

THE QUIET WORD



[Carlton Hill Friends Supporting Fair-trade Fortnight](#)

Up and Coming 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

Otley Meeting appreciates the support we receive from visitors from other Leeds Meetings. We look forward to meeting with some of you during 2013. Although Otley Meeting is held regularly on the first and third Sundays at 10.45, our venues are less certain. We try to give these out a month in advance but if in doubt please telephone the Clerk on **0113 318 8084**. There are occasional changes usually around Bank Holiday weekends.

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.

Friday March 8th – Celebrate International Women's Day at Carlton Hill QMH from 7pm to finish by 9pm An evening led by Una to share stories of women who have been important in our lives, sing some songs, perhaps juggle co-operatively / possibly even circle dance.

Sat. 9th 1.30pm for 2pm start 'Does Aid Still Matter' a discussion panel chaired by Ien Tingle of BBC with MP's Greg Mulholland & Fabian Hamilton, John Hilary (director of War on

Want) Dr. Mogha Kamal-Yani (senior adviser to Oxfam). venue Woodhouse Community Centre, 197 Woodhouse Street, Leeds LS6 2NY

Saturday 16th Leeds Area Quaker Meeting 10:30 am at Adel QMH with ‘Peace Workshop’ from 1:15pm

Friday 22nd 9:45am discussion group at Carlton Hill QMH – open to all

Friday 22 at Leeds Metropolitan University. “Nonviolent People Power” An informal half day course to discuss the possibilities and tools of a nonviolent activist facilitated by members of the peace movement. To book contact R.julian@leedsmet.ac.uk

Saturday 23rd 11-5 Carlton Hill QMH Non-violent Direct Action training day with Stop the Arms Fair an event organised by Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT) contact outreach@caat.org.uk www.caat.org.uk/events

Wed 27th 7.30pm – Poverty in Leeds talk / discussion at **Roundhay QMH**. Speaker is Robert Keeble.

Thursday 28th 6pm ‘Soup and Hot Cross Buns’ meeting of the Carlton Hill Sustainability Group – topic is water sustainability and meeting is open to all interested.

Friday 29th (Good Friday Public Holiday) 10:30 am to 11am Meeting for Worship at Carlton Hill QMH followed by a Hot Cross Bun Coffee Morning at 11am.

April: Friday 5th 9:45am discussion group at Carlton Hill QMH – open to all

Saturday 6th 10am to 1pm Leeds Quaker Criminal Justice Group Meeting – open to all.

Adel Light Group meetings are scheduled for Saturday 13th April and Saturday 25th May, both at 9.30 am at Adel Meeting House. All welcome.

Saturday 13th 10am to 4pm – Quakers in Yorkshire Gathering, Bootham **Junior** School, York.

Sunday 14th 1.15 to 3.15 – preparation for BYM (provisional date).

For **Contributions to the Quiet Word** please contact the editor Ben Wood on punkrainbow@hotmail.co.uk

Friends Educational Foundation
Grants for higher education for academic year 2013–2014

Quaker educational grants are available for members and ‘attenders in good standing’ or exceptionally others closely associated with Quakers. They are intended for mature students (not school/college-leavers, but including graduates undertaking postgraduate studies) wishing to take full or part-time courses in further or higher education of at least one year’s duration.

Please encourage people to apply even if their plans are not yet concrete. Grants in 2012 were between £500 and £2,200. Applicants can re-apply for each year of their course.

The closing date for completed applications is **30 April 2013**.

For further information and application forms contact: Kristin Skarsholt, kristins@quaker.org.uk 020 7663 1121

A Yorkshire Quaker targets UK Nuclear Hypocrisy



In the early hours of **3rd February, Yorkshire Quaker and Trident Ploughshares** activist Sylvia Boyes was arrested attempting to enter Faslane, home to the UK's nuclear submarines. Sylvia statement read:

I would like to explain my reasons and state of mind at the time of my entering the Faslane nuclear submarine base. I have been a campaigner against war in general and nuclear weapons in particular for over 30 years. Peace with justice cannot be brought about by violence; in fact violence creates more violence. I remain convinced that all nuclear weapons are weapons of mass murder and mass destruction and are therefore illegal under international laws of war. They are immoral because of the terrible suffering they will cause, not only when used but to future generations. They are a terrible waste of resources which are so much needed for human welfare. Successive governments have not encouraged or enabled debate on such a serious matter which so affects us all. The building work and development for the Trident replacement at Aldermaston Atomic Weapons Establishment continues unabated despite the government saying no decision is to be made until the next Parliament in 2015.

