

THE QUIET WORD



Dates and Events

Sunday Meeting for Worship 10:45 at all Leeds Meetings with exception of Ilkley which is at 10:30am and fortnightly house Meetings at Otley (**contact David Robson 0113 3188084 for details**)

3rd Sunday- Teenagers Meeting 12:15pm talk & lunch at Carlton Hill

4th Sunday Breakfast Meeting – shared breakfast 9am, MforW 9:30am Carlton Hill

Mindfulness Meditation Group: Do you feel very busy and struggle to find time for yourself? Does the pace of life feel too fast? Come and try a simple meditation practice which offers you a chance to experience inner peace. This group is intended for anyone who would like to begin or develop their mindfulness meditation practice. It is a drop-in, weekly Secular (non-faith) meditation group. £6 per session. Concessions and pay as you go available, or get a session free when you book and pay for 6 sessions. Please bring a mat and cushion with you.

Location: Inkwell, 31 Potternewton Lane, Leeds LS7 3LW

Time: Tuesday evenings 6.00-7.00pm. This is an on-going group. Suitable for beginners and more experienced. Please contact Shona at: shonalowe66@hotmail.com or on: 07583865922 for more details and to check forthcoming group meeting dates.

12 February 2013: Cafe Economique – Clive Lord will speak on the “Citizens’ Income”,

Doors open and refreshments from 7pm., Speaker and discussion from 7.30 – 9.30 pm

Chapel Allerton Methodist Church, Town Street, Chapel Allerton, LS7 4NB

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

16th February: Women and the Criminal Justice System, Carlton Hill Meeting House, 10:00 until 13:00. How are women treated by the Criminal Justice System and what we might be able to do to help? Speakers: Nicola Simpson from ‘Together Women’; Karen Evans from Liverpool University; Jill Page from Carlton Hill Quaker Meeting.

LAQM in 2013 – put these dates into your new diary!

Sunday 10th Feb.at Ilkley – Topic: **International Quaker Work.**

Saturday 16th March at 10:30am at Adel with business as led, then 1.15pm workshop on **Peace and reflecting on 100 Years of the NFPB**

Sunday 12th May Gildersome Topic: **Assisted Dying** – presentation for BYM 2013 special interest group, facilitated by the ADWG

Sunday 14th July at Carlton Hill Topic: **Homelessness and our Leeds Quaker Response.**

Sunday 13th October at Rawdon Topic: **Mental Health and Vulnerable Adults.**

Sunday 8th December at Roundhay with business as led

Nb all start at 1:15pm on Sundays following a lunch. Worship 1:15, topic to 3pm, then a short break followed by business as led from 3:15pm to 4:15pm and finally a tea.

Please send your articles or event details to Ben Wood at punkrainbow@hotmail.co.uk

Northern Friends Peace Board, Liverpool, 24 November 2012



NFPB met in the new (5 years) Meeting House which is only ten minutes walk from Liverpool Lime Street Station. The morning session included the Members Forum with inspiring news of Peace activities in various Area Meetings, where I mentioned our AM Sustainability Group. We endorsed the Quaker call for an end to the use of force in Gaza and heard about the continuing NFPB project on **Building Peace in Diverse Britain.**

Area Meetings so far this year have given less than they did by this time last year and individual donations are slightly up. Plans for the Board's centenary celebration in 2013 include a calendar showing Peace posters, an illustrated history booklet and display, a celebration in York on Saturday 15th June, a Walk of Witness in July from Richmond Castle (where COs were imprisoned in 1914) to reach Menwith Hill on July 4th in time for the yearly Declaration of Independence from the United States to be held there on that day. More details of these and other events are available. (www.nfpb.org.uk)

Later we heard from Wills who works for Forces Watch which is monitoring the activities of the military since the Armed Forces Act. Schools in the North and Scotland are being offered attractive sounding activities, such as adventure days and mock interview days for secondary schools. (www.forceswatch.net). Steve Walton of **QPSW** told us about Dialogue for a Nuclear Free World which aims to have ordinary people talking about such a NFW and make

progress with decision makers on developing agreements such as removing the risk of nuclear accidents. This could lead on to the reduction of nuclear weapons kept 'in readiness'.

