

Quaker News



An update on Quaker work in the care of Britain Yearly Meeting



Choosing peace

No. 103 – Summer 2019

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Cover image: Detail from *Razor wire & olive branches* a new peace education resource (see page 13)

Editorial

As Quakers, certain core values are key to our faith: equality, peace, truth, simplicity, and sustainability. These testimonies are not just something that we think are good but are the expression in our lives of the insights we gain from the promptings of the Spirit in our hearts. When we examine our conscience we may experience the leadings of faith, prompting us to take action in the world.

It may mean saying 'no' when called for military service (page 7) or supporting work to promote peace and nonviolence in areas afflicted by war and conflict across the world (page 6).

It can mean grouping together to stand up to the arms trade through protest and song (page 8) or taking an individual stand in our places of work when we feel something just does not sit right (page 9).

It is through our worship that we can ground these actions and discern where we are led – faith and action go hand in hand, which is why it's important we support both areas, as Oliver Robertson explains (page 11). This is both through delivering the centrally managed work requested by

Quakers (pages 14 and 15) and looking at the make-up of our faith community. How do people of all ages fit in (page 10) and how does our privilege affect both how our faith reaches new people and how it enacts change in the world on our key concerns? These are issues we will be exploring at Yearly Meeting 2019 – watch this space!

Paul Parker
Recording Clerk

Quaker News

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Britain Yearly Meeting works on behalf of Quakers in Britain, supporting the Quaker faith and putting Quaker values to work in the world. It is a registered charity, number 1127633.

Quakers try to live simply and sustainably, promoting peace, equality and truth. Putting faith into action is central to their way of life and they gather weekly for quiet worship, usually on a Sunday, in around 480 locations across Britain.

You are welcome to any Quaker meeting for worship. Find your local meeting, and more information about us, at www.quaker.org.uk.

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Quaker News, Friends House,
173 Euston Road, London
NW1 2BJ
qn@quaker.org.uk
020 7663 1157



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Vibrancy in Meetings: main evaluation report released

More than 95 percent of Quakers surveyed have rated support from the Vibrancy in Meetings team as being 'excellent' or 'good', according to a new report.

Since 2016 four Local Development Workers and one National Coordinator have been working to support local and area meetings in their regions to thrive as part of the Vibrancy in Meetings Programme.

The pilot project, which is funded by legacies to Britain Yearly Meeting and supported by Woodbrooke's resources and facilities, has been undergoing evaluation from NCVO Charities Evaluation Services for almost three years. Now NCVO has released its main evaluation.

The report shows the programme has been well-received by Quakers who have come into contact with it. All those surveyed said that their worker was approachable, while 95 percent thought they had a good level of knowledge regarding the issues they needed support with.

Quakers highlighted the ability of workers to connect them with other people and meetings, and their accessibility. They appreciated their ability to listen, understand the issues at hand and provide high-quality support.

Over half of meetings have made, or are in the process of making, changes as a result of the support received, including reducing demands on role-holders.

Options for the future of the work beyond the pilot phase are now being considered by BYM and Woodbrooke Trustees in consultation with other groups, including central committees and Meeting for Sufferings. A decision is expected in summer 2019.

Read the full report and watch a video of Friends discussing the impact Vibrancy has had on their meetings at www.woodbrooke.org.uk/vibrancy.

What Quakers come to Vibrancy workers for support on (size of circle relative to demand)



How Vibrancy workers supported meetings, grouped by number of requests



What Quakers rated as the most important aspect of Vibrancy (first choice only, 106 people surveyed)



How privilege affects our work

4

Privilege is currently a hot topic for Quakers. We found out how it impacts on the work of two staff members working in the areas of sustainability and diversity.

The underlying theme of this year's annual gathering of Quakers in Britain, Yearly Meeting 2019, is privilege. The focus will be on examining what it is, how it exists within our faith, and how it impacts on Quakers' ability to act in the two urgent areas of climate justice and inclusion and diversity.