In magistrates courts and crown courts, at more times than I care to remember, evidence has been given in my defence to prove the illegality of all nuclear weapons. Experts with greater knowledge and finer minds have laid the facts to the court. To no avail except in a few cases where the judge ruled that the defendants had a defence but not that Trident was illegal. I am particularly being lead to take action at this time because of the recent Holocaust Memorial Day events. The Nazis dehumanized the Jews and other groups before sending them into the gas chambers.

I draw parallels between the horrors of the concentration camps and our general acceptance of war and nuclear weapons. No one today can say they do not know of the effects of any nuclear bomb being fired. It must be acknowledged that the continued possession and deployment of these horrendous weapons entails the creation of enemies and implies a willingness to be one of those groups that would allow suffering to be inflicted on another group on an unprecedented scale, both immediately and in the longer term; a suffering from which none would escape.

When the government of my country fails in its democratic duty to disseminate the necessary information to initiate debate on such a vital issue how can I not continue to act. I am a mother with six grandchildren. No nuclear weapons have been used in war since 1945 but they are in use being deployed 365 days a year and if maintained will one day be used. How can I think of the future and not take action against these evil weapons. The German people took many years before facing up to the horrors of the concentration camps. We here in the

UK must face up to our role in the silent acceptance of the proliferation of weapons of mass murder and mass destruction. In being at Faslane I think of the submariners acting on our behalf and the words of a Greenham song “And now underground they do not see the eyes of the dying.” My action is a straightforward statement that the continued possession of nuclear weapons is not in my name, in solidarity with anti-nuclear activists all around the world, I can say with conviction that this is not a one off action but one of many to create a climate of opinion to enable the government to take part in real disarmament negotiations. My banner **NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT IF NOT NOW, WHEN** is asking that question for us all to answer

Footnote: “Nonviolent People Power” How does nonviolent action bring about social change? An informal half day course to discuss the possibilities and tools of a nonviolent activist facilitated by members of the peace movement. Facilitators include **Sylvia Boyes**, Dr Rachel Julian, & Prof Dave Webb. **Friday 22/03/13 at Leeds Metropolitan University.** To book contact R.julian@leedsmet.ac.uk

Leeds Quaker Criminal Justice Group: Women and the Criminal Justice system



The first of the new quarterly meetings of this group met on Saturday 16 February at Carlton Hill Meeting House. Judy Kessler opened the session with a short silence, then read extracts from Faith and Practice, 23.94 –96, and introduced the speakers Nicola Simpson, Together Women Project; Karen Evans, University of Liverpool; Jill Page, Justice for Women.

The talks enabled us to step back and look at the evolution of the British criminal justice system over time and from a broad perspective as well as considering in detail the current situation by focussing on the benefits of early interventions and the need to be aware of gender disparities. The stories of individual women caught up in the criminal justice system reminded us that behind the statistics and theories are many ordinary women pushed, or who have slid, over the edge into criminality by circumstances beyond their control.

We were impressed by the work of Together Women Project in getting to the heart of this, supporting individual women to overcome their problems in order to sustain themselves and their dependents, so breaking the cycle of re-offending and future problems through broken families. We learned that unfortunately the current difficulties in maintaining funding, in a harsh economic climate, and against an increasing discourse of punishment, alongside calls

activist projects. As part of Co-Operatives UK, Radical Routes aren't isolated from less 'political' co-ops, but the purpose of individual co-op membership to RR is to encourage grassroots and radical social change. Friends will know that being part of a wider network is an aid to more local efforts. Interestingly, Radical Routes' autonomy and mutual aid has many similarities if not a direct relationship with Quaker practice. Consider how a meeting's subgroup is in some ways self-sufficient yet relies on business meeting for support. Or more widely, think of Carlton Hill's solar panels being paid for by the area meeting. Each member, in this sense, benefits from co-operation. There is nothing really like Rootstock in the UK. The money that they collect is guaranteed to go towards co-operative movements which are committed to radical social change. Compared to groups like Triodos, Rootstock are small but powerful, and their strength is in having a considerable reach without too many members or institutional frameworks to obstruct it. To emphasise their distinction, Rootstock is different from ethical investment banks and building societies like Triodos, Ecology, Co-op Bank and credit unions) in a very direct way. Rootstock only invests in Radical Routes members. To become a member, co-ops need to meet certain criteria:

Radical Routes is very particular about who it accepts, we're pretty hard line co-operators and social change activists. You must be a fully mutual co-op, your rules will be checked to make sure you cannot run off with the cash. You must be committed to positive social change and we will want to know what you do about it.

