

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

Otley: Visitors at our Meetings are most welcome. If you have any difficulties about finding the venue please telephone **David Robson** on 0113 318 8084.

7 April 37 Harecroft Road, Otley, Leeds LS21 2BG

21 April 59 Riverside Park, Otley, Leeds LS21 2RW.

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

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

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

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.

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

Leeds Area Quaker Meeting 16th March 2013



The welcome from friends at Adel was very warm and the catering was exceptional, with not only sumptuous offerings at lunch, but also a cake selection at the 3pm tea break as well as our traditional Yorkshire Tea at 4:15pm. Unfortunately, there were gremlins with the heating system which meant that some friends chose to wear their coats in the morning session – the day reminded me of the early Quakers who saw everyone in their meeting as part of their own family and worshiped in our historic Meeting Houses without any heat at all.

We undertook our more formal business meeting in the morning and representatives were appointed to attend the Quakers in Yorkshire Gathering at York on 24/04/13, to Ackworth School AGM on 11/05/13 and to BYM on from 24th to 27th May. BYM – Britain Yearly Meeting is the annual gathering of Quakers and it is open to everyone, whether appointed or not (if you are not yet in membership then you should speak to an Elder in your meeting so that they can arrange your attendance at BYM). To prepare for BYM we agreed to hold a special meeting on Sunday 14 April from 1.15 to 3.15pm at Carlton Hill QMH, preceded by a soup lunch from 12.30pm. A theme of the Yearly Meeting is 'Trust', trusting the spirit and trusting the discernment of our governing bodies. We are asked to consider three questions:

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?*

We heard a report from our Area Meeting Trustees, during which we were informed that Adel QHM requires significant building repairs. Thankfully Area Meeting has a special fund, known as the Building Futures Fund which is there to help local meetings pay for major repairs. Other items of business were the 2013 quota and whilst we agreed to the treasurers recommendation for our support of the NFPB work, Area Meeting running costs and Quaker work done on our behalf by BYM, we were not able to agree the suggested contribution level to the Building Futures Fund, so passed this matter to our Trustees for consideration and advice. Suggested improvements to our newsletter, The Quiet Word, were agreed and letters from two MP's written in response to our letter regarding Asylum Support Rates were read to the meeting. We also received a Testimony to the life of Douglas Townsend, a long-standing Attender at Carlton Hill LM, as well as the Adel 2012 State of Meeting Report.

By the afternoon, the 'emergency' heating measures were working much better which was a great relief. Our topic was 'Peace and 100 Years of the Northern Friends Peace Board'. Barry Mills outlined the wide-ranging national and international achievements of the first seven years of the NFPB. He showed how the NFPB, which had a firm organisational structure from the beginning (with an office in Leeds), sought 'the active promotion of peace in all its height and breadth', all the while displaying a steady adherence to the Peace Testimony, and a willingness to work with other people. Philip Austin, the NFPB co-ordinator, showed a PowerPoint illustrating the history of the NFPB and we had a moving reading of a section from a play set around the time of World War I. There was time for quiet reflection and also time to share our own contributions to the Peace Movement. Finally, a brief illustrated overview of recent NFPB work was followed by consideration of current peace priorities.

Robert Keeble [LAQM co-clerk](#)

Quakers in Yorkshire



Hear reports from: **Bootham & the Mount Schools with presentations from students**

John Hocking of the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust on "No Poor Here",

The impact of changes to Welfare and Housing policies

Saturday 20 April 2013

Bootham Junior School

Rawcliffe Lane, York YO30 6NP

Telephone (01904) 655021



Explorations in Hasidism

In the midst of praying, the Baal Shem once said the words in the Song of Songs: “New and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.” And he added: “Whatever is in me, everything, new and old, for you alone.”

They asked him about this, saying: “But the rabbi tells words of teaching to us too!” He answered “As when the barrel overflows.”

With this typical Hasidic anecdote – concise, challenging, and enigmatic – I start my series of essays about a tradition that has fascinated me in the past couple of years. Before digging into this story, I’ll outline the key aspects of Hasidism and its history. Who is the Baal Shem, and who are ‘they’?

