

Bath Quaker News Jul/Aug 2019

Welcome back! Molly Scott Cato writes for Bath Quaker News

The newly re-elected Green Party SW England MEP writes about faith and political life.

I find some of our *Advises and Queries* to be invaluable in supporting my public work but the most useful phrase that comes back to me is a short piece of poetry from DH Lawrence:

*Not I, not I, but the wind that blows through me!
A fine wind is blowing the new direction of Time.
If only I let it bear me, carry me, if only it carry me!*

This helps me to put my ego to one side and to realise that being a politician is not just about public service but also a response to a deeper energy and a more grounded sense of purpose. I am probably a better Taoist than I am a Quaker and I am always interested by the idea that if you are a good leader then ultimately everybody will forget you and they will take credit for changing the world themselves. I find this much more spiritually wholesome than the personality politics that is flourishing all around us. I feel that the projection of one's own aspirations onto another person – or your ideal of that person – will lead to disappointment and is ultimately undermining of a flourishing democracy.

It's obvious that conflict is inherent in politics and this can be uncomfortable for anybody who believes in peace and consensus. I find that our Quaker philosophy has a good balance between strong principles, based in conscience, and a commitment to valuing the life experience and motivations of others. Here the advice that we should 'try to enter imaginatively into the life and witness of other communities' and especially 'Think it possible that you may be mistaken' is invaluable. Even in the heat of disagreement, I find that if I can take a step back and try to understand why others are disagreeing with me so strongly it can really help to diffuse the emotional tension and to find a place of agreement.

Throughout my political work I have been surrounded with love and support from Friends. It was an amazing feeling being released from a small, rural police station after occupying a nuclear missile dump in Belgium and to find on my twitter feed a message from Quakers in Britain letting me know that they were upholding me in my action. How many politicians could benefit from that sort of support. And I have also received practical and personal support as well, including from the excellent team at Quaker House in Brussels.

Quakers are a strong community and the knowledge that they are carefully and thoughtfully supporting my work is a great and much appreciated source of energy and comfort.

Pride in our Friends and in our Childrens' meeting

June - Pride month - saw a beautiful incident of syncronicity at our Meeting. We heard the news that two Friends had quietly just got married. At that moment Aliya's carefully prepared pride-themed craft session for the children's meeting came into its own. The one young Friend present that day had made a rainbow-coloured beaded hanging decoration. He generously donated it as an ideal gift from the Meeting for the newly married couple. Even better than a card.

Concern for a community in Palestine

Ali Morgan writes with news of the Hebron International Resources Network (HIRN) and how our support is helping.

In March we shared news of Bath Friends' Concern for a Palestinian community in the occupied West Bank. At our 10 March Business Meeting, Bath Friends committed to support this Concern and an application for a Quaker Peace and Social Witness Relief Grant which Gloucestershire Friend, Ann Davison and I submitted. Ann and I are both Board members of UK Friends of HIRN which works to support vulnerable communities in the West Bank.

I'm really pleased to be able to tell you that QPSW have approved the first year of our grant application and the sum of nearly £5000 has been gratefully received by UK Friends of HIRN. Our grant application noted that we would like to apply for two more years funding in 2020 and 2021 and we are hopeful that QPSW will continue to support this work if funds allow over the next two years. The grant will fund provision of school transport for children in the Bedouin village of Umm Al Khair.

Recently our partners in Amos Trust took a delegation to Palestine and spent some of their stay working with HIRN and its founder to rebuild a Palestinian home that had been demolished by the Israeli occupation forces. They also visited Umm al Khair and saw the need in the community that our Concern will now support.

Finally I am also very excited to tell you that the Palestinian founder of HIRN will be visiting Britain in July and will be coming to speak to us about Umm al Khair and HIRN's wider work, after Meeting for Worship on Sunday 7 July. (We will have a shared lunch at 1200 before he speaks). And if you can't attend on Sunday lunch time there is a second opportunity when he will be speaking at The Cheese and Grain in Frome 1700 the same day (Sun 7 July).

Come to a Quiet Day at the Old Barn, Sat 31 Aug 2019

Katie Evans & Christine Goodgame-Nobes write:

Would you like a day out for rest and spiritual refreshment? Having enjoyed Quiet Days at the Old Barn, Kelston Roundhill for the last few years, we're delighted to be holding another on Sat 31 August.

We'll suggest some activities you might like to try as ways into quiet stillness, or you're free to follow your own way. The day won't be completely silent. There will be opportunities to worship and reflect together and to chat over lunch and coffee.

Practicalities:

- The Old Barn is just below Kelston Roundhill, between Bath and Kelston, see <https://kelstonroundhill.com>. We'll arrange shared lifts for those who need them nearer the time.
- Timing is 1000-1600. Soup, bread & cheese lunch and tea/coffee will be provided.
- We're asking participants to make a contribution of £20 towards the cost of the day. But please don't be put off by this – donate what you can afford.

Places are limited. Please let Katie know if you'd like to attend.

Have you filled out a Quaker service information form?