All this might sound a little domineering, but I see such rules as a definite strength. Each commitment is right at the forefront of whatever RR co-ops engage in. Besides, co-ops should be curious about other co-ops' activities! On a more serious note, lack of accountability can be disastrous in such scenarios. Rootstock is of particular interest for Quakers especially at this moment. Our Minute 36 commitment to becoming a low-carbon, sustainable community is one for ourselves. Yet the way we invest our money can be remarkably positive. Both as meetings and as individuals, I would encourage Friends to consider investing in Rootstock. Members of RR are fully committed to living sustainably and we may have a lot to learn from them.

We know Quaker business to be far from straightforward, not to mention the networks of co-operation within Britain Yearly Meeting. But I would like Friends not to be discouraged from the apparent complexities of the Radical Routes network, its ethos of mutual aid, of loan stock and other mechanisms. The effect of your investment is simple. The Rootstock website states: 'By making a socially responsible, ethical investment in Rootstock you will be helping to provide capital for people starting up housing and workers' co-ops and social centres in the UK.' As shareholders, you also be able to have input into the running of Radical Routes. This would give Friends to spread our knowledge of positive action, but we could also learn a great deal from the efforts of co-ops to live and work sustainably.

www.rootstock.org.uk

Pascal Ansell, Carlton Hill Meeting

Death and Dying: A concern gathers momentum



Much has happened since Quentin Fowler initiated his concern on Assisted Dying at Adel Meeting in 2011. Not only has informed discussion taken place and future moves been planned amongst Leeds meetings, but also the national debate has widened and deepened. The legal and medical-ethical problems are now recognized and the solutions more evident and in urgent need of implementation by Act of Parliament. People want to be able to die in the UK with control and choice over how, when and where they depart this life, that is, they want autonomy within an ethical, cultural and spiritual framework that speaks to their condition.

The Workshop at Carlton Hill in November 2011 on our attitudes to our own deaths was a prelude to the talks and group discussions covering many aspects of assisted dying that made up the 12 May 2012 Conference at Oxford Pace, 'Dying and Death - the last taboo'. This successful conference was videoed. Many participants requested copies of the DVD, and in addition, many more of the 250 made have been sent to Leeds Area and Yorkshire meetings. It has also been sent to organizations locally and nationally involved in this issue. This writer's article, "The last taboo" (**The Friend** - 10 August 2012), sets out Professor Jan Bernheim's deeply moving Conference lecture on how assisted dying is humanely practiced in the Benelux countries. This article has produced positive feedback from Quaker Area meetings in Cambria and Kent and from several other UK faith-based groups.

This national response within and beyond our Society is encouraging. However, the Assisted Dying Working Group maintains its twin aims. First, its commitment and obligation to LAQM for its valuable support for local discussions, and second, the extension of this concern as widely as possible within the Society. To this end the Group is planning a series of Focus Groups. One will be at Carlton Hill on 24 March, and involve Carlton Hill, Rawdon and Gildersome meetings and the other at Adel on 17 March. These groups need be no more than 12 people. They could be videoed or taped. We want to hear as wide a range of views as possible. It will be 'Quakerly', we do not want to challenge people's views but to hear them. It will be helpful if people have seen the conference DVD.

The salient points from these discussions will enable the Assisted Dying Group to give a presentation to LAQM at Gildersome on 12 May on the overall conclusions. This takes us on to the next stage and the implementation of our second aim. The report to Gildersome and feedback from it will be the basis for a presentation that the A D Group could give at a fringe meeting at BYM this year. We have yet to hear whether or not we have a place and time. This will be a beginning but one we hope may lead to a full debate on the agenda at BYM 2014. In that case we may begin to take our rightful place in the national debate on assisted dying.