In the midst of great suffering for 18th Century Polish Jews, a radical circle emerged, preaching intense devotion over staid rules, casting aside many Rabbinic strictures. Their aim was to behold the shards of divine light in all things, even such seemingly worldly acts of eating, drinking and making love. The ‘hasidim’ (literally, ‘devoted ones’) prioritised a religious fervour and a focus on ecstasy in the world as it is, “in the midst of their uncleanness” (Lev. 16:16). Bearing some similarities with George Fox, Rabbi Yisroel ben Eliezer was a mystical healer. His travellings around present-day Poland and Ukraine had a profound effect on the sick. His knowledge of the divine words gave him the name Baal Shem Tov. This literally means ‘master of the good name’, or ‘one with a good reputation’. His works and preaching spawned a group of disciples, the stories of which were notated

years later. The zaddikim were the most pious of his circles, which spread and developed Hasidic teachings.

Jewish life in 19730s central Europe was burdened with two dreadful realities. The first was the frequent pogroms in which Jews were violently persecuted, known as the pogroms. Secondly, there were harsh memories and the threats to Jewish identity in the actions of a 'false' messiah, Sabbatai Zevi, whose charisma converted many Jews to a new form of devotion, only for him to convert to Islam on pain of death. It is hard for me to say exactly how such internal and external pressures lead to Hasidism. However, the legendary accounts of the Hasidim never strike me as merely escapist. I find a profundity to the tales which can be unexpected, exquisite, and most of all, thought-provoking.



The Baal Shem

To turn to the story quoted above, which is titled 'For You' by the great compiler of Hasidic stories, Martin Buber. The story has one typical characteristic of a Hasidic anecdote: its concision. It ends abruptly, as if offering you a little kick which urges the reader to 'think!'. It leaves me in a pleasant daze where I want both to interpret it and draw out its threads, yet at the same time I'd rather enjoy the enigma, that wordless feeling of strange impression it sustains.

What might be challenging in it? Well, it could be that the Baal Shem hasn't a care about humans or worldly things whatsoever. By the looks of it he may as well pipe his prayers up to God in total disregard for the day-to-day life of his community. His may be even misanthropic, concerned only with contacting God. For me, it is important that we don't wrap ourselves around spiritual conceptions that become too comfortable. How can we work through such a shunning of human interests and needs? Perhaps it is a case of whatever is aimed at God by its very nature attaches to us humble humans. We can't help helping; the endeavour to reach God splinters off and rings around the community.

Often Friends look for 'that of God' in someone, especially in difficult circumstances. So initially at least, we might like to consider directing all our worldly endeavours to a divinity, one who by definition is not excluded from residing in humans. Instead of residing

‘out there’, God is *everywhere*. Our job is to see it in other people. I am reminded of a teacher and friend of mine. In lessons she had no idea the intensity of effect she had on her students. Her lessons were *events*! They reached us, yet she remained oblivious. She simply kept attending to her job as best she could. What she may have directed towards that goal spilled over, as it were, eventually finding a destination in her students. Is there not humility in aiming so high, in the idea that, at least temporarily, our endeavours could ‘only be towards God’?

A final note about the uncomfortable aspects of these tales. I sometimes risk what the rabbi Sheila Shulman calls ‘spiritual arrogance’. In other words, this is the ‘danger of making things too easy for ourselves, religiously speaking’. While not proposing that we punish ourselves on our spiritual journeys, I find Hasidic tales pleasingly challenging. Even when coming across ideas of devotion that I may find distasteful, there is a signature wit and enigma that carries throughout the stories. Such conceptual prodding keeps me attentive, and so I search for interpretations which I find useful and life-affirming. I hope other Friends may benefit from these wonderful tales!

Pascal Ansell

The story is taken from Martin Buber’s ‘Tales of the Hasidim’ (1947, Schocken Books). Sheila Shulman’s collection of sermons is called ‘Watching for the Morning’ (2007, Beit Klal Yisrael).

Adel Quaker Meeting: State of the Meeting Report **2012**



Quaker Faith and Practice refers to “local meetings, each of which should be a community” (para.10.03). We rejoice that Friends at Adel share both spiritual and social activities, but inevitably communities change. During the year we recorded the deaths of three Friends: Colette Lenz-Inebnit, Gwynneth Priestley and John Horsley. We heard an inspiring testimony to the grace of God in John’s life. He was mainly self-educated and a conscientious objector during WW2. At the end of 2012 our Friend Dennis Charlesworth passed away. We have held in the light the families of those deceased Friends, and also those from our midst who have suffered illness or are incapacitated by old age or poor health, in particular Simon Kilner who is now making steady progress following a stroke, and hopes to return to Meeting in the near future. We miss all those who for one reason or another no longer worship with us.