It's an exciting and challenging discussion, one that will affect how Quakerism exists and grows for future generations. To find out more, *Quaker News* spoke to two people who are tackling privilege in their work for Quakers – Edwina Peart and Susanna Mattingly.

Edwina is helping Quakers in Britain to reflect on their diversity and inclusion. In 2018/19 she carried out a survey that created a 'baseline audit' documenting the diversity of the British Quaker community as it exists now. Her one-year post was created following the 2017 decision by Britain Yearly Meeting to examine its diversity in order to "remove barriers and actively seek wider participation in the full life of our meetings".

Susanna runs the sustainability programme at Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), which represents almost 400,000 Quakers in 87 countries. Her work centres on building Friends' collaborative efforts around the concern of sustaining life on earth.

FWCC is talking to Quakers around the world about "spiritual issues of privilege and historical injustice" ahead of the next world conference of Friends in 2023. There will be opportunities to engage in this conversation at Yearly Meeting 2019.



Participants at Yearly Meeting Gathering 2017, where Quakers in Britain heard the call to "examine our diversity". Photo: Mike Pinches for BYM

Q: So what does the word 'privilege' mean to you?

SM: It's about having options and choices, freedoms and advantages available to you, simply by virtue of your circumstances or identity. These advantages are not earned, but are a result of the structure of our society.

EP: Often we are simply born into it, so it can be something we are not particularly aware of – which makes it a difficult thing to unpack. But if we are to use our privilege wisely we need to become aware of it and think about what we do with it. It's also important to understand that our level of privilege is not a static thing, and can change: we can have more or less privilege depending on context.

Q: And how does privilege connect with your work?

EP: As someone exploring diversity

in Quakerism, it's intricately connected. Take class privilege, one of the specific areas that the minute that gave rise to my work spoke to. Within the Quaker community certain assumptions and expectations exist around how someone participates in Quakerism, such as level of education, disposable income and even just cultural fit.

These are expectations that we have as a community that are largely not spoken about but are real. They can exclude certain people, albeit unwittingly. Excluding people is not something we set out to do, but by not examining our privilege we can do so.

SM: Environmental disruption is affecting Quakers worldwide. It is creating greater inequality and as a result leading to conflict and violence. While the principal cause of climate change is high

consumption, those in countries who are most responsible for consumption and emissions rarely feel the worst impacts.

The communities who bear the brunt are often more underprivileged. They are those most reliant upon the land for their livelihoods, who are already vulnerable to extreme weather events, natural disasters and rising sea levels. They are often also socially marginalised due to their economic status, race and gender.

Q: How does privilege impact on our ability to realise Quaker concerns in the world?

EP: If we're going to talk about recognising that of God in everyone, we need to understand privilege. Quakers have long been concerned with equality, peace and justice; it's the same underlying concern, just with a different name.

SM: I'm seeing this in my work as well. Friends are increasingly seeing climate change as a peace and justice issue and this has helped to unlock greater action in our community. I think once you've made that step it's not such a big step to bring issues of privilege into that conversation. We do need to be careful about language: some evangelical Quakers may find terms

like 'climate justice' problematic. For some Friends, language that acknowledges that it is God's creation we are trying to save is a primary motivation for this work.

Q: What are some of the challenges you've faced addressing this in your work?

EP: I've experienced both support and resistance. I remind people that I'm here because of their discernment, I didn't just turn up of my own accord. The work has been requested by, is owned by, Quakers. That doesn't mean it will be easy, however.

There was some sentiment in response to the diversity survey about whether being white and British is 'good enough'. Of course

"Be gentle with yourself when engaging with your privilege. Guilt isn't very useful as a motivator."

it is: it's more than good enough, it's what is. Seeking to map that is not the same as disparaging it. The aim is to understand where we are and are not diverse, and direct our efforts there.

So there's perhaps been some fear. On the other hand, some Quakers feel comfortable with things as they are. They love the community and rich spiritual tradition they have, and rightly so. What I say to them is: can you help make this thing you love easier to share with a wider audience who need it too?