Rawdon QM

Circle Dancing at Adel



A small group of Friends and others enjoy circle dancing fortnightly at Adel and would be pleased to welcome any other interested dancers. Circle dancing is one of the oldest forms of religious expression and group celebration. Our dances today range from traditional folk to modern choreographies set to popular or classical music. We find the (usually) gentle exercise is both physically, socially and spiritually enhancing, and well as keeping the brain alert! Do join us on alternate Thursday afternoons from 3.30 to 5.00 at Adel Meeting House, New Adel Lane, Leeds 16. The next session is on Thursday 7th March. For more information please contact Pat Gerwat 0113 2899626, patricia.gerwat@viginmedia.com.

The Northern Friends Peace Board and 100 Years of Peace Making

Leeds Area Quaker Meeting, Saturday 16th March
Adel Quaker Meeting House, New Adel Lane, Leeds LS16 6AZ

10am to 10:30am

10.30am

11am to 12:30

12.30am to 1.15pm

1.15pm to 4.15pm

Drinks on arrival

Meeting for Worship

Business as led

Lunch

Peace Workshop

Set up after a peace conference of Quakers in the North in January 1913, the Northern Friends Peace Board has undertaken a variety of work with and for Northern Friends. Its task from the outset has been to *'advise and encourage Friends in the North, and through them their fellow citizens, in the active promotion of peace in all its height and breadth'* and it

is supported by funding and representatives from throughout the North of Britain. To mark its centenary [Philip Austin the co-ordinator](#) will talk to Leeds Area Quaker Meeting about the work of the NFPB over the past century covering in particular the period of the two world wars and its more recent peace work.

We will look at how Leeds Friends have been and are currently involved in peace activities, and how we can meet the challenges facing us today. You will have the opportunity to make your own contribution during the session.

All bloody principles and practices, as to our own particulars, we utterly deny; with all outward wars and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretense whatsoever; this is our testimony to the whole world. ([Declaration to Charles II, 1660](#))

[Child care can be arranged for the afternoon session. Please let us know by Sunday 10th March. Tel: 0113 2899626; email: adelquakers@gmail.com](#)

A Notice: Please be Alert

Meetings need to be careful about how they deal with those who approach them for help. We have recently received a report from Central England AM regarding an incident that took place last week at Dudley LM. This individual and his modus operandi seem very similar to a spate of incidents that occurred in the midlands and the north of England three to four years ago in which a conman obtained considerable amounts of money from a number of Friends and meetings.

He seems very convincing and appears to have an in depth knowledge of Quaker procedures and terminology as well as knowing the names and details of a number of 'weighty' Friends in Northern Ireland. He also appears to do his homework on the meetings he visits, knowing the name of the clerk, elders etc. As always, Friends and meetings need to be alert and careful about how they deal with those who approach them for help. If someone says that they are a Friend, and in need of assistance, then they should be content to have you contact their own Meeting to confirm their *bona fide*. If a similar incident has happened at your meeting, could you let Michael Booth the Support for Meetings Officer know on michaelsb@quaker.org.uk or 020 7663 1023.

In friendship

Graham Spackman

Asylum Seekers and poverty in Leeds

At LAQM it was agreed that the clerks would write to all the Leeds MP's on behalf of Leeds Quakers. I was also shocked to read that so many children in Leeds are now living in poverty (YEP 20/02/13 page 9) and to be informed that Leeds Central ward includes some of the worst rates of child poverty in the UK with 38% of children living in poverty in the Burmantofts and Richmond Hill areas of the city. This information was subsequently included in a modified letter that was sent to the press (YEP and The Friend). The text of the MP's letter is below and friends are encouraged to write to their own MP's. Robert Keeble.

Dear (Leeds MP's)

Early day motion 1019 - ASYLUM SUPPORT RATES

On behalf of Leeds Area Quaker Meeting we are writing to encourage you to add your name to EDM 1019 which was tabled by on 5 February 2013 by Sarah Teather MP (Labour) and sponsored by other MP's including Peter Bottomley (Conservative) and appears to have cross party support.