Happily we continue to welcome new enquirers and attenders. There has been a steady stream of interest through the year and our community has been enriched by their presence. It is disappointing that so few children now attend the meeting, but we appreciate the energy and enthusiasm of our two teenagers who brighten our lives.

Meeting for Worship remains the focal point of our community. Occasionally silent, but sometimes consisting of powerful ministry, it empowers us to live our Quaker witness in our daily lives. Many Friends continue to show this in the charitable work they undertake. Our spiritual lives are further nourished by the Light Group and the Prayer group, which help to sustain and strengthen those who participate and send loving support to those who need it.

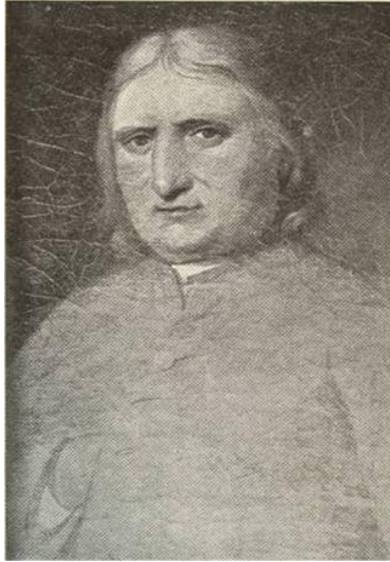
We have been encouraged and inspired by Learning and Sharing sessions covering 'What I believe' and 'Sustainability and Spirituality in Challenging Times'. Responding to Minute 36 of BYM 2011 on sustainability, we showed two DVDs: Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* and *The Age of Stupid* and undertook carbon impact calculations for individuals and the Meeting as a whole. We continue to raise awareness of climate change and our response to it.

There is a great commitment to the meeting and to supporting each other. Our librarians have been working hard to reorganise and catalogue the books. Extra money has been allocated to purchase more books which we hope will be a valuable resource. We have enjoyed various social events ranging from our much loved annual party, shared lunches, theatre trips, the area meeting outing to Malham, and a picnic in June where we thought of present Friends and remembered past Friends with us in the burial ground. We hosted the Quaker Theatre Company in October when they performed *One of That Despised People* and several of us went to see *On the Road to Adel*, written by a local historian and performed at St. John's church, Adel. This included a portrayal of Isabella Ford.

As a community we are also accountable for the buildings and grounds. The Garden Room which opened in 2009 continues to be popular with hirers. Lettings have increased considerably during the year which ensures a useful income. But it is more than a money-raiser. It provides a pleasant space for a variety of health and community groups as we originally envisaged, and we see it as a form of outreach. Gratifying as this is, it has created a lot of work for Adel Friends and we are beginning to question the feasibility of a warden. Sadly at the moment this is out of the question since the cottage is uninhabitable.

Following a survey of Adel premises in the autumn, several serious problems were exposed and the meeting faces considerable expense to bring the cottage up to standard. At the same time some of our trees were found to be dangerous and essential maintenance was carried out. These last two unexpected issues were a sharp reminder of our responsibility to maintain and preserve our buildings and our heritage. However, we have not let concerns about premises and room hire, or financial uncertainties, distract us from the important aspects of our sharing together. Worship remains at the heart of the meeting where we can peacefully reflect and pray. This brings tranquillity to our lives and enables us to grow in faith and spirit. "Friends, meet together and know one another in that which is eternal, which was before the world was" *George Fox 1657*. [Michael Saunders & Pat Gerwat February 2013](#)

Some Thoughts from the Editor: Quakers and Politics



Quakers have always been political activists even if that activity has often taken place outside the confines of institutional politics. First generation Friends understood their commitment to the political process primarily through the vivid and unsettling language of the *Book of Revelation*. In particular they took John's vision of the Lamb's War as a rich symbolic starting-point for their practice. Quakers were to confront social evil, but not through coercion. Unlike theocratic Puritans like Cromwell (who hoped for 'the rule of the saints' through Parliament) young Quakers wanted to transform society through the inward rule of Christ. Despite its quietist-sounding implications, such inner revolution represented the very opposite of political retreat. As the Quaker scholar Douglas Gwyn notes, for George Fox '[the] political power of the Church lies less in its engagement with the political process than in its power to shift the social context of the process, thereby destabilising sinful policies' (p. 203).