QPSW has also published a new leaflet which sees the opportunity to educate for Peace, particularly in Schools, in the coming commemoration of WW I in 2014. The Peace Board's Centenary is important in the preparation for such work.

This meeting in Liverpool took forward the work done at our September meeting in Glasgow which also included Meeting for Worship at Faslane on the Sunday; some of us joined a small group of Friends from the Glasgow area who witness there once a month.

Una Parker

Some Thoughts from the Editor: Do You Feel Dependent? Good!



We live in a culture petrified by the very idea of dependence. The message from the market-place, advertising and politicians is very much the same; "you should behave as self-determining individuals, living out self-sufficient lives- or else you're a failure!" The language of the 'customer' now used in both business and the public sector gives the enjoyable illusion that life is one long shopping-trip with our choices lying unhindered at the centre. Any deviation from this orthodoxy of self-determination is treated with contempt, pity or bafflement. Those who depend on others (or worst still the state) are deemed a 'social problem' because they can no-longer participate affectively in the perpetual shopping-trip our society celebrates.

What is so incongruous about this use of the phrase 'social problem' is its denial of what society *is for*. When a haughty MP comes on television to decry 'benefit-dependency' I always wonder what lies behind the outrage. Yes- it's awful that people are caught in a cycle of low-income and no-work- but to me there is always something far nastier at work under the surface; the suggestion that needing help is something to be ashamed of. Disabled people are frequently subjected to this same poisonous judgement, courtesy of the seemingly innocuous language of 'independent living'. In both instances such 'problem people' are being forced to subscribe to idea that relying on others is some kind of sin. Yet, what this

fantasy of self-determination forgets is that society exists precisely because none of us can be said to be truly independent.

We are *all in need* of food, shelter, security and company- things we couldn't obtain on our own. A 'social problem' strictly speaking only arises when society expects citizens to do too much as individuals and not enough as a community. It is failure to meet need and not being in need, which is a *social problem*. If it is absurd to think of 'dependence' as a predicament why do so many people aspire for independence in our society? And why is so much derision presently poured on those who dip into the social pot?

I am not by nature a conspiracy theorist but I'm tempted think that our cultural fetish with 'the rugged individual' is something which has been subtly foisted on us by people who have very insidious reasons for doing so. An atomistic society (with little reference to others) is incidentally also one where large concentrations of wealth and power are tolerated. By becoming egoists, we are liable to think that the poor conditions we live in, our long spell of unemployment, or even our loneliness, reveal personal faults. If the adverts seduce us into thinking 'it's all up to us', when hard-times strike, we might conclude that we're just talentless and ineffective, rather than contesting our unjust conditions. In this way, individualists make excellent apologists for the state quo, because they only ever have themselves to blame.

"It's not the fault of unscrupulous employers that you're poor", says the egoist, "it's because you haven't worked enough hours to deserve higher pay". "If you get stuck on an NHS waiting-list it's not the fault of the government's bad decisions" he admonishes, "it's because you haven't taken responsibility for your health". Such a rationale is always useful for the rich and powerful. The mantra of *individual responsibility* serves as an excellent cover for cutting services; withdrawing the state and making society do some very anti-social things for the benefit of a small group.

Contesting the myth of independence is therefore a positive stepping stone in rediscovering community-spirit and solidarity. Once we realize that none of us can evade being sick, old or reliant, we are less likely to look down on those who need help. We are also more likely to work for a society which is less an aggregate of self-serving individuals and more (to use a phrase from the Diggers) "a common treasury" built up by all and drawn on by all.

Such a society has a very different feel to our present one. Instead of permitting avoidable public scarcity in favour of private affluence, it would prioritise its resources to meet our deepest needs. Putting into practice such a way of life takes effort. In a society where we are tempted to see ourselves as private consumers, we need a practical anchor which keeps us mindful of others and their needs. For Quakers this counter-cultural space is Meeting; a place where we can let go of the pernicious mask of self-sufficiency and instead learn how to care and be cared for.

