Mark Thomas

Steve Hill (Daftasadrum)

Peter Tatchell

East Lancs Clarion Choir

Roy Bailey

"Seize the Day"

Quality vegetarian food

Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases

[www.caab.org.uk](http://www.caab.org.uk)

Download a flyer for this event at..

[www.caab.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2008/03/menwithA5.pdf](http://www.caab.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2008/03/menwithA5.pdf)

*Menwith Hill is the American Base  
near Harrogate West Yorkshire (HG3 2RP)*

Meet at the Main Gates

## York's Hidden Gem: Bootham School Observatory

This article is a report on a visit to the Observatory made by the author and Melvyn D. Taylor on the evening of 2010 March 15.

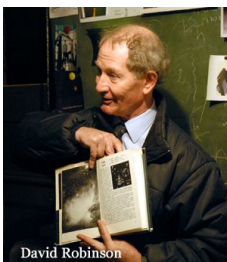
Whilst perhaps most citizens of York – indeed most of our fellow astronomers – may not have heard of this remarkable building, it is well worth a visit should



the opportunity arise. Many more people will be familiar with the Observatory in the Museum Gardens at York, which is open to the public on a regular basis. Those who have had the opportunity to observe through this latter instrument will be able to attest to its fine optical quality. In fact, the telescope at the Bootham School is a near twin; both are 4.25-inch refractors, and both were made by Thomas Cooke of York during the earlier part of his career as probably Britain's finest optical craftsman.

This rare opportunity to find out about the Bootham Observatory came about as part of the York Science and Technology Festival. The Observatory was open to members of the public on just two nights. On each occasion only two small groups of ten persons each were allowed in, due to very restricted space in the instrument rooms and on the roof. Melvyn and I were fortunate in being able secure places for a visit – indeed I nabbed the last one!

Not only was the history of the Observatory a fascinating tale (which is almost always the case with such places), but the weather gods smiled on us and we were treated to both clear skies and steady seeing for our visit. We were in the expert and highly knowledgeable care of our genial host David



Robinson, who has taught at Bootham since 1974, and is just recently retired. (I should remark that Bootham is a Society of Friends – Quaker – establishment; hence the use of formal titles which might indicate hierarchy is generally avoided amongst Friends

themselves.) The school moved to its present location in 1846, but was actually known until 1915 as the "Yorkshire Quarterly Meetings School".

Since the Friends believe strongly in a direct and practical route to obtaining understanding of the workings of Nature, there was a time when many Quaker schools in this country had their own observatory; sadly, only four are now left. Indeed at one time the Mount School in York had its own facility, as provided by the one-time Flounders Institute of Ackworth. (It is this instrument which is now in the Museum Gardens, having been restored and emplaced by apprentices from Vickers' optical works in the mid-1970s.)

The original Observatory at Bootham School dates from 1851-2, but has only occupied its current position since 1901. The original was a free-standing building in a small field. However, when the school sadly burned down in 1899, it was decided to relocate the science facilities well away from the main school buildings, and it was at this time that the Observatory was incorporated in the roof area of the new building.

Bootham was one of the first schools in the country to have its own observatory. The first Observatory came about through the then Head of the School, John Ford, who had a great interest in Astronomy. (His original title was actually "Superintendent of the Establishment.") When Samuel Gurney, a wealthy London Quaker, paid a visit to the school, he offered £100 towards the purchase of a "philosophical instrument". Ford immediately suggested that a telescope would be just the thing. Thomas Cooke of York quoted £120 for the telescope, and £250 total to provide and to house it along with the other instruments in a complete observatory. At this point the School already had a transit telescope and also a sidereal clock (made by Allis of Bristol, and still going strong) and the necessary funds to complete the project were once again forthcoming through the generosity of other Friends. Cooke therefore supplied the new refractor on its German equatorial mounting, and housed this together with



the transit instrument and the clock in a stand-alone building. The equatorial telescope was housed under a "trademark" conical roof. Such a design is sturdy and easy (hence reasonably cheap) to construct. Although in this case it obscures the zenith area, and the slit does narrow as it rises up the cone, it is an acceptable compromise where a small refractor telescope is concerned.

When the instruments were removed to the upper part of the new building, special measures had to be taken to ensure the stability of the telescopes. In particular, the mountings were built onto masonry

pillars which descend through the building onto their own foundations, in no part actually touching the main structure of the building. This method, which is adopted by all serious workers (who can afford it) to the present day, ensures maximum freedom from unwanted vibrations.

The transit telescope was used for programmes of observation and measurement during the Victorian era, partly as an adjunct to the mathematical education of the pupils at the school (at that time all boys, of course). However, the instrument presently at the Observatory is not the original one. This rather sadly was “recalled” by its owner, despite the pleas of John Ford. Apart from the positional work, he had used the transit instrument to provide readings which were used to regulate the Minster clock. The instrument in fact went to another recently opened Quaker school – the one at Ackworth near Pontefract, which also for a time had its own observatory, courtesy of the Flounders Institute. The transit telescope now housed at Bootham was actually acquired from the private observatory of Brigadier Walker near Felixkirk in North Yorkshire, in about 1950. (The Walker family were iron founders from Sheffield and cast the cannon for the Victory and other R.N. ships during the Napoleonic Wars.) This later instrument was made by Troughton & Sons around 1900.



On the wall of the transit room is a photograph of the original free-standing observatory, showing sheep grazing in the field. Inevitably there is a story attached to this. When one of the teachers was walking over to the observatory, one of the sheep took a dislike to his appearance and commenced to chase him around the field, until he obtained sanctuary in the building. How long he had to remain there in the interests of safety is not recorded. One of his colleagues on the teaching staff promptly knocked up a piece of humorous verse which referred (amongst other items of wit) to the said astronomer having been chased by Aries the Ram...