To be filled with the Spirit of Christ is to be equipped for a new social order- one in which the 'kingdoms of the world' eventually come under the authority of Christ [Revelation 11:15]. In this sense, to be a Quaker was to go into spiritual battle with all the economic, social and political structures which obstructed this goal. As the *Peace Declaration of 1660* put it:

We do earnestly desire and wait, that, by the Word of God's power, and its effectual operation in the hearts of men, the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ; that he may rule and reign in men by his Spirit and truth; that thereby all people, out of every profession, may be brought into love and unity with God, and one with another; and that they may all come to witness the prophet's words, who said, '*Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore*' (*Isa. ii. 4., Mic. iv. 3*).

Fox's political method therefore was one of persuasion rather than violent altercation. What mattered was changing the condition of the self and not merely the structures the self inhabited. In this way Early Friends hoped that their practice of peace and reconciliation would spur a wider paradigm-shift in a society ravished by war and sectarianism. Holding to this view, Friends in the following centuries participated again and again in significant social transformations- from the abolition of slavery to the building up of Britain's welfare state. In each case the spiritual goal was much the same; to remove an obstacle to the formation of Christ-like lives and communities. To what great turning of the tide are Quakers in Britain called today? While the answers to this question are many and varied, one stands out for me; keeping the obligations of the state intact in an era of global capitalism.

Historically Friends have been instrumental in arguing that the primary role of the state is to secure the welfare and happiness of ordinary citizens. Yet, over the last few years it has become apparent that the government is attempting a significant paradigm-shift of its own as it attempts to reconfigure the relationship between the citizen and the state towards a 'devil take the hindmost' approach. This experiment did not begin with the present administration or with the last, but has been going on for more than thirty years now. It was not that long ago that the state took direct responsibility for the provision of housing, employment, health and education to the general betterment of our people. Yet now we see the extent of public involvement in delivering these goods receding- contracting out many of its functions to private businesses, while reducing the scope and funding for its services. On the matter of full-employment the state has almost entirely given up on ensuring the conditions for a strong and robust labour force, preferring instead to top-up low-paid work through tax-credits or *compulsory workfare schemes* rather than redress the imbalance between surging profits and shrinking wages. Under pressure from international investors the state cuts back further and further in an effort to create an attractive environment where returns are large but social obligations are small.

Yet as we have seen in the last two years, this 'race to the bottom' strategy is daily causing misery for millions of people as they struggle to support themselves. All the present government has to offer is a pernicious politics of 'divide and rule' which sets the out of work millions against hard-pressed workers. Their answer is to cut back services while demonising those who use them. Of course this no answer at all. Faced with such a cruel artifice, anger is not merely justified; it is needed if we are to remain true to our prophetic voice. A central part of this task is the condemnation of a public sphere increasingly poisoned by greed, inhumanity and avoidable squalor. These vices and not the welfare state are the things our society can no-longer afford.

Thus alongside protesting to keep vital public services alive in our communities, Friends must also bring into the Light those elaborate devices which to justify systems of selfishness, whether that takes the form of 'trick-down economics', 'winner takes all' or 'the invisible hand'. Are we as a Society prepared to challenge some of the sacred cows of our culture? In short, do we have the collective courage to pit our Quaker convictions against the corporate fakery and political pitilessness which comprises so-called 'economic necessity'? Many Friends are already doing just that by forging links with variety of groups from *Occupy*

to *UK Uncut*- offering what help we can to movements of social protest. Yet, such is the urgency of these issues that I believe we are called as Quakers to intensify our work. Just as early Friends proclaimed an alternative to war and violence so we must begin to build the foundations for a peaceable economy- one where rewards are justly distributed and any material surpluses are used to alleviate poverty and suffering. Only when justice guides public decisions can true peace and prosperity be secured.

Ben Wood

Here Comes the Sun: Photo-voltaic Panels fitted to Carlton Hill Meeting House in Leeds



PV Solar Panels were fitted to the roof of Carlton Hill QMH, Leeds in August 2011. The installation has been successful. We have generated a total of 3711 Kwh to 31/10/12. The Carlton Hill QMH now generates about the same amount of electricity that it is using from the grid i.e. in 2011 we drew 4114Kwh from the grid. Compared with our electricity use in 2007, we have seen a 50% reduction from 8292Kwh; the Solar Panels have helped reduce our draw from the grid as have new low energy lighting, a new fridge, new time controls and much reduced use of security lighting. Some of the reduction has also been due to a reduction in the use of the building due to the recession - our challenge will be to continue to reduce our energy use as the use of the building increases rather than decrease.