Ben Wood

Junior Holiday/Link 2012



In 2012 we held three successful holidays that started with Barmoor in June when 22 children and 5 adults filled all of Barmoor's 27 beds. Everyone is welcome at JH and we try to meet everyone's needs as best we can. We provide good wholesome vegetarian food and cake treats are always an important part of the experience.

The age range at Barmoor was 7 to 11, a much bigger range than previous years, but this seemed to work well, as did swapping this holiday from September to June. Highlights of this holiday were: using the storm shelter in a torrential downpour, a muddy walk, a dusky walk and enjoying an Andrew Goldsworthy environmental art session.

Our August holiday was at the lodge at the Bradley Wood Scout Camp Site, near Brighouse and was attended by 21 children (ages 8 to 12) which was a little down on previous years. The site had lots to offer, but it was also a bit of a squeeze – a bit like camping indoors! One highlight was taking the older children on a day visit to Holiday School where they had a very warm welcome and a fantastic time, however, this trip was also problematic as it split our JH holiday with many children excluded from the visit. Other highlights were returning the youngest participants back to the scout site by taxi following a wet walk and creating a sculpture park in the woods.

Our final holiday was our September Barmoor holiday – this was promoted as a JH Link holiday for 11 to 18's and we had 20 U19's on the holiday of whom half were teenagers. We used the Holiday School / Link boundary rules for the weekend and it worked very well. The catering was superb and there were lots of eager helpers at the end of the holiday when we needed to do the 'big clean'. We were able to go on a 'proper walk' to Kirkbymoorside where we had a picnic in the Meeting House garden followed by Meeting for Worship in the Meeting House. On our return we split into two groups – those that wanted to walk back quickly to enjoy free time and do home work (a significant number of children had brought homework which was a first for JH). The slower group was a much smaller group and we ambled the five miles back sustained by big bag of sweets which helped keep us going. In addition to homework, another 'first' was lots of mobiles at JHLink, but this did not distract from the weekend, partly because there was no mobile signal at Barmoor!

Suzanne Wilson and Chris Hart are now the new co-convenors. Our core team of helpers continues to be too small so we welcome offers of help from those who are fit, energetic and good at working with young people nb all volunteers need a CRB check. If you know of a friend who may enjoy the opportunity to serve as a helper, please contact Suzanne or Chris. In addition to identifying new staff, we also need your help to ensure that all Quaker children in Yorkshire are encouraged to attend Junior Holidays. In 2013 we will be going to Snowball Lodge near York, to Buckden House in the Dales and to Barmoor near Kirkbymoorside. The holidays are detailed on the Quakers in Yorkshire website and booking forms are also downloadable from the website.

Robert Keeble (JH convenor to end of 2012)

Approaches to Ministry & Non-Conformity

On 11th November 2012, Armistice Day, I brought my ministry to Ilkley Meeting in a black bin bag. It took the form of a peace quilt I had made as part of an art project I was involved with. Whilst it didn't conform to usual practice at Meeting, it did most definitely spring from the soul.



Ilkley Meeting House with the peace quilt draped over the normally unadorned table which stands at the centre of meetings

I had made the quilt in Oct/Nov 2010 as part of a piece of work called 'Collateral Damage (Unfinished)' for the 'Bed-In at The Bluecoat' project at The Bluecoat Gallery in Liverpool. The event was to commemorate the life of John Lennon. (It was then the anniversary of his assassination and 70 years since his birth). For 70 days the gallery had a bed set up in it for

different invited artists (and other groups) to present or perform work with particular reference to the Bed-In peace protests, which John Lennon held with Yoko Ono.

A fellow artist, Clare Brumby, who makes films and who had been invited to take a slot at the Bed-In, decided to organise an event she called 'Peace Talks' and she contacted me to see if I wanted to be involved. She was making a kind of chat show and wanted me to talk about my experience of using dialogue as a means of conflict resolution during my years as a lawyer. She had other invited guests as well (a peace activist, a local councillor, a yoga practitioner, a stand up comedian and a band). She wanted to look at different ways of promoting peace and human connection, as a tribute to the life of John Lennon.