SM: Sustainable living has been at times a difficult subject to discuss with Quakers around the world. The lifestyle changes necessary to be part of the solution, rather than the problem, can be a sensitive subject – and these sensitivities can differ by location.

In developed countries these conversations can make Friends feel anxious about loss of comfort or convenience, and guilty for their contribution to the problem. In developing countries, where increased consumption might alleviate poverty, where Global North lifestyles often hold great

appeal, and where having choice around food and transport is a luxury many don't have, promoting reduced consumption can be insensitive and inappropriate. There is certainly no one-size-fits-all answer.

Q: What can Quakers do to help change happen in this area?

EP: Be open to the idea that you have privilege and to having conversations about that. Learn about privilege in whatever way works for you, and be gentle with yourself when engaging with it. Guilt isn't very useful as a motivator.

Then think creatively about what options your privilege gives you and what small things you could do with it. It could be as simple as speaking up and gently challenging a sweeping assumption someone has made, when you might previously have stayed quiet.

SM: Often the response of British Friends to the human impacts of climate change on Quakers around the world has been "who can we send money to?". Of course this generosity is well intentioned and welcomed, but I think it is more valuable for us to show Friends in affected areas that we see the situation is unjust, we understand our role in contributing to it, and we are taking action.

In Britain, if we have privilege, we can often use it to good effect: by paying a bit more to travel by train rather than taking a cheap flight, eating a more plant-based diet, or switching to a renewable energy provider. We can also make the most of our strong human rights protections to take political and nonviolent direct action, or support those Quakers who are.

We can all try to be more conscious in our consumption, and notice where privilege or lack of privilege plays a part in our everyday decisions and choices.

Contact:
Edwina Peart
edwinap@quaker.org.uk

Susanna Mattingly
susannam@fwcc.world

Take part in the discussion

Yearly Meeting 2019 takes place at Friends House, London in May. Because privilege, sustainability and diversity are such big topics, they are also set to be on the agenda at Yearly Meeting Gathering – an extended version of Yearly Meeting that happens every three years – in 2020.

Whether or not you attend Yearly Meeting in person, you can contribute to the ongoing discussion by engaging with the event's spiritual preparation materials (either individually or in your meeting), and follow and contribute to the event online. Find resources and links at www.quaker.org.uk/ym.

Helping the world move from violence to peace

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The long working relationship between Quakers and Christian Aid is being put into practice again with a new programme focusing on promoting peace around the globe.

Marigold Bentley, Head of Peace Programmes and Faith Relations

If you've been to a local Quaker meeting in recent weeks you may have noticed the Christian Aid Week leaflets that are sent to meetings at this time each year.

Why do Quakers support and work with Christian Aid? The most obvious answer is our shared commitment to peace and justice. Christian Aid works in partnerships in 37 countries across the world to tackle poverty and support communities to thrive – a cause close to many Quaker hearts.

But there's also our shared history. In the aftermath of World War II, the British Council of Churches focused on relief and reconstruction work in Europe. Both the Religious Society of Friends and the Inter-Church Aid and Refugee Service, which would go on to become Christian Aid, were members. By 1947 nearly a million pounds had been raised by the Council – a remarkable

illustration of commitment from a war-torn country. The first Christian Aid Week was held in 1957 and has been an annual event ever since.

Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) has been working with Christian Aid since that time. BYM is therefore a 'sponsoring church', which means it is involved in discussions on the charity's strategies and plans.

Quakers support this work through fundraising and financial contributions. We also support it through our ideas and expertise in the realm of peacebuilding, drawing on the best of our respective organisations in our work together.

One exciting example of this is a new strand of Christian Aid's work called From Violence to Peace, which focuses specifically on violence reduction and peacebuilding across the globe. Staff on this programme have looked to Quakers, a historic peace church, for guidance and advice.

