

THE QUIET WORD



Meeting for worship

July 2016 issue no.7

GILDERSOME Friends Meeting

House 75 Street Lane, Gildersome,
Leeds, LS27 7HX

tel: 0113 2564944 or 07973 450368

Sundays, 10.45 am

ILKLEY Friends Meeting House

Queens Road, Ilkley, Leeds, LS29 9QJ

tel: 01943 600 806 or 01943 601181

Sundays, 10.30 am

ADEL Friends Meeting House

New Adel Lane, Leeds LS16 6AZ

tel: 0113 2676293

Sundays, 10.45 am

CARLTON HILL Central Leeds

Friends Meeting House

188 Woodhouse Lane, Leeds,

LS2 9DX

tel: 0113 2422208

Meetings for worship:

Sundays, 10.45 am

ROUNDHAY Friends Meeting House

136 Street Lane, Leeds, LS8 2BW

tel: 0113 2933684

Sundays, 10.45 am

OTLEY Friends Meeting

1st and 3rd Sundays each month at 10.45

in The Court House, Courthouse Street, Otley

usually in The Robing Room

Enquiries: 0113 318 8084, dmr@cooptel.net

RAWDON Friends Meeting House

Quakers Lane, Rawdon, Leeds,

LS19 6HU

tel: 07582 960092

Sundays, 10.45 am

LEEDS UNIVERSITY

Tuesdays, 1.05pm

In Claire Chapel, The Emmanuel Centre which

is alongside the main entrance to the University

of Leeds Campus opposite the Parkinson

Building (with the white clock tower).

Organised by the Leeds Universities Chaplaincy

Bedford Court

First and third Wednesdays,

10.30 am



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Please send any submissions for Next month's issue of the Quiet Word to quietword@leedsquakers.org.uk. The Quiet Word is available online from www.leedsquakers.org.uk/activities/a-quiet-word

@ denotes an event that is only open to those who attend Leeds Quaker meetings.

Quaker Meeting for Worship at **all Leeds Meetings at 10.45am on Sundays**

Quaker Meeting for Worship at **Otley Court House held on 1st and 3rd Sundays at 10.45am**

Quaker Meeting for Worship at **Ilkley is held 10.30am on Sundays.**

July

Courage, Conscience and Creativity at Leeds City Museum, Millennium Square - an exhibition that looks at Quaker war resistance in WW1 and peace activities then and now. (exhibition runs to the end of 2016)

Friday 1st 4pm to 6pm Quaker Peace Witness Dortmund Square - remembering the start of the Battle of The Somme

Sunday 3rd 2pm to 4pm - Gildesome QMH 260th Birthday Party - all invited

Tuesday 5th 7.30pm Leeds Quaker **Bible Study Group** at Carlton Hill QMH

Thursday 7th 6pm to 7pm Meeting for Worship followed by refreshments at Carlton Hill QMH

Saturday 9th 9.45am Interfaith Walk of Friendship - Welcome at Carlton Hill QMH at 9.45am then depart QMH at 10.15 to walk to St. Augustine's Church (Hyde Park) via St. George's Field, then Makkah Masjid Mosque and finally the Hindu temple for a lunch at 1pm. Information and a welcome will be provided at each venue. Organised by Leeds Concord.

Saturday 9th 10am Light Group at Adel QMH - this is a guided meditation and all are welcome to attend

@Sunday 10th 1pm to 4.15pm Leeds Area Quaker Meeting to be held at Carlton Hill QMH. Topic: Membership: what it means to be a Quaker. Invited speaker Ben PinkDendelion

Tuesday 12th 6.15pm refreshments 7pm to 8.30pm discussion Quaker Faith & Practice at Carlton Hill QMH

Thursday 14th 10.30am to 12noon When is it right to fight? Quaker Peace Workshop at Leeds Museum

Saturday 16 10am to 4pm Quakers in Yorkshire Gathering at Ilkley. A presentation by Young Friends General Meeting.

Sunday 17th 2pm to 4pm When is it right to fight? Quaker Peace Workshop at Leeds Museum

Tuesday 19th 7.30pm Leeds Quaker **Bible Study Group** at Carlton Hill QMH

Thursday 21st 2.30pm Meeting for Worship at Farfield Friends Meeting House - organised by Skipton Quakers

Saturday 23rd to Saturday 30th Quaker Camp 2016 - contact RobertKeeble@hotmail.co.uk for details.