The panels have proved to be a 'catalyst' for continued interest in Sustainability, especially at Carlton Hill meeting where we have a vibrant 'Sustainability Group'. During the autumn, this group of friends have toured the main waste recycling centre in Leeds, arranged a showing of a film by Tom Bliss, written to MPs re. **The Energy Bill**, written to supermarkets re. Plastic recycling. Events planned for November are a talk by Tom Bliss, planting an apple tree in the Meeting House grounds, preparing ground for new raised vegetable beds at the Meeting House.

A **QPSW (Quaker Peace and Social Witness)** grant of £100.00 was given towards and Leeds Area Quaker Meeting Trustees paid a further £12,470 by drawing money from other funds. The cost of the installation supplied by Leeds Solar was £12,250. There were additional costs of £320 for planning permission and drawing up plans for the panels which were required for the planning permission. Between 1st January 2012 and 11th September

2012 the Feed in Tariff raised £1,353.44p which suggests that the initial costs will be met within ten years provided that the system continues to work!

Quaker CO's in First World War



Carlton Hill meeting has a vibrant discussion group which meets fortnightly on Fridays from 9:45am to which all friends are invited. Our last three sessions have looked at the topic of Conscientious Objection and I have been able to share the written experiences of my Great-grandfather, **Hubert Peet**, who was a prominent Quaker and the editor of *The Friend* in the interwar years. There were over 6000 CO's who were refused exemption from military service and sent to prison during WW1 and many were Quakers. One of these was my namesake, my Great-grandfather on my father's side, George Ewan (my middle name is George). George moved to Birmingham from Kendal following the death of his mother – he was just sixteen and soon found work as a grocers boy. His employment ended when, having found so many people were buying drink and then not having enough money to feed their children, he took it upon himself to break several bottles and then said to his boss ‘I'll never touch this stuff again, nor have anything to do with it’. He then got a job with the co-op, first as a driver, then working in the warehouse. He married, had two children and attended Quaker meeting at Bourneville and then his life changed. This is the story that I could have shared with friends at the Friday Discussion, but time ran out so I am now sharing with a wider audience. My grandmother was aged seven when George, her father, received his call up in 1916, and what I am recounting are the words of my grandmother – the experiences of a child, who, towards the end of her life, wrote down her memories for the benefit of future generations:

We all lived happily – we were a happy family – until the war started in 1914. When conscription came, dad refused to join the army, believing that war was wrong and that conflicts between people could only be settled amicably if we only tried it out. One evening a stranger came, to tell Dad he would be calling for him on Monday to take him into the Army. Dad refused to do this, but he said he would meet him by the tram and would attend the tribunal. Stan (my older brother) and I went up to bed and Stan told me that dad would probably be taken away. So Stan and I saw them off at the tram stop. Stan ran on to school: he wouldn't wait for me, but I think the reason was he'd got some tears in his eyes. Mother

came home the same evening, but dad was kept behind. He was issued with a full uniform, which he refused to put on or carry; so the escort he had with him had to carry his own as well as Dad's. Knowing how very kind he was, and very thoughtful, I think Dad might of helped him, but he wouldn't take any responsibility for it and he was put in the guardroom at Warwick, as having disobeyed orders. He was in the barracks guardroom of the Warwickshire Regiment, and we went to see him once, mother and I. They all slept in a row on sloping boards. I don't know how long he was there before he was finally sentenced to nine months in prison at Wormwood Scrubs.

Meanwhile Mother had to live without any income, except the Co-op allowed her to have coupons to be spent at the Co-Op, but it didn't pay the rent and so we had to have two lodgers in the house. There was a very hard attitude towards men who refused to go into the army. People could be very difficult. I think we got off fairly lightly; although I know I was the only one at school whose father was known not to be a soldier, and that made it difficult for me because I was always a rather timid creature. I was very quiet. I know at one time a girl said to me "is your father a soldier?" and I said, "Yes", but to myself under my breath I said "of Jesus" and so salved my own conscience in that way, but I felt very guilty about it for some time.

After the nine months, Mother and I went to meet him out of prison. We had to travel by train overnight, and the only train was a troop train. The stationmaster locked us into a carriage and told us to pull the blinds down. There was no rejoicing: the train-load was conscripts who were going to France. It was very noisy, but there was no trouble.