Given that an estimated one fifth of the world's population is affected by violence, an organisation like Christian Aid is well placed to establish programmes that work on peacebuilding. By working together, Christian Aid and its partners benefit from the knowledge, history and practice of Quakers, while Quakers benefit from having Christian Aid's global reach and resources working towards one of our testimonies, that of peace.

As Karole Balfe, Head of From Violence to Peace at Christian Aid Ireland, puts it: "Insights from the Quakers, with their long and inspiring experience of working for peace and reconciliation, have been invaluable as we develop our programme. It's good to know we can learn from them."

Christian Aid staff also work closely with Quaker Peace & Social Witness on the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), which Quakers run in the UK and Ireland. This partnership with EAPPI is something that William Bell, Head of Middle East Policy for Christian Aid, has characterised as "a critical aspect" of Christian Aid's programme in the occupied Palestinian territory.

If you'd like to get involved in the continuing relationship between Quakers and Christian Aid, why not join your local Christian Aid committee, either via the organisation Churches Together or through other interchurch groups.

Contact:
Marigold Bentley
marigoldb@quaker.org.uk
020 7663 1060



Students learning in a classroom in the Caño Manso humanitarian zone in Colombia.
Photo: Christian Aid

A matter of conscience?

How the stories of World War II conscientious objectors are being brought to life in a new national exhibition.

Lisa McQuillan, Archivist and Records Manager

Peter Tennant was 26 and working in London when World War II broke out. Despite coming from a wealthy Scottish family with a strong military background, he had developed strong pacifist beliefs. Enlistment in the military was not an option.

He quickly registered as a conscientious objector and joined the Friends Ambulance Unit (FAU), the volunteer ambulance service run by Quakers. This work soon took him to China, and as second in command of an FAU convoy he spent several years in the region giving medical assistance, at one point narrowly escaping on foot from Burma into India after being trapped by the rapidly advancing Japanese army.

Peter Tennant was a man of many talents: he went on to work for peace in Northern Ireland and was a key figure in the formation of Dunblane Quaker Meeting. He was also, it would seem from his fascinating photo albums that we have here in the Library at Friends House, an excellent photographer. The photos date from his time in China and range from beautiful images of street life to grisly shots of the injuries and illnesses he and his FAU colleagues were treating.

Images from these albums are now part of a new national exhibition on conscientious objectors. In the run-up to its March opening the Library worked closely with National Museums Scotland and the University of Edinburgh to help them interpret related material in our collections.

It was an exciting opportunity for us to explore the lives of WWII COs. As in WWI not all Quakers were COs, and while it was easier

to gain CO status compared to their WWI counterparts it was still a difficult process that required providing evidence of their beliefs before a tribunal. Some, like Quaker scientist Kathleen Lonsdale, went to prison for their stance.

Find out more at the Friends House Library or at the exhibition, Conscience Matters, which runs until January 2020 at the National War Museum, Edinburgh Castle.



Clockwise from top right: detail from a pamphlet on registering as a conscientious objector; a photo taken by Peter Tennant while in China with the Friends Ambulance Unit; Peter Tennant's photo on his British Forces ID. Images: BYM

Putting peace into practice: how Quakers are standing up to the arms trade

8

Resisting the arms trade is a key part of Quaker peace work. We explore its background, find out how a Quaker teacher raised awareness in his school, and hear from a new Quaker group heading to the arms fair in London this September.

The UK government has shown great commitment to securing the sale of arms and to cultivating military alliances with other states. In the process, it has aided and abetted violence and repression around the world.

In 2017 the UK approved arms export licences to 18 out of the 30 states that were deemed to be of “priority concern” by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office due to their poor human rights records. The Defence and Security Equipment International (DSEI) arms fair, which has taken place every two years in East London, is one of the largest arms fairs in the world, at which soulless machines of violence, repression and murder are marketed.

In recent years opposition to the arms trade has been growing in wider society. This is partly due to increased public awareness about the devastating consequences of UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia. For the last four years, the Saudi-led coalition has been carrying out a bombing campaign and siege of Yemen, which have led to immense human and animal suffering. According to conservative estimates, 85,000 Yemeni children under five may have died of hunger since the beginning of the war.