Sunday 24th 7pm Rawdon QMH Amnesty Concert King Lear

August

Courage, Conscience and Creativity at Leeds City Museum, Millennium Square - an exhibition that looks at Quaker war resistance in WW1 and peace activities then and now. (exhibition runs to the end of 2016)

Thursday 4th 6pm to 7pm Meeting for Worship followed by refreshments at Carlton Hill QMH

Saturday 13th 10am Light Group at Adel QMH - this is a guided meditation and all are welcome to attend

Thursday 18th 2.30pm Meeting for Worship at Farfield Friends Meeting House - organised by Skipton Quakers

A Bad Decision?

What was your reaction to the news on the Friday after the referendum? Anger? Disbelief? Sadness? Many people have expressed these sentiments, yet when the situation is analysed, it was an earthquake waiting to happen. Just 37.5% of those eligible to vote cast their vote to leave. Hardly a majority decision. But then only 34.7% said they wished to remain. 20% abstained from voting. Had they cast their vote, would the result have been any different? Probably not.

But rather than playing with figures, I am more interested in why it happened the way it did. Britain is the most unequal society in the whole of Europe. It is one of the most unequal societies in the whole of the “developed” world – ranked 6th from bottom out of 30 OCED nations. The richest 10% in the UK control a whopping 45% of the country's wealth, and of that more than half is controlled by just 1%. The bottom 50% have access to just 8% of the country's wealth.

Viewed in that light the results of the referendum highlight just how unequal and divided our society is. In every constituency and every ward throughout the country those areas with the highest marginalised populations voted overwhelmingly to leave (voting for change), whereas those with the highest proportion of people who felt they were “doing ok” voted to remain. In general those areas with a high proportion of university students also voted to remain.

Quaker Richard Wilkinson wrote his book “The Spirit Level” back in 2009 to highlight this situation and then helped to found The Equality Trust (www.equalitytrust.org.uk), supported by the Joseph Rowntree Trust, to find ways to bring about change. The Leeds Equality Alliance is affiliated to The Equality Trust and meets at Carlton Hill M.H on the second Monday of each month. Our next meeting is on Monday July 11th. In the coming months we will be working hard to highlight the problems in Leeds and working closely with those that can bring about change.

Pete Redwood

The following statement has been issued by Friend's House:

Building Bridges after the Referendum

The outcome of the EU referendum and the campaigning that led up to it have shown up and sometimes exacerbated divisions within and between our communities. There is now a great need for bridge-building, for reaching out to one another in love, trusting that below the political differences lie a shared humanity and a wish for flourishing communities.

Inequalities run deep in society and some are exposed by the vote. Quakers in England, Scotland and Wales are committed to working together and with others – including Quakers across Europe - for a peaceful and just world. In the coming year our Quaker Yearly Meeting will focus on building movements with others locally and globally. We refuse to prejudge who is or is not an ally.

Turbulent times can be frightening, but the Spirit is a source of strength for all, guiding us in who we are and what we do. We take heart from the knowledge that with change comes opportunity. We will look for creative ways to find common cause, to listen, to influence and to persuade. As the status quo is shaken we and our neighbours must look to one another for support, wisdom and above all ways of healing divisions.

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The following statement was issued by the French charity **L'Association européenne pour la défense des droits de l'Homme** (European Association for the Defence of Human Rights) – translated from the French and paraphrased:

Instead of setting shared goals, the EU is regressing into a number of governments negotiating the lowest common denominator. The only remaining common policy areas are economic, financial and budgetary, to the detriment of all others. Britain has now left, and the EU is transformed into a competitive environment. To avoid total collapse, the European project now needs to return to its founding values:- only a democratic, social, inclusive Union granting the same rights to everyone and respecting its international obligations could be considered as legitimate by its citizens.

Epistle from Britain Yearly Meeting

Held at Friends House, London on 27 –30 May 2016

Loving Greetings to Friends everywhere,

British Friends of all ages, and visiting Friends from around the world, have gathered in London for our second of three Yearly Meetings looking at 'Living out our faith in the world' and have experienced a great depth of worship.