The EDM text reads: *That this House believes that Britain can rightly be proud of its history of welcoming those fleeing persecution and war; welcomes the cross-party parliamentary report on asylum support for children and families; notes with concern the finding of that report that current asylum support levels are leaving up to 10,000 children destitute or in severe poverty; further believes that section 4 support rates are especially austere and that cashless payments impose damaging restrictions on how families buy essential items; further notes that asylum support rates have not been increased since April 2011; regrets that the previous Government broke the historic link between support rates for asylum seekers and income support; calls on the Government to increase asylum support rates so that they are at least equal to 70 per cent of income support and to up-rate support rates annually; and further calls on the Government to abolish section 4 support and implement a single cash-based support system.*

Leeds Quakers have considered the EDM1019 text and concluded that it is very important that we give it our full support. We are concerned that large numbers of children fleeing persecution are made to suffer again due to inadequate support in the UK. Leeds Quakers are presently helping to fund work undertaken by Solace (www.solace-uk.org.uk) on a project that is providing counselling support for children who have sought refuge in the UK and are still traumatised by persecution they experienced before fleeing their former home. In 1948 Quakers were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for work done to relieve destitution in war-torn Europe, including support for refugees. We feel that in the light of our historic and present-day experience of supporting child refugees, it is important that we write to you requesting your support for EDM1019. We hope that you will sign the motion.

Yours sincerely

[Clerks to Leeds Area Quaker Meeting.](#)

European and Middle Eastern Young Friends Spring Gathering: A Message from the Planning Committee



Dear Friends,

We hope this finds you well and through the worst of the recent bad weather we've been having. Our apologies for the unsolicited nature of this email; we hope you may find the following of interest, as well as it being a request on our part. We are writing to ask whether you might consider supporting the [European and Middle Eastern Young Friends Spring Gathering](#), which is to be held in Yorkshire, in April 2013. This year we hope to welcome Young Friends aged 18-35 from all over Europe and beyond for a week of reflection, workshops and spiritual exploration. It is a wonderful opportunity for Young Friends to share experiences with each other and get to know one another in a supportive and friendly environment which transcends borders. We already have applications from Georgia, Italy, Germany and France, as well as Britain.

Our theme this year is ['The Body Electric; Exploring Spirituality through our Creative Power.'](#) It includes art, music and drama workshops and we will work in conjunction with the Leaveners who are generously offering their expertise free of charge. We will also work for a day as volunteers in the local community to express how we can use our bodies for the benefit of others. In a world of ever increasing pressures on and expectations of young people, Spring Gathering offers a chance to celebrate the joy of simple living and worshipping together, bringing us closer to God.

As part of the 'Whoosh' initiative of 2012, [EMEYF Spring Gathering](#) presents an opportunity to support a vibrant and developing community of Young Friends who, for the first time in ten years, are delighted to be meeting in Britain. There are a number of different areas where we need support, including bursaries for those Young Friends who struggle to finance the Gathering and travel themselves, expenses for facilitators and speakers, and Visa costs. If you felt able to contribute even a modest sum towards core costs, we would be incredibly grateful, and would of course provide a full written account of the Gathering (with photos!) If you do not feel able to contribute financially, but are interested to hear about how the Gathering went, we would equally be delighted to send you a copy of the Epistle etc with photos.

If you are interested, general funding for one particular aspect is a possibility, however, given that this can be difficult to manage, we would very much appreciate non-specific donations. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like any further information. We thank you in advance for any contribution you may feel able to make, and wish you all, regardless, a very happy and peaceful rest of 2013.

In Friendship,

Miranda and Laurina
The Planning Committee
EMEYF Spring Gathering 2013.

Circles of Support and Accountability

Anna Needham

Quakers have always been good at holding out the hand of Friendship to those who have been rejected by Society. From William Tuke (the mentally ill), to Elizabeth Fry, visiting the women who were waiting to be transported on the prison ships. Now, here is one of the biggest challenges - Circles are now recruiting volunteers to offer Friendship to paedophiles and ex-abusers who are surely among the most reviled people (mostly men) in Society.

I first became interested in Circles when I realized that to continue to perpetuate the rejection when these men were released from prison was just going to push them back into seeking attention, solace and sex with a client who had been abused. It was the most painful work I ever did. I wanted no more victims. Eventually that became the strap line for Yorkshire Circles- **“NO MORE VICTIMS.”**

The concept of circles is very simple and was first used by the Mennonite Church. Just four very ordinary adults, sitting around with a cup of tea with their core member who has been released from jail, on license after serving his sentence for sexual abuse. It is hard to change your ways, especially if you are seen as the lowest of the low. As prisoners, they were often set upon by other prisoners, and in many cases were housed in prison in special wings, for their own safety. This Circle and the core member will meet weekly, perhaps for as long as a year. Not every sex offender is suitable for a Circle. The core members must acknowledge the offence and really want to change. I have now been in two Circles and I am about to start a third.