It is in this context that the DSEI arms fair is scheduled to return in September of this year. It will be met and challenged by a mass peace assembly.

Quakers are well-placed to significantly contribute to this effort because of our radical peace testimony and long involvement in creative peacemaking. Experience tells us that the transformative power of well-organised active



Protestors take to the streets in London against the current Saudi Arabia-led bombing campaign in Yemen. Photo: Alisdare Hickson CC 2.0

nonviolence can exceed the power of brute force. This understanding informs our work to advance alternatives to the arms trade, war and violent conflict more generally.

This work requires active engagement of Quakers together with others, so a key aspect of our Peace & Disarmament Programme is to support Friends in their peacemaking. As the noted Quaker peace scholar and activist Adam Curle repeatedly observed, it is peacemaking from below which is needed if deep social change is to occur, as it empowers people to take action to challenge the war machine and build a humane world.

The emergence of Roots of Resistance, a new grassroots community of Quaker peace activists, is a significant breakthrough in this struggle [see box, opposite page]. It is organising against the arms fair through a range of activities that reflect the creative and pluralistic nature of our peace activism.

I encourage Friends to continue to step forward and help build and spread this growing movement for peace and nonviolence. Quaker peacemakers can do this in many ways: by joining with Roots of Resistance, by engaging with other Quakers locally, and, like the teacher John Nayar [see case study, right], by putting these ideals into practice in our daily lives and in our communities. For further ideas, resources and support see www.quaker.org.uk/peace. It is our responsibility to build a stronger, more united movement against war, militarism and the arms trade – for a different, peaceful society. We are called to challenge the world that is “red in tooth and claw”, to instead promote the ethic of love and to build a new culture of peace and nonviolence.

– Daniel Jakopovich,
Peace & Disarmament Programme
Manager

Case study: One teacher against the arms trade

In March 2019 Quaker teacher John Nayar is faced with a question of conscience when he hears that British Aerospace Systems (BAE) is due to visit his London secondary school as part of a UK roadshow.

On the one hand, the roadshow sounds benign. It features talking robots, explores the connections between computing and engineering, and aims to “inspire the next generation of engineering talent”.

On the other hand, weapons made by BAE, Europe’s largest arms company, are currently killing Yemeni civilians, destroying homes, schools and hospitals, and playing a part in creating what the UN has described as “the world’s worst humanitarian crisis”.

The roadshow is also supported by the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force. And while it isn’t explicitly promoting the arms trade, it could easily be seen as encouraging students to work for BAE or the armed forces. Without any reference to the moral questions surrounding warfare, it raises the question of whether the education system is promoting informed choice as it is required to do. If there is no critical thinking around the ethics of the ‘defence industry’, BAE’s roadshow is just one more example of militarisation within our education system (something powerfully explored in the film *War School* by Pow Productions).

John takes his concerns to his local Quaker meeting, and eventually to the head teacher at his school. The roadshow

isn’t cancelled, but it is agreed that following the visit John can organise special lessons exploring the arms trade. With support from the Quaker Peace Education team, John and his colleagues deliver the lessons across years 7 and 8 (aged 11–13). Feedback from staff and students is very positive.

“When I explained to them that BAE systems provide weapons to Saudi they were shocked!” says one teacher. “It was nice to see how passionate they were about the issues.”

“Sir, if they are selling weapons to people, why were they allowed to come into school to do a talk?”

Another says that the highlight for them was to be asked: “Sir, if they are selling weapons to people, why were they allowed to come into school to do a talk?”

John is surprised to be stopped in the corridor by a Year 10 student, who tells him he has been “really inspired” by his stance. For John, this is the most rewarding part of it all. “If this galvanises one student then it’s job done as far I’m concerned – so job done!”

– Isabel Cartwright,
Peace Education Programme
Manager

To find out more about Quaker peace education and explore our current projects see www.quaker.org.uk/peace-education.