We reminded ourselves where we ended last year, with a call for equality and action. We were inspired by hearing an epistle from Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM) and news of projects undertaken by individual Friends, local meetings and area meetings. We all, adults, children and young people, have considered how we use our gifts, how we recognise, test and support concerns, and how we work with others.

Taking so much time to consider the concept of Spirit-given gifts has brought us to a point of deeper understanding. What makes something a gift of the Spirit is not the gift itself but the way in which it is used. As written in Corinthians:

'There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are varieties of service, but the same Lord. There are varieties of activity, but in all of them and in everyone the same God is active. In each of us the Spirit is seen to be at work for some useful purpose.' (1 Corinthians

12:4-7 Revised English Bible)

Even our brokenness and burdens, which may change our lives in deep and challenging ways, can become gifts.

How does the Light push us into action? Quakers have a long tradition of testing concerns in local, area and yearly meetings. Testing a concern may challenge not just the leading of one Friend, but the commitment of the whole Meeting and lead to growth for everyone. Through the right use of this process we can support our Friends in their callings.

We have heard inspiring examples of Friends living out their faith. Friends had the opportunity to see a play about Ada Salter's outstanding social and political work a hundred years ago. Some Friends described their own personal journeys of acting under concern.

Our Swarthmore Lecturers shared their experiences of Quaker peace work in Central and East Africa. Although we heard the words of both we were deeply saddened that Cécile Nyiramana was prevented and Esther Mombo attended alone. They spoke of using and adapting existing peacemaking tools. Some of the causes of conflict they see, such as poverty and inequality, are present in our own society. Sustainable peace-building begins with individuals working within their local communities.

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Our working with others and “movement building” will be the theme of our next Yearly Meeting. We have been challenged to consider whether we ought to be a prophetic voice crying in the wilderness, like John the Baptist, or take direct action in collaboration with others.

The problems we face are big and urgent and we may feel as if we are standing at the edge of all we know. However, if we have faith and trust in our leadings, when we take the next step together, either we will find earth under our feet or God will give us wings.

Signed in and on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting

Deborah Rowlands

Clerk

A Quaker Introduction to the Courage, Conscience and Creativity exhibition

I wondered whether I should wear my Quaker outfit today? I haven't actually got one but a younger friend might have lent me hers if I had asked. It was made in 2003, significant year for war, and is a hoodie sweat shirt emblazoned 'Quakers were against war long before it was cool'. Is it now cool to be against war? That's one of the many questions arising out of the Courage, Conscience and Creativity exhibition.



Leeds Quakers were very glad to be asked to join in this exhibition. We have learnt a great deal both from our colleagues Concord and the Bradford Peace Museum, and from our enquiries into our own history. We have tried to take 'Leeds' and 'Quaker' as our key words, but do realise this is only one detailed footnote in a much wider story. The research and presentation has been at times a very steep learning curve, but someone said 'one of the things I've most enjoyed doing as a Quaker'.

There are several short films on show related to this project. The film about Concord delights the eye and the heart. The film about Quaker Peace Witness: Past and Present is more questioning – in it Robert says 'we are encouraged to question how we live our lives'. In 1916 men were compelled by the Military Service Act to question how they would live their lives. In 2016 in the UK the question is not as stark, but more complicated with several shades of grey. Here's information about two sessions facilitated by Quakers exploring this theme in July.

We suspect that when the museum management asked us to tell our story they thought it would be the story of how Quakers were conscientious objectors and are still working against war and for peace now. We have found that there is not one story but many different stories, and that conscience led Quakers and others in many different directions. This is shown in the second case which asks 'Which hat would you have worn?'; the soldier (Allan Cox), the nurse or ambulance worker (William Roylance and Donald Wood), the political activist (MP Ted Harvey or suffragist Isabella Ford), the absolutist objector in Richmond Castle (Ernest Spencer of the Richmond 16). Quakers wore all of those hats; they all took courage.