My personal preference was to make something, rather than be interviewed, and my immediate thought for the project was to make a covering for the bed, so that was the starting point. I became interested in using the 'tree of life' as the basis for a design - aiming to focus on the interconnectedness of all life on our planet. It had obvious appeal as a design motif and seemed relevant to the project as it features in many different cultures, so might be regarded as a symbol which can speak across divides. The words embroidered on the quilt read: "It is a tree of life. All its paths are peace" (taken from the Book of Proverbs).

At some point in the course of doing background research I came across a website made by a group of Iraqis who had kept a tally of civilian deaths (the deaths which are always notably absent from the news reports we receive here of conflicts abroad involving our own armed forces). It was shocking to read the pages and pages of names, some of them so young, some old and fragile. The details were brief and matter of fact (name, gender, age, cause of death, occupation) and the English broken.

The website carried the heartfelt plea from human being to human being to think of family, simply presenting these names as someone's mother/father/sister/brother/son/daughter . . . Teachers, gardeners, shopkeepers, business men, students, doctors, clerics, manual workers and housewives numbered among the dead. It conjured a picture of ordinary people going about their daily business, just being obliterated in the most horrific circumstances.

But the most striking were the children, too young to have ever even had an occupation. I decided to create a kind of memorial piece, using some of the names. I homed in on the names of those children under the age of ten for two simple reasons:

Firstly, that under UK criminal law the age of ten is the youngest that a child can be deemed to have criminal responsibility. In legal terms, therefore, infants are presumed absolutely innocent and incapable of committing any crime. So these victims did seem to me to be very particular innocents - who could have absolutely no understanding, still less any involvement in the conflict, directly or indirectly, but simply had the misfortune to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. ; and secondly, one of our most basic instincts is to protect our young and this is something which goes so deep I believe it must also cross cultural divides & be something that connects human to human. (Think of the mothers' peace movement in Northern Ireland when Catholic and Protestant mothers set aside their religious differences to focus on achieving an end to the conflict that was killing their children).

I used the details I found on the database to decorate the tree of life with ‘fruits’ each bearing the name, age and cause of death of a child. The foliage is made from army camouflage netting (made in Vietnam). The ‘fruits’ take the form of labels, based on the image of a hand grenade, tied to the camouflage.

I was eventually persuaded by Clare to be interviewed for her film and talk a bit about the work. The film can be viewed via following the link: [Peace Talks at The Bluecoat](#) . Coincidentally, the show was made in the gallery just a day or two after news of the Wikileaks & the Iraqi Body Count hit the headlines, so the work suddenly became particularly topical at the moment of its showing. Commenting on the quilt, Friend Diana Jakeways wrote to me after meeting, saying:

“It was very striking to see the table like that when I walked in: I thought the way you had draped it was very beautiful. It was even more interesting when you spoke about the origin of the quilt. My first impression was of fallen leaves, then later it reminded me of army camouflage- the colours of the pieces you attached created that impression I think. I don't know if that was your intention. I looked at some of the writing afterwards- too small to see from where I was sitting in Meeting- it must have made you very sad reading all that on the database you found. It was so thoughtful to share it on Remembrance Sunday”.

I was prompted to bring the quilt to meeting in the first instance to stand in my place on the day (I was absent from the main meeting room for most of the time myself, as I was making poppies with the young children upstairs in the Children's Meeting). I'm glad the quilt was received at meeting in the spirit it was offered for ministry. A number of us had discussed in our Food For Thought session a week or two before that meeting the nature of ministry and how we each understood it. The general consensus was that ministry takes many forms, extending well beyond the words spoken at meeting. My own feeling is that this piece of work was what I had to offer as my own individual ministry, though I still wasn't sure when I put it forward whether others might find it inappropriate.

Perhaps it didn't conform to ‘the letter’, which, historically and with good reason has required no adornment in places of worship for Quakers. But I do firmly believe it was in line with ‘the Spirit’ of meeting for worship. Perhaps that springs from my own conviction as an artist that creative activities sometimes have the capacity to express that which words fail. It did seem to me a fitting day to unwrap the quilt, which had been lying dormant in my studio since the Liverpool show.