The support which I have personally experienced has been very good. On both Circles, we have worked very closely with the Core member's probation officer and the police. The core member will be encouraged to talk about his life, the abuse and also practical problems, to do with living outside prison. In return, the Circle will want to know the exact terms of his License and whether he is sticking to them. Any slips and he could be back in jail. The re-offending rate has been surprisingly low. One core member asked to return to prison when he thought that he was in danger of reoffending.

So the Circle goes on and you know what after weeks of meeting in this way, we find a human being under the scary title of pedophile. Every Circle (like every Meeting for worship) is different. The mix of members is different and each has a part to play. Housewife, parent, teacher businessman, plumber, each has a part to play. I first heard about Circles at BYM and immediately thought it was a good idea and I joined a small steering group which met to look into the feasibility of a Circle in Yorkshire. In those early days, we were very sure that we needed the input of professionals, such as police and probation. Now in Yorkshire we have developed a number of Circles, and we have fulltime co-ordinates (mostly ex probation officers, but quite separate from Probation).

This set up means that there is time for very close co-operation and supervision. Notes are written after every Circle and go to the coordinate who gets a pretty good idea of what is going on. Why not give Circles a try. I am very willing to talk to anyone interested. My email is: annaneedham@talktalk.net and my phone number are 01132625877 or you can bypass me and go straight through to the coordinator: Melva Burton on 0904.

Summary of LAQM held 10th Feb. 2013



With heavy snow forecast I was quite expecting a much depleted meeting at Ilkley, however, whilst some friends were prevented, nearly thirty were able to enjoy the hospitality provided by Ilkley Friends. The first session departed from our more established 'work shop session' and consisted of a series of very interesting short talks taking us on a discovery of [Quaker work around the world](#). Nicholas Evens from Harrogate told us about the work of Quaker Bolivia Link which is a Quaker response to poverty in Bolivia; we learnt that there were risks of unintended colonialism' that come with working with local communities; we also learnt of the Quaker Bolivia Education Fund. Peter Jarman from Friagate Meeting told us about the work of Friends House Moscow and Quakers in Russia. Using the principles of SPAN, Spiritual Principled Active Non-Violence, Quakers have helped to encourage a Civil Society; one example given was helping young Russian Conscientious Objectors understand their rights. Robert Gibson from Ilkley told us about his recent experiences of working abroad, his talk was titled ' "Oh Brother Man" A Quaker Abroad'. Robert reminded us that our witness as Friends also includes what we can do as individual Friends wherever we are. Robert has been involved in encouraging arts and leadership projects, including working with Universities in Libya, the Middle East and Cambodia. The arts can help to reunite and bring communities together. We also watched a DVD about the Quaker United Nations Office.

The business session followed a most appreciated cup of tea. During the opening worship we heard of the deaths of three Leeds Friends since our last meeting - Denis Charlesworth of Adel Meeting, Douglas Townsend, an attender at Carlton Hill Meeting and Virginia Luling, of Otley Meeting. We also received the 'State of the Meeting' news from Ilkley friends and learnt that there are 230 Quakers in Leeds – down 5 from the previous year. We agreed not to seek the registration of Quaker Meeting Houses in Leeds for Civil Partnerships at this stage and looked forward to all Quaker Marriages being recognised in Law. In preparation for Yearly Meeting, which will be at Friends House, **24th-27th May** this year. Three questions are asked of Area and Local Meetings, and individual Friends. They are:

- 1. How have you discerned the right way forward in your own life?**
- 2. What experiences have you had of Quaker Meetings being guided by the spirit when making decisions?**
- 3. What do you value about the ways in which Friends work together?**

Finally, we were informed that Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network is asking friends to consider taking action on two fronts, by lobbying MPs on an Early Day Motion 1019 about Asylum Support Rates and by supporting a report about G4S failure to provide adequate accommodation for asylum seekers in our region. We agreed to write to the Leeds MPs asking that they support the EDM1019 but with we were unable to express our support for the submission of the report as it had not been possible to circulate the report prior to our meeting. We encouraged individual Friends to consider their support for this report which is attached, along with the full minutes, the Ilkley State of Meeting Report and a letter sent to MP's regarding the Minimum Pricing of Alcohol. With tea, cakes and good company, we concluded what had been a most enjoyable day together.

Robert Keeble co-clerk