How have we found all this out? We have used the Quaker records in the Special Collections, Quaker material from the Liddle collection in the Brotherton Library and Cyril Pearce's database of COs. But most surprisingly we have found it out across family generations. Old and young people have brought us both memories and memorabilia which have been hidden in their family cupboards. This is particularly so in the first display case which tells the story of two men who served in the Friends Ambulance Unit for the whole of WW1. Their descendants who brought us the material have been led in

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different ways by their consciences. One elderly Friend who features in the film cast light on how the men whose lives were linked at the time of conscription also continued together in peace work in Leeds for years after the end of WW1. We discovered a strong network in the past often linked together by family ties. Now families are rarely all Quaker but there is still a strong Quaker network of peace activists shown in the pictures of Faslane, set within another strong network of quiet Quakers who continue to ask themselves what love requires of them.

Please go and see the exhibition and see if it asks you questions about your life now.

Susan Robson

Courage, Conscience and Creativity Exhibition

Leeds City Museum



Come and think about this difficult question in a reflective session led by Leeds Quakers

Thoresby Room, Leeds City Museum

10.30am Thursday July 14 and at 2pm Sunday July 17

In 1916 Britain was already at war when the introduction of conscription made fighting an unavoidable question. In 2016 men and women are still conscripted and governments have to decide when to take up arms.

This session will present various past, present and international responses to the question. It will give you time and space to reflect on your own questions and answers and to listen to others. Suitable for anyone interested over the age of 12.

Facilitators from Leeds Quakers are Yael Arbel, with personal knowledge of conscription, and Jonathan Fox from the Peace Museum, Bradford.

No booking needed, but if you intend to come to either session it would be helpful if you could email susan.robson@cooptel.net



A message from Leeds Museum following the CCC Launch

I just wanted to extend a massive thank you for the work of the last few months pulling the exhibition together and for the event on Sunday which I think was an amazing success and so good to see so many people coming together to celebrate peace and diversity, especially given the bleakness of current news feeds. The event lifted spirits and reaffirmed faith in the future and I am looking forward to events throughout the next few months and hopefully our final celebration on December 10th. The choir was wonderful and the songs very moving – I hope that they will come back again.

We had over 150 people at the event, a great turnout.

With thanks again and best wishes

Gabrielle

A Glenthorne Weekend



Over 30 F/friends and family members enjoyed the peace and tranquillity of Glenthorne over the weekend of 24th - 26th June. Relaxation and fun were the main features of weekend in the form of walks, discussions, good food, comfortable surroundings and home brewed entertainment. The weather was also kind with just a couple of showers and plenty of sunshine.

Reflections from Glenthorne



Good food

"It was wonderful to spend time with people I knew, and those I didn't know before this weekend."

"Each and every one: walk on with hope in....."

"Remember..... All these things are at home too..... People, friends, strangers, children, grass, trees, birds, birdsong, food, fun and laughter, music, hills (of a kind!) ove, sunshine, clouds, rain and joy...."



Fun

"India (aged 3) had a fantastic time. She loved the other children – Rosa, Grace, Eva – the walk to the tarn, the party, the juggling games on the lawn, the food, the adults. The gardens....everything!"

"Grace – I liked going to the tarn, it was very cold! And playing with India."

"Clare – connections, recuperation, the importance of walking together, creating a journey stick with Eva. Eva has enjoyed the easy contact with lots of lovely adults and children. We all look after each other all the time."



Fabulous walks

For those that have never been before, Glenthorne is a Quaker guest house in the village Grasmere in Cumbria. It is run by a charity whose aim is "The relief of persons in need by reasons of age, ill health, disability or financial hardship in particular, but without limitation, by the provision of facilities for rest or convalescence." It is open to anyone but gives priority to Quakers and Quaker groups. It is the aim of the charity not to exclude anyone on the grounds of affordability and a bursary fund is available.

If you have enjoyed time there, you may wish to contribute to the bursary fund to enable others to enjoy it. Contact the manager for details. Glenthorne

Quaker Centre, Easedale Road, Grasmere, Cumbria, LA22 9QH or see the website: <http://www.glenthorne.org/>



Just the place to chill out



Toast and teddy



'Friends from the Start' – Exploring Early Quaker History at Swarthmore

Before moving to Lisbon I wanted to have one last dive into Quakerism. I chose the Woodbrooke course about Quaker history called Friends From the Start. It took place at Swarthmore Hall, and was a real cracker!



Prior to the course, all I knew about early Friends were the shocking bits: individuals running through marketplaces, and the general fervour and passion that electrified those individuals.