I saw some of the coverage by the BBC later in the day of the Remembrance Services (which I haven't paid much attention to in recent years) and was quite shocked at the level of pageantry and military focus in stark contrast to our quiet meeting. Politics at work I suppose - It really wouldn't do to have the young men we send into these conflicts thinking of themselves as the canon fodder for political strategies, would it. [Kathryn Oubridge, January 2013](#)

Memoranda of Understanding between Area Meeting and Local Meetings

As many of you will know, we have recently completed agreeing an initial set of MoUs between Leeds Area Meeting and each of our constituent Local Meetings. Many thanks to all those who have supported this effort. This note provides a brief explanation of the MoUs for those not familiar with them.

Three developments over recent years are changing the relationship between Local Meetings and their Area Meeting:

- The RECAST report to Yearly Meeting in 2005 which encouraged Area Meetings to build and support a community of their Local Meetings;
- The Yearly Meeting decision in 2007 to remove the distinctions ('preparative', 'recognised' and 'notified') between local meetings, all now being simply Local Meetings;
- The move from excepted status to charity status for the Society, with Area Meetings being the organisational 'units' registered as charities with the Charity Commission.

Whereas in the past Local Meetings were largely autonomous, these developments place more responsibility on Area Meetings. Quaker Stewardship Committee in Friends House recommends that MoUs be drawn up between Area Meetings and their Local Meetings to clarify how responsibilities are shared between them.

Leeds Area Quaker Meeting became a Registered Charity (no. 1134542) in 2008. One important aspect of being a registered charity is that an Area Meeting is required to have named *Trustees* who are held legally responsible for the charity - including Local Meetings. Trustees are not expected to be involved in all decision making; our traditional practices of local decision making is not threatened. However, Trustees face two questions:

- How does the Area Meeting help Local Meetings to do all that they need to do?
- How do the Trustees ensure that proper responsibility is exercised at all levels?

Legally speaking, Trustees may delegate some of their 'powers' to others in the charity. However, Trustees retain responsibility for general oversight and ensuring that good practices are followed. Trustees must be informed about what is going on and they must take an oversight of the charity's assets (such as meeting houses) and the stewardship of the charity's resources.

A further aspect of being a registered charity is that we are required to have a *Governing Document*, which sets out the objectives of the charity - this has been appended to our MoUs.

Quite apart from the requirements of the Charity Commission, it is useful to have recorded agreements about *who does what* between Area Meeting and Local Meetings.

Misunderstandings can easily arise in areas where responsibilities overlap – in matters of finance, property and employment for example. Our initial set of MoUs, now in place, will be reviewed in 2014/5 to see how they can be improved, and to adapt to any changes. Have a look at your Local Meeting's MoU; your comments and thoughts would be welcome.

Further background information can be found at the Quakers in Britain (BYM) website, Quaker Stewardship Committee.

[John Murdoch LAQM Trustee \(Adel Meeting\)](#)

Quaker work around the World Leeds Area Quaker Meeting Sunday

10th

February 2013 at 1.15 pm



Ilkley Meeting House

Queens Road,

Ilkley

LS29

9QJ

(Share packed lunches from 12.30pm)

Speakers: **Nicholas Evens**: Quaker Bolivia Link:

A Quaker Response to Poverty **Peter Jarman**: Author

Of Encounter & Discernment

Quaker Service in Former Communist States **DVD about QUNO**: Quaker United Nations Office **Robert Gibson**:

'Oh Brother Man' A Quaker Abroad

Followed by

Tea and a short Business Meeting

Reaching in, reaching out: Rethinking outreach

High Leigh Conference Centre 18-20 January



The inclement weather dictated portions of this conference, however there were ideas and discussions that I valued that I'm anticipating will be useful for our meetings. High Leigh is situated in Hertfordshire and was the family home of the Barclays. Following the death of, Mr Barclay, whose first name escapes me, the building was donated for Christian groups to use. Our weekend hosted a London Church group, a Male voice choir and the Quakers. We accepted the offer of a few songs on the Saturday evening by the choir – quite a treat!