Giving a different point of view: teacher John Nayar. Photo: John Nayar

Taking action: Roots of Resistance



Roots of Resistance is a community of Friends building a creative, vibrant and radical Quaker response to the DSEI arms fair in London. We are encouraging people to come and stop the arms fair, and excitement is building! Hundreds have signed up to take part, including 75 local organisers, and we are holding training and information days in various places across Britain.

Quakers have been involved in action against DSEI for many years. Roots of Resistance is planning to build an unprecedented Quaker presence this year, standing together against the global arms trade.

There will be three themes to our day of action outside the Excel Centre: meeting for worship, bringing our mini banners to form a huge Quaker tapestry, and of course protest singing. It will take place on 3 September, part of a wider week of action against the arms fair. We will gather for a briefing session on 2 September at Friends House in London, from 1.30pm for action preparation (making banners, etc.), and from 5.30pm for a full briefing, legal information and meeting for worship, to make sure our hearts and minds are prepared.

If you would like to sign up as an individual or to be a local organiser see www.rootsofresistance.org.uk.

– Ann Bettys
Roots of Resistance

Building a community for all ages

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The discussion about how to make Quakerism a more intergenerational faith is growing. Find out how you can be a part of it.

Mel Cook, Children's Work Officer

Care homes and nurseries have traditionally been seen as places catering to two very different audiences. But the well-publicised success of a new integrated centre in London, which brings young children and adult residents together in a mutually beneficial exchange, has shown how potentially rewarding an intergenerational approach can be.

This move towards all-age communities is also being embraced by faith groups in Britain as a way of enriching and growing their communities. Britain Yearly Meeting has been following the research in this area, and we are working hard to make an all-age approach integral to the opportunities we offer Quakers.

February this year saw us host our first ever All-Age Outreach Conference. Over 80 people aged between 0 and 85 gathered for an inspirational weekend that focused on how to build dynamic and welcoming Quaker communities.

We had some lovely feedback from the event, with Friends



of all ages saying that it had reinvigorated their connection to Quakerism. One participant was moved to post online that actively including children in Quaker meetings is “fundamental to our testimony of Equality” and that “we have failed as a religious movement if we don’t”.

Then in March Friends gathered in London to explore how our *All are welcome* resource is being used in meetings. Participants

shared how interest in making meetings more intergenerational had been growing among Quakers, and gave examples of how children and adults were finding new ways to share their ministry together.

Looking to the future, in July we are running the events Exploring worship and Being a Quaker parent, which this year include a crèche and a teenage programme.

From summer we will be offering new workshops that aim to spark conversation and help meetings rediscover the importance of all-age worship (for more information, see page 12). An expanded workshop, open to all ages, will be happening at Woodbrooke in November.

Please do join us if you feel so inspired, and help us make Quakerism more welcoming and inspiring for everyone.



Getting creative at the All-Age Outreach Conference. Photos: Mel Cook for BYM

Contact:
Mel Cook
melaniec@quaker.org.uk
020 7663 1014
www.quaker.org.uk/cypworkshops

Magnifying witness and worship: Q&A with Oliver Robertson

Oliver Robertson is the new head of Witness & Worship at Britain Yearly Meeting. It's a key leadership post and wide-ranging role, responsible for delivering a coherent programme that supports both Quaker action in the world and the spiritual life of Quaker meetings.

We caught up with him to find out more about his plans for the role and thoughts on the future of Quakers in Britain.

Q: What are you most excited about in this new job?

A: Probably meeting lots of Quakers and finding out about the amazing things they do. There are a lot of inspirational people around and it always feels very empowering to hear their stories and help them do even more.

Q: Your role combines support for Quaker life and for Quaker action. How do you see this balance?

A: It's not a balance, it's a magnification. Part of the power of Quaker action is that it comes out of a place of prayer and is an expression of that, not separate from it. I strongly believe that faith and action feed off each other: acting as your faith compels you can strengthen that faith, but you also need a solid spiritual grounding to be able to hear and respond to leadings. My job isn't to put up false barriers between these two facets of Quakerism, but to help Friends combine them.