During the Civil War (1642 - 1651), it is said that sons were pitted against fathers; an extreme example of huge social disruption. Yet with your king's head chopped off, how could anyone be apathetic? Early Friends were confronted with a huge sense of indifference from people whose habits Friends were trying to shake. The Civil War lasted almost a decade, a time of crushing poverty for many. The huge social disruption cause makes it understandable that one might be inclined to opt for whatever easiest option there was around. Questions bothering early Friends at the time must have been tiring to hear. Outside these bubbles of unconcern, heated debates made the pamphlet rounds as to the church as a legitimate force, of the correct form of priesthood and religious governance.

Friends will know of similar religious groups which sprouted during and after the English Civil War: The Ranters, The Seekers, The Diggers and so on. But they're not the Quakers after all, so why did the course cover them? Firstly, their activity demonstrates that many individuals in this era held similar opinions. The time was right for the Society of Friends to extend its reach and spark so many people's imaginations. It's less surprising, therefore, that 1% of the British population professed Quakerism in the later 17th century, and there were around 10,000 of them just in Bristol.

Secondly, the Society of Friends is not the creation from one person's imagination. George Fox was pivotal in its foundation. He effectively streamlined ideas that were already in the air.

Fox was an important source of counsel for early Friends, and was an expert public speaker. Crucial, though, is that he did not formulate the ideas of early Friends by himself. Similar spiritual practices had been developing 120 years previously in early Reformation Germany with

the Anabaptist movement. An obvious difference though is that while Quakers received harsh persecution, it was of a form far less punitive than at any time before the mid 17th century. Although their imprisonments were a form of indirect capital punishment (by dreadful conditions leading to deadly diseases), no Friends were burned at the stake or brutally tortured in the British Isles. Steven Pinker describes well the decreasing tolerance for violence in Europe, as the Enlightenment spread its intellectual power after the Middle Ages. Early Friends were lucky to find themselves living in a time of (relative) religious tolerance, compared to most societies preceding them.

The writings of early Friends aren't often very easy to understand. The wording seems repetitive, the sentences mangled and maze-like. Can't they just get to the point? George Fox could write, but apparently not very well, so it's likely he dictated most of what we read now in his journals. The same could be true for many early Friends' writings. So not only should we be patient with their texts, but we may like to read them aloud, to better help get to the heart of their writing.

James Naylor, an early proponent of Quakerism, was a soldier in the New Model Army. This smaller section of the Parliamentary military force was fervent in its radical theology. A young man like George Fox or Naylor could easily be inspired by new ideas in such a setting. It may seem odd that many of these armed men may eventually have turned out to be radical pacifists, - but let me give you an example closer to (my new!) home.

In 1974, Portugal underwent a peaceful

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revolution, which overcame a 41 year dictatorship. The Portuguese army led the way, and not a shot was fired by them. It is within groups of young men, albeit with weapons, that radical ideas can be openly debated. Their position of power is tangleable, and at a given moment may thrust them into challenging the status quo.

I am now far away from anything like Woodbrooke and their generous bursaries! These are available for Friends who would not be able to afford the course fees. I attended this course thanks to a fund available from Carlton Hill meeting – do not be afraid to ask for one!

This course was something of Quaker swan song, but I'm content here in Lisbon and some stirrings have been made with regards to setting up an informal meeting for worship group. Thank you to everyone at Carlton Hill for helping me get into Leeds life 8 years ago, when I started studying, and where I found out about the Quakers. I miss you all very much. Please get in touch if you need a tour guide around Lisbon!

Pascall Ansell

pascalansell@gmail.com

Gildersome Quaker scarecrows



Margaret and Robert

The historic Gildersome Quaker Meeting House which is located some six miles to the south of Leeds and was built in 1756, opened its doors for the annual 'Gildersome Scarecrow Festival' on Sunday 19th June.

Following the horrific death of Jo Cox, the MP who was murdered just two days before in Birstall, which was less than three miles away, it was not clear how the event would work out, however, on the day the festival brought the local traumatised village community together and many people, especially local people, visited the Meeting House.