So the conference: when writing this I noticed the title of the conference is rethinking outreach. I'm not sure for those who are more experienced at Quaker outreach, this objective was fulfilled, however for me, a novice, I found it a useful and enriching experience.

What I found of most value were the home groups and the discussions. Speeches are a good start to lead discussion however less is more – I'm a kinaesthetic learner – I have to do to learn so listening and absorbing aren't my strengths.

Some things I did glean from the talks were good – one from Rosemary Harthill who suggested that no Quaker meeting should be organised without ensuring that its role fits into one or other of the three principles of Quakers – our social witness, promoting Quakers or strengthening our spiritual lives. I think it is useful to have such principles to hang things from as they work as a useful guide.

What I will take back and explore with Carlton Hill and perhaps Area Meeting – are being aware of what is a healthy meeting and how this can be sustained; having a variety of different ways to attract people to meeting; being aware and discussing the testimonies; being alert to new ways in which we can enliven the meeting.

On reflection, I could recognise good practice that is already happening in Leeds Area Meeting, from this conference. I think that the true test is seeing this practice as an ongoing and fluid process.

Iona Lyons, Carlton Hill

Minimum Pricing of Alcohol: The following letter was sent to all Leeds MP's



On behalf of Leeds Area Quaker Meeting we are writing to encourage you to actively support the minimum pricing of alcohol, preferably at the 50p per unit level. Leeds Area Quaker Meeting draws its membership from across Leeds and also includes the Ilkley area. The Religious Society of Friends, commonly known as Quakers has a long standing concern about the misuse of alcohol. We are very aware that the financial, health and social costs of alcohol abuse to individuals, families, communities and the nation as a whole are very heavy. We recognize that mitigating the adverse effects of alcohol misuse is difficult and complex requiring multiple initiatives. Minimum pricing is an important element of what needs to be done.

Well researched and documented evidence is available from the Chief Medical Officer of Health's (Sir Liam Donaldson) annual report 2009 in the appropriately named chapter on alcohol called "Collateral damage".

More data is available from **Alcohol Concern** and the 2009 report from the North West Public Health Observatory called "Costs of alcohol-related harm in Leeds 2008 – 2009" (available at: <http://www.cph.org.uk/showPublication.aspx?pubid=713>) which estimates £20 million as the annual cost to the NHS in Leeds. To this we have to add the costs of policing, social care and lost working days.

Leeds Area Quaker Meeting would be pleased to hear from you about what action you are taking on our behalf to introduce the minimum pricing of a unit of alcohol.

Yours sincerely

Clerks to Leeds Area Quaker Meeting.

Short report of Leeds Area Quaker Meeting



Many took the opportunity of enjoying the whole day with Rounday Friends – the all aged Worship in the morning, the sumptuous ‘Christmas Lunch’ and the tea at 4:15pm were all a real treat and much appreciated.

Concern for Poverty: The afternoon session started with a workshop and questionnaire looking at changes to the benefits system and the new ‘sanction’ regime that can result in people losing rights to receive benefits for up to three years (the questions and answers are attached). We also agreed to set up a Working Party to look at the viability of establishing a Library Service for homeless asylum seekers. Regarding a directory of Quaker involvement in the voluntary sector, we agreed that a simple list of Friends be established by the co-clerks and made available on a password protected page of our LAQM website. We were also reminded of the work of Leeds Friends Action on Poverty. Information about this fund, how to donate to it and how to apply for funds is available on the LAQM website.

Communicating well in the modern world: Was the other main theme in the afternoon and Diana Jakeways explained how Ilkley Meeting is making full use of the LAQM website. With the assistance of a data projector Diana showed Friends the new Ilkley Meeting pages on our website, these are password protected and used by nearly everyone in the meeting. We commended greater use of our website by our other Local Meetings.

Support for minimum pricing for alcohol Roundhay friends sent the following minute for consideration at LAQM:

There are Department of Health proposals to introduce a minimum price for a unit of alcohol. This is controversial and there is a powerful lobby from the Drinks Industry to resist this measure. We ask Leeds Area Quaker Meeting to write to Members of Parliament for Leeds to support the proposals.

We agreed that the LAQM clerks should write to all Leeds MPs