[Just checking. Go online to forms.quaker.org.uk/qsif/](https://forms.quaker.org.uk/qsif/) or do it by post if you prefer.

Marking the Windrush anniversary

Several Bath Quakers helped organise and attended Christ Church's Windrush Thanksgiving event, with Fairfield House and BEMSCA. The well-attended Church of England service was graced by the Rainbow Steel Band, and followed by coffee and cakes, then a full-on Caribbean cook-out BBQ with sound system operated by DJ Steely Ranx in the Christ Church garden.

The anniversary of the arrival of Caribbean immigrants on *HMT Empire Windrush* has become politicised with the UK Home Office's implementing David Cameron and Theresa May's "hostile environment" policy with bureaucratic persecution of the descendants of Windrush-generation immigrants. Revd Lore Chumbley spoke powerfully about the contributions of the Caribbean community, and the shortcomings in Britain's welcome both then and now. Many of the Caribbean families that worship at Christ Church started their lives in Britain in neighbouring streets in Bath.

In the care of Friends: marriage and registration

Katie Evans reports on the Quaker Registering Officers Conference

My overriding impression from participating in the Registering Officers Conference is that it is the care of Friends that makes Quaker weddings the wonderful occasions that they are. Marrying 'in the care of the Meeting' isn't an empty piece of Quaker jargon, Friends really do care!

I was so impressed by the creativity and goodwill with which Registering Officers (and Quakers in Britain staff) approach arranging meetings for worship for marriages that really fit the particular couple. There's an attitude of asking 'how can we make this happen' rather than seeing obstacles. But at the same time Friends recognise the seriousness of marriage and maintain scrupulously high standards in the records and civil reporting needed.

This lets me see the restriction that Quaker marriages are only available to people with a strong connection to Quakers (typically members and attenders) in a new light. Rather than being a legalistic restriction to stop Quakers going rogue as wedding planners, or a test of a couple's Quaker credentials ('can you recite a list of key testimonies and do you use environmentally friendly washing-up liquid?'), I see it now as asking the couple: are you prepared to let Friends care for you and your relationship? A Quaker marriage isn't just the 45-minute meeting for worship, Friends support the couple in their preparation and will uphold them throughout their marriage. That's why the connection, or at least openness to the possibility of connection, with the Quaker community is vital.

This year Quakers in Britain are celebrating 10 years of our commitment to marriage equality. It was moving to hear Friends who had been involved both in the discernment behind this commitment and in advocating to government for legal provision for same-sex marriage saying with joy: 'we never thought things would move so fast, we didn't expect to see this in our life time'. Uniquely, a couple marrying in a Quaker wedding can do so with no reference to their gender in their wedding declarations (though at the moment they would still have to give their gender as either male or female when giving civil notice of their intention to marry).

In addition to the Conference, I also attended a training course for Registering Officers which took us through the process of preparing for and registering a marriage. There's a lot of detailed paperwork to be precisely completed! However, changes to the law being worked out at the moment are likely to significantly reduce the volume and complexity of the civil paperwork. There's no need for me to set out all the steps of the process here, but please can I stress that any enquiries regarding Quaker weddings or holding weddings in Quaker meeting houses in our Area Meeting should be passed on to me as soon as they come in.

What are Bath's Young Friends up to?

Kirsty Philbrick writes:

We had a brilliant Young Friends Friday in Bedminster in May – with a dozen people, loads of games, food and thoughtful discussion. We looked at different ways we can create change in the world – through campaigns and protests, finding new ways of doing things (and sometimes they are old ways – like getting on our bikes!) and changing values and perceptions. So far young Friends have identified interests in environmental and migration issues.

We considered the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers in Bristol and started a dialogue with Finding Words, a writing for wellbeing group facilitated by Fiona Hamilton (Redland Meeting) which has been meeting since March. The group was set up in collaboration with Bristol Refugee Rights and Freedom From Torture and is supported by Quartet. Young Friends' words contributed to a spoken word piece performed by the group in Bristol Refugee Festival on 26 June, with music from Sudan performed by oud duo Nabra and Kurdish songs from Syria performed by Dijwar & Jane.

- Young Friends have lined up a weekend away for 11-18 year olds 13-14 July with camping, games, workshops and activities around the theme of "sanctuary".

Young Friends' Quaker Any Questions with Paul Parker

Kirsty Philbrick reports on a lively evening hosted by the Youth Project.

Fifty Friends gathered at Horfield Meeting House for a fun and thought provoking evening. The panellists – Paul Parker (Recording Clerk), Rosie Thayer (Peace Activist) and Sam and Isabel (Young Quakers) bravely answered questions considering the 'pearls' of their Quaker faith, whether Quakers should 'be the voices of the oppressed' (Q F&P 23.04) and lots more besides.

The panel reflected that young people are often absent from or separate to the Quaker community. Paul Parker challenged us to look at our Meetings and consider that if we don't have people from every decade - from nought to nineties - in our community that we are not really inclusive and that we are doing something wrong. He challenged us to find ways to include young people. Suggesting giving them roles and using their skills to bring dynamism and positive change to how we organise and the work we do.