It is estimated that up to 1000 people may have visited during the course of the day – it was difficult to count because they simply kept on coming. There were a few couples, but most were in family groups with young children and a surprisingly large number of dogs. Thankfully, apart from a few spilt drinks, there were no major mishaps - the liberal use of hazard warning tape is always recommended!

This year we had 'Quaker Peace Scarecrows' on display. At the gatehouse entrance, 'Margaret', our present day peace activist was

sporting all the badges we could find to illustrate the Quaker Peace message over the recent decades. 'Margaret' was inspired by one of the Friends who regularly worship's at Gildersome.

A short biography revealed that 'Margaret' was born in 1935 in Leeds, became a teacher in 1958, had joined Mothers for Peace in the 1980's, had 'Embraced the Base' when women encircled the Greenham Common base in 1983, had attended the 4th United Nations Conference on Women, which took place at Beijing, China in 1995. She had also been arrested on two occasions when she took part in a Quaker Peace Blockade at Faslane Nuclear Base, Scotland in 2006 and 2007. 'Margaret' was also a keen knitter and had knitted 3 meters of the 8-mile-long 'Pink Peace Scarf' in 2014 and now she gives ongoing support the Leeds Quaker Peace Witness against Trident.



Dressing "Margaret"

The 'Robert Walker' scarecrow took pride of place in the entrance courtyard. The scarecrow represented Robert Walker who was born in Gildersome in 1717 and attended the local Quaker Meeting most of his life. He was the son of John Walker who was from Batley and

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was a clothier by trade. Robert and his family lived in a little cottage at Gildersome and hand wove woollen cloth for the Leeds market. At the age of 34 he was recorded as a Quaker minister at Gildersome ie someone who was recognise as being gifted in preaching. One contemporary described him as 'a preacher eloquent by nature' ...'learned without education, and polite beyond all the forms of good-breeding'.

In 1756 Robert started travelling and visited most parts of this country and Ireland. In 1773 he visited America, where, in April 1775, he was so concerned about the 'bitter hatred of the Mother country' that had developed and the prospect of a war, that he travelled to Washington and spoke to the newly formed Congress. Sadly, Roberts attempt to avert the American War of Independence was not successful. He returned to England and later, when visiting friends in London, became ill

and died in 1785. He was buried at the Quaker Burial Ground at Whitechapel, not at home at Gildersome.

Visiting friends will be able to see 'Margaret' and 'Robert' on Sunday 3rd July when Gildersome Friends will be celebrating 260 years of the 'new' Meeting House. The afternoon will include a string Quartet, a cream tea and family activities are also planned from 2 to 4pm.

Sunday worship at Gildersome can peaceful but the numbers attending the meeting are now very small and there is concern for the future viability of the meeting, however, we hope that by being welcoming to so many people, we will, in time, see a growing meeting.

Robert Keeble (co-clerk of Gildersome Quaker Meeting)

This article appeared in The Friend 24th June 2016

A note for your diary

Sunday 17th July 2016 12.15pm at Carlton Hill Meeting House

You are invited to a talk by Tom Chigbo, of Citizens UK, on their work organising people to work together to change their neighbourhoods, cities, and ultimately the country for the better. To do this they ask them about their concerns and help develop strategies to improve their communities. They ensure that civil society is at the negotiating table alongside the market and state, so that communities are included in the decisions that affect them.

Surely more significant than ever.

Phil O'Hare

This will be followed by a shared lunch.



A selection of forthcoming courses at Woodbrooke

Exploring Worship: for 8–12-year-olds plus parents programme

Friday 15 – Sunday 17 July | 38 places | £215 ensuite | £205 standard – children half price

This event is for children aged 8–12 years old. There is a separate, parallel programme for accompanying adults. This weekend will explore and think about some big questions:

What is God? Where is God? What is worship? What is a Quaker? What is a Spiritual Warrior? We will spend time inside and outside, hearing stories and music, playing games, being still, getting creative with arts and crafts, and making worship places for ourselves. Children must be accompanied by an adult who will be responsible for them outside of programme time.

The Dance of Connection: enter the body, release the mind, connect to spirit

Wednesday 3 – Friday 5 August | 18 places | £225 ensuite | £215 standard

Using the 5 Rhythms™ as a moving meditation practice, this workshop will assist you in becoming more embodied, less inhibited and able to connect more fully to the spirit that flows through all things.