We waited outside Wormwood Scrubs. Eventually Dad came out, together with his escort and it was arranged that that the escort would go off to another part of London and we promised to meet him at the station by the train to Portsmouth. Two of Dads sisters also came and they tried to persuade him to change his mind and become a soldier, but of course he had made up his mind and he would not. They came to the Isle of White with us. I was quite excited to see the sea, but it was all very strange and I think it was the first time I had seen the sea. Dad was put into the guardroom of the barracks where the army was staying, and we stayed in a hotel where we shared two rooms with the two aunts. I think we were only there a day or so when Mother and I got up early one morning, had breakfast, and disappeared to find lodgings of our own, away from the aunts. We visited Dad in the early evening, and we were allowed to walk around the parade ground with him away from the other soldiers. But I can remember how horrible it was, because there were these great sacks hanging up, painted with figures of people which was a training method for the soldiers.

*I don't know how much time we spent there, but I know Mother was running short of money, and she had to send a telegram to one of Dad's brothers who had some money for Dad. It tidied us over, and Dad was taken back to Portsmouth. That was a great relief; because we had thought he might be on his way to France. They had tried to send some CO's out, and they had ordered them to be shot. But it had become known in Parliament that this was on the cards so they were brought back. Dad was given another two years' imprisonment at Portsmouth, which meant that he would be still in prison when the war ended in 1918. He didn't come out till the summer of the following year. **Robert Keeble***

Sunday 14th April



12:30 -1:15 soup lunch

1:15 -1:45 BYM intro.

Learn about how BYM - Britain Yearly Meeting works.

1:45 - 3:15

Questions...

How have you discerned the right way forward in your own life?

What experiences have you had of Quaker Meetings being guided by the spirit when making decisions?

What do you value about the ways in which Friends work together?

Venue: Carlton Hill Quaker Meeting.

Testimony to the grace of God in the life of Douglas Townsend (8 June 1925 to 28 December 2013)



For many of us attending the new Carlton Hill Meeting a familiar sight for many years was the reliably late arrival of Jennifer and Douglas Townsend. Jennifer, who attended the old Carlton Hill Meeting since she was a little girl, where — by her own admission — she got up to all kinds of mischief, was a birthright Quaker. Douglas, born in army barracks, and

working for most of his life in the brewery business, came into Quakerism in his mid-thirties and found a home there. Coming from an Anglican background, his first significant encounter with Quakerism was in 1961 when he soundly defeated Jennifer Firth in mixed doubles. He was tall, handsome, mature and athletic, bound — Jenny thought — to be ‘a big-head’. He spent the next fifty years proving her wrong and was content to let Jenny have the limelight.

Douglas’s father was on the staff of the military college at Repton in Derbyshire, and his older brothers followed their father into the services. However, as early as 1939 their father had great misgivings about the onset of war and some of Douglas’s brothers’ experiences during the war were very traumatic. Joining the RAF in 1944, Douglas was spared the worst of these horrors, flying mainly on reconnaissance missions as a navigator. In view of the family’s disenchantment with military solutions, it was easier than it might have been for Douglas to pursue a civilian career and throw in his lot with the pacifist Quakers.

He and Jennifer married at the old Carlton Hill Meeting on 4 April 1963. By the end of the decade the family was complete: Jeremy; the twins, Guy and Jonty; and Sarah. A photograph of the wedding is still one of Carlton Hill’s treasured possessions and the occasion itself is fondly remembered by those from the Meeting who attended the old Carlton Hill. By this time Douglas was established in the brewery industry, eventually becoming managing director of Stones. He possessed a variety of gifts and the brewery business had been one of several opportunities presented to him. He joined it because of the cricket club. One of Douglas’s many strengths was the way in which his inter-personal skills were fine tuned. He inspired people in his quiet way, rather than explicitly directing them. Long before the phrase ‘work-life balance’ became popular, Douglas had mastered the art. The children knew that he would always find time for them, and he treasured family life. All four children were educated at Ackworth. When they had left the school, Douglas was pleased to serve on the Ackworth School Committee.

This phrase, ‘pleased to serve’ typifies Douglas’s approach to life. When he retired, Douglas maintained his friendships from work, but also took on new roles in the local community, including serving as a parish councillor. At Meeting, while Jenny did sterling working on catering events, for more years than anyone can remember Douglas faithfully served in the capacity of treasurership. In helping to take the burden of responsibility for financial matters so graciously, in his quiet dignified way he was a tower of strength to Carlton Hill Meeting.

In all this Douglas never gave the impression of doing anything he did not want to do. He loved life and living things, down to the ducks at the end of his garden. Having been a member of our Meeting for some fifty years — although he never formally applied for membership — Douglas was a natural Quaker and dearly loved by Carlton Hill Meeting.