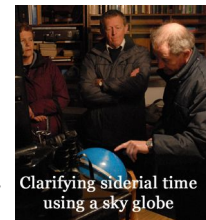


After this quick précis of the history of the Observatory, we all climbed up the narrow ladder leading from the transit room onto the roof. Finding one's way around up there was no mean feat, with eleven persons being squeezed into a small space which was bisected by the ridge of the closed transit slit. However, a grand view was had of the night sky, the conical roof and equatorial telescope of the main

observatory, and moreover a superb view of the illuminated Minster. The roof area is also equipped with a set of ex-naval gunsighting binoculars with angled eyepieces. We had been supplied with binoculars by our host, who went on to explain what could be seen in the sky (Melvyn and I were the only two “seasoned” sky-watchers in the group).

Our group then made its way back down the ladder and into the main equatorial observatory, with its 4.25 inch instrument atop a cast iron pillar. Here we had fine views of both Saturn and Mars through the Cooke refractor. The seeing was good, and two of the Saturnian moons were immediately seen in attendance on the thin-ringed planet. The eyepiece used (a push-fit ocular) gave a magnification of almost 100 times. No detail could be seen on the now fast-receding planet Mars; however, its slightly gibbous aspect was clear. The 1851 objective clearly still gives a superb performance, and is a testimony to the skills of its maker.

Back in the transit room, our host then undertook to explain, with the help of a sky globe, the intricacies of sidereal time – never an easy task! Along the way, some ever-useful cold water was thrown on the follies and ignorance of modern-day astrology.



The School does possess a Coronado h-alpha filter for observing the Sun; hopefully this will be used ever more frequently as the Sun's activity continues to pick up markedly. Unfortunately no programmes of detailed observation are being currently undertaken at the School as they were back in the nineteenth century, but really keen students do come along from time to time. Solar observations are on occasion made by projecting the Sun's image with the main telescope. There is also a small “d-i-y” solar projector which was pressed into service for the transit of Venus back in 2004.

David Robinson provided each of us with a copy of his “sky notes” detailing what could be seen on the evening we attended. He uses a quasi-Mercator projection for his diagrams illustrating the positions of the heavenly bodies, a method which as far as he knows has not been adopted by anyone else.

After some more informal discussion about matters astronomical and scientific, we then made our way home from what had been a most rewarding evening; we had seen an historically fascinating facility and had the privilege of using a fine telescope made by one of Yorkshire's and the world's finest optical craftsmen.

Ray Emery



## The Sermon on the Mount as "Tweets"

### **The Beatitudes** (Matt. 5:2 – 5:12)

*We must be emptied of "self" (self-pride, self-importance, self-righteousness) before we can be filled with the Spirit.*

### **Salt and Light** (Matt. 5:13 – 5:16)

*What's the point of hiding our Light? Let's provide the maximum benefit to society, ourselves and those around us by not quenching the spirit.*

### **The Law** (Matt. 5:17 – 5:20)

*Let's not think that our own spiritual path makes us above the Law.*

### **Enemies** (Matt. 5:43 – 5:48)

*Love one another. Yes, it's not easy at first, but it even means those who don't love us.*

### **Prayer** (Matt. 6:5 – 6:15)

*Prayer is between me and God - not for exhibition or broadcast.*

*If I think someone has "done me wrong" I'll suffer in spirit if I do not forgive them.*

### **Riches** (Matt. 6:19 – 6:21)

*Forget material possessions, they don't last; it's our good deeds and the goodness of our hearts that provide the real rewards in life.*

### **Possessions** (Matt. 6:24 – 6:34)

*How fortunate we are to be here, right now. What else do we need; isn't this enough? Let's be grateful for the present and not fill the future with our anxieties.*

### **Judging** (Matt. 7:1 – 7:6)

*No one's perfect, so let's not judge another person. Instead we'll identify and work upon the same fault in ourselves. Only then are we fit to teach or admonish someone else.*

### **Seeking** (Matt. 7:7 – 7:12)

*Whatever spiritual gift we truly desire is always available to us. Above all, let's use the same sense of caring for others that we use for ourselves.*

All this is the fruit of a Roundhay Meeting Study Group and you'll notice that we haven't (yet?) covered the entire Sermon.

Everyone knows that the great spiritual teachers from history propose similar strategies for happiness and fulfilment, the Sermon on the Mount being just one example. But often we just don't "get it" because these turn out to be the very things most discouraged by our culture.

None of us, I hope, is arrogant enough to think we can rewrite Jesus' moral teachings, but cutting large chunks down to "tweets" can be fun and is a useful way of helping ourselves understand.

Why not have a go yourself? The remaining sections are:

- ✓ Anger (Matt. 5:21 – 5:26)
- ✓ Adultery (5:27 – 5:30)
- ✓ Divorce (5:31 – 5:32)
- ✓ Vows (5:33 – 5:37)
- ✓ Revenge (5:38 – 5:42)
- ✓ Charity (6:1 – 6:4)
- ✓ Fasting (6:16 – 6:18)
- ✓ Light (6:22 – 6:23)
- ✓ The Way (7:13 – 7:14)

Why not send in your own, if you come up with a tweet you'd like to share?

#### **Er.. What's a Tweet?**

Just in case you've been living in a cave for a couple of years, Twitter is an alarmingly popular "micro blogging" service that lets its members send and read text messages known as tweets. Each tweet is limited to only 140 characters.

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Please send items for the next "Quiet Word" on or before Saturday August 7<sup>th</sup> 2010