Join us and find a deeper relationship to yourself, others and the elements of life. The 5 Rhythms™ are flowing, staccato, chaos, lyrical and stillness; they are suitable for all ages and abilities.

Tutor(s): Neil Pinnock and Gill Pennington

Voices of the Earth: exploring the spirit and the natural world creatively

Monday 15 – Friday 19 August | 16 places | £387 ensuite | £369 standard

An opportunity to explore the intimate relationship between the natural world and spirituality through creative responses in written and visual form. Prompted by poetry, the visual arts, music and Woodbrooke's extensive gardens, with questions and suggestions from the tutors, we will make spaces for playful or practical work, quiet reflection, conversation and close listening. We will be equally attentive to the words we can use to inquire into these matters, and to the places where words cannot go.

Tutor(s): Philip Gross and Zélie Gross

Full details of all courses on the Woodbrooke website - <http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/>

Help needed to cover the cost? Bursary help is available for most courses. Please contact:

Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre

1046 Bristol Road

Birmingham B29 6LJ, UK



FREE RANGE – the Leeds a cappella choir



Free Range has been going strong since 2007. We rehearse on Tuesday evenings at the Carlton Hill, Quaker Meeting House and we perform 4 or 5 times a year. We sing a wide mixture of popular and choral works, songs from around the world, and original compositions by our conductor, Frances Bernstein, who has trained in choir leadership with Sing for Pleasure and the Association of British Choral Directors. Our material is mainly secular and a cappella, but nothing is ruled out, and we have also worked together with other musicians.

Members describe the choir as a 'committed and supportive group' with 'good rapport, friendly people, cohesive'. It offers the 'right level of challenge' with 'interesting and diverse performance opportunities', and is 'ambitious about singing and performing well'.

Currently we have 20 women and 8 men. We would like to increase our numbers to 36, but it's important that we maintain the balance between the sections of the choir. As a result, we're particularly keen to recruit some more 'men who sing'.

There are well documented health benefits of singing in a choir. But unlike women who sing, men who sing are quite hard to find. There seems to be a never-ending supply of sopranos and altos and it's not unusual for there to be a waiting list for these parts whereas a recruitment campaign is required to find just a handful of tenors and basses! If you're interested, you will be very welcome.

Our current project involves collaboration with Clive Barrett of the Bradford Peace Museum, leading up to performances in November and December. Clive tells the story of Conscientious Objectors in the First World War with Free Range singing some of the songs that we know were important to the men who refused to fight.

We normally perform in the Leeds area, though sometimes have gone further afield to Sheffield, Manchester, London and once even to Paris! In May we organised a charity fund-raising concert. This was a great success and enabled us to donate £1100 to a local Leeds charity for refugees and asylum seekers. In June we took part in the Headingley Music Festival along with a number of other local choirs and enjoyed both singing with other choirs and performing to them.

Our website gives much more information about the choir and also the opportunity to listen to the sounds of Free Range. www.freerangechoir.org.uk. We don't audition and reading music is not essential - we do use written music a lot for learning, but also provide learning tapes to use at home.

We now have a few vacancies for men to join us. If you are interested in joining us, no matter what part you sing, please ring Frances on 077 5956 3848 or email her at frances.bernstein@ntlworld.com.



A Simple Lifestyle

“The produce of the earth is a gift from our gracious creator to the inhabitants, and to impoverish the earth now, to support outward greatness appears to be an injury to the succeeding age.” John Woolman 1772

“Our use of energy connects us directly to the effects of climate change and to world food supplies. Our banking system and interest rates link us directly to the debt burdens that are forcing many countries to destroy their environments in pursuit of cash crops and foreign currency.” Ruth Todd 1990 QFP 25.11
(The emphasised words are mine to bring the quote up to date)

As far back as October 2008 the magazine New Scientist produced a special edition with the theme *“The Folly of Growth – Our Economy is Killing the Planet.”*

In 1978 UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and US President Ronald Reagan simultaneously adopted the theories of revolutionary American economist Milton Friedman. Friedman's theory was that all the services that a government is expected to provide should be run by private enterprise, that the world commerce markets should be self-regulating, without interference from government and that the labour market required a significant level of unemployment to work effectively. Most important of all he set forth the concept of what we now call Gross Domestic Product – the idea that we have to have economic growth each year or else the economy stagnates. In fact all the ingredients for the economic and environmental troubles that the world now finds itself in.