Thanks to everyone who made this event, especially Maisie (young Quaker) for her help with the food, Mark Smalley for creatively chairing and Judi Brill (Horfield Warden) for welcoming and hosting so caringly. We're looking forward to another opportunity to bring Young Friends to the heart of our regional community soon.

Please get in touch with kirstyp@quaker.org.uk with questions, feedback and ideas.

Messages from Britain Yearly Meeting

Extracts from the latest BYM update below.

Quaker Week 2019 - Sat 28 Sept to Sun 6 Oct 2019 - is all about Quaker stories. Do you know each other's stories? Can you share your meeting's story with the world? Use the hashtag [#QuakerStories](#) to find and share stories. [More info on our web site.](#)

Quaker Mental Health Forum – Mental health in community
Sat 19 Oct, Priory Rooms, Birmingham, B4 6AF. Do attend the Quaker mental health forum which will explore the impact of community on mental health, consider what

makes a healthy community and reflect on Quaker witness in creating spiritual connections within the community. Email mhdo@retreatyorkbfund.com 019-flyer

For children and young people:

Facilitation and Leadership Fri 18 – Sun 20 Oct at Woodbrooke (16 to 21 year olds). catw@quaker.org.uk

Living as a Quaker 18–21 Oct, Sustainability Centre, Hants (for 12-15 year olds; book at <https://forms.quaker.org.uk/laaq-2019> or call 020 7663 1013

How young Quakers can witness for peace at the arms fair
Mon 9 Sept 2019 1800-2000; Tidal Basin Rd outside Royal Victoria DLR 1800.
Silent vigil before DSEi arms fair. Contact catw@quaker.org.uk, 020 7663 101

Other events

Witness against the arms trade - see Roots of Resistance flyer on our web site or contact Daniel Jakopovich, danielj@quaker.org.uk, 020 7663 1090

Asylum and migration conference 27–29 Sept 2019, Woodbrooke

Hardship grants available

Please speak to Christine Goodgame-Nobes or any other local overseer.

Diary

Mon 8 Jul *Meet the Royal United Hospital spiritual team* with Revd Narinder Tegally at the RUH Spiritual Centre 1900

Wed 10 July *One-day workshop on Rethinking Security* with Diana Francis, Ammerdown Centre 1000-1600. Tickets £50.

Weds 10 Jul *Rethinking Security: nuclear power and weapons* talk by Ian Fairlie BCURC Tovey Hall (Grove Street entr) 1900

Th 11 July 1930: *Nicky Gladstone from York care centre*: Christchurch, Julian Road

Sat 13 July *Climate Crisis*: Bath The Edge, Uni of Bath with Wera Hobhouse MP, Molly Scott Cato MEP and Paul Allen from CAT. Tickets free via Eventbrite

Sat 13 July 1400-1600 *Working party at the Quaker Burial Ground* (Clarendon Road, off Widcombe Hill). Please bring water to drink, gloves and any basic gardening tools

Sat 13-Sun 14 July: *Youth Residential Hill House*; open to all 11-18 year olds. Contact kirstyp@quaker.org.uk for info

Sun 14 July 1300-1500 *Shared picnic lunch in Burial Ground after Meeting*

Tue 16 July *Q&A with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Locksbrook Rd*

Sun 4 Aug 1030 *Devizes: all-age Meeting for Worship in the Quaker burial ground Hillworth Park. Share picnic.*

Fri 9 Aug *That's How the Light Gets In* - adult storytelling performance with Mark Steinhardt, Mill Room, Dapps Hill, Keynsham 1930

Sat 10 Aug *A Lapful of Windfalls* adult storytelling performance with Mark Steinhardt, Old FMH York Street, time tbc. Contact Hazel Mitchell

Sat 31 Aug *Quiet Day* at the Old Barn, Kelston Roundhill. Contact Katie Evans

14 Sept *Ride & Stride* in aid of Somerset Churches (more fun than it sounds - Ed)

Sat 21-Mon 23 Sept: *Quaker visit to the Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales* (contact Alan Fox and Robin Brookes, Devizes Meeting)

Sat 28 Sept *Beyond the fog of Brexit* Somerset Room, Manvers Street Baptist Church. Contact Nick Francis 1000-1600

If you want diary dates added to the web site and newsletter please tell the editors, or if you're reading online click [here](#) & just type them in.

Regular worship at BCURC: Sun 1030-1130; Tue 1800-1830; Wed 1030-1100

Every Sunday	10:30-11:30	Children's Meeting
1 st Sunday of Feb, Apr, May, July, Sept, & Nov	12:30	Meeting for Worship for Business (Preparative Meeting)
1 st Sunday	09:30-10:00	Friends Fellowship of Healing (currently suspended)
2nd Sun of even months; 3rd Sunday of odd months	12:30	Poetry Group
4 th Sunday	12:30	Shared lunch

Front cover: Memories of Summer by Stella Penrose.

Articles to wmheath+BathQN@gmail.com; please include photos. Follow @BathQuakers on Twitter and Instagram.