So how, as Quakers, do we respond to a world in which, every minute of every day we are bombarded with demands to spend, spend, spend?

I regularly take inspiration from the various passages in Quaker Faith & Practice, and, possibly like many Friends, have always thought that there are only two references to environmental concern in Advices & Queries -

the last two, that were added in the 1980's revision. Reading through again recently I realise there are several – if we are truly

following the Quaker path.

“Try to live simply. A simple lifestyle, freely chosen, is a source of strength, Do not be persuaded into buying what you do not need, or cannot afford. Do you keep yourself informed about the effects your style of living is having on the global economy and environment.?” Advices & Queries 41.

This begs the question “What is a simple lifestyle?” I have not had a television in the past 25 years, have never owned a car, have never owned my own house, and do not possess a tumble drier or a dishwasher. Maybe that is a simple lifestyle, but for most people it would be considered impossible.

It is really a question of examining our own consciences. For example, a car for most people is considered a necessity. Without it, it would not be possible to do many of the things that we do regularly. But, just consider - it might be that ownership of a car has made these things possible – the choice of where we live (off a bus route, maybe), playing golf the other side of the city, going to the gym five miles away, sending the children to school some way from home because we feel it is a better school. The list could be endless but the possibilities exist because we have the car rather than that the car is a necessity to be able to do them.

I have picked on the car simply because it is the largest single polluter on this planet, in terms of emissions, carbon footprint in manufacture and disposal - and the need for a huge, expensive to maintain, and polluting infrastructure. 25% of all available land space in this country is taken up with the provision of movement and parking of vehicles; 61,000 sq km of it. In large cities like Leeds that figure is well over 30% of all available land. Land which is a no-go area for pedestrians and an area fraught with hazards for cyclists. And anyone living or walking near a busy road is choked with fumes. In 1970 there were 10 million cars on the roads. Today there are 32 million.

I could have picked any number of examples and come to the same conclusion. Our love of electrical gadgets means that we are

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consuming more and more electricity each year – over 60% of which comes from the burning of fossil fuels. Although this rise is partially balanced by energy savings within industry it still means each of us is using an awful lot of energy which is contributing to climate change – not only in its use, but in the manufacture and disposal of the goods as well. Many computerised products, including televisions, microwaves, washing machines, mobile phones etc use rare minerals which are now becoming rarer and local communities in far off places are suffering as a result of their extraction.

Equally our love of vegetables and fruit out of season – tomatoes, soft fruit etc in December? We need to consider where they are produced, and how they are produced. Can we really justify the energy used in their production and transportation – and the

resulting contribution to climate change.

So we come back to Advices and Queries – no 11 says *“Be honest with yourself. What unpalatable truths might you be evading?”*

And again no 39 says: *“Consider which of the ways to happiness offered by society are fulfilling and which are potentially destructive.”* To the end of that I would add “destructive to the world around us.”

At the end of the day each individual has to decide what effect their own lifestyle might be having on the environment as a whole and on other people, both in this country and in other countries.

Again, Advices & Queries no 38 sums it up: *“Don't let the desire to be sociable, or the fear of seeming peculiar, determine your decisions.”*

Pete Redwood

READING QUAKER FAITH AND PRACTICE

Last year the Book of Discipline Revision Preparation Group invited you to join with them, and other Quakers across the country, in reading and getting to know our current Book of Discipline. They produced a calendar of suggested chapters to read each month. Leeds Quaker Meeting has been holding regular study sessions.

The recommended reading for July is:

Chapter 26 - Reflections

It is suggested that you reflect on the following questions:

- *How do I react to this material?
- *What does this material, and my reaction to it, tell me about the history and development of Quakerism?
- *What authority do I give to this text?
- *How does this speak to me today?
- *What spiritual benefits do I gain from reading and reflecting on this?

Remember, this is a learning exercise, not a consultation. Chat with other Friends/friends about your responses.



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Chapter 26 - Reflections

As we reflect on our experience, intimations emerge about the nature of God. In this we are helped by the experience of others which enlighten our path.