Q: Can you talk a bit about your previous experience?

A: Most of my professional life has been spent in the charity world, some of it working for Quakers, but never before for Quakers in Britain. I came to this job from managing the Fellowship of Reconciliation, a small ecumenical peace charity, and before that spent nearly a decade working on human rights issues. Four of these years were at the Quaker United Nations Office



Helen Drewery and Oliver Robertson, outgoing and incoming heads of Witness and Worship. Photo: Anne van Staveren for BYM

in Geneva, where I also did some work on climate change.

I've been attending Quaker meetings for the last twenty years, across England, Scotland

There is a real strength that comes from following the promptings of faith, even against huge odds

and Switzerland. I've performed many roles in meetings, though most often they've appointed me to nominations and children's committees and the role of clerk. I really love clerking, helping groups reach that still centre where they can discern what needs to happen so that they can flourish.

Q: What do you think are some of the main challenges for Quakers in Britain in the next few years?

A: I think that the smaller number of active Quakers, together with a world that is turning against many Quaker values, will make many things feel harder. This is the case whether we're trying to create thriving meetings or secure a peaceful and sustainable world. But here I think Quaker faith and history can really help: past generations of

Quakers have personally faced far worse than we are likely to in the coming years, and there is a real strength that comes from following the promptings of faith, even against huge odds.

Q: Your predecessor Helen Drewery has worked for BYM for over 30 years. Is that a tough act to follow?

A: I don't get particularly fazed by people referring to Helen, because she's been around so long she's a natural reference point. I also don't want to unthinkingly copy her: to borrow a piece of advice given to authors, I will only ever be a second-rate JK Rowling (or Helen Drewery in this case), but I can be the best Oliver Robertson there is.

But it's daft not to draw on the accumulated wisdom of 34 years of service, so we had an hour a day of handover discussions from when I began to when she left. These helped me get up to speed on everything from live issues facing central committees to where the biscuits get put!

Contact:
Oliver Robertson
oliverr@quaker.org.uk
020 7663 1069

News in brief

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Workshops on creating a more sustainable economy

Would you like to explore how to build a more just and sustainable economic system with your Quaker community? Staff are available to run workshops for Quaker groups interested in exploring these ideas either privately or as a public event. Topics on offer include:

- an introduction to climate justice, for people who feel led to take action on climate but are unsure where to start
- how our dominant economic system is driving climate breakdown and how it could be transformed into an economy where people, communities and ecosystems can flourish
- why tax is key to equality and justice, and how Friends can take action for a more just tax system
- how the 'new economy' is already here in the form of food co-operatives, repair workshops, and the unpaid help people give their neighbours – and how Quakers can support this work.

To book a workshop or find out more about the lesson plans, email neueconomy@quaker.org.uk or call 020 7663 1071.



Building a more sustainable alternative?
Photo: wikimedia.org

New resource for meeting house maintenance

Are you involved in looking after a meeting house? Then why not take a look at our new *Meeting house handbook*. In addition to offering advice on things like fire safety and PAT testing, it has sections to record useful information like lists of key-holders and records of maintenance.

"This sort of information tends to be stored in various places, ranging from a noticeboard to just in people's heads," says Huw Davies, Project Manager for the Britain Yearly Meeting Property Support Pilot Project.

"In time it can get out of date and/or lost, making life difficult for everyone. This document can help with retaining that information and being an easy access source for everyone involved at the meeting house."

Download it at www.quaker.org.uk/property or contact Huw Davies at huwd@quaker.org.uk.

Library visits

Did you know that the Library at Friends House in London hosts groups from around the world who want to find out more about Quaker history? The most recent was a group of students from the USA who were studying in London. They viewed a special display of items from the collections to illustrate Quaker peacebuilding work and responses to conflict, beginning with the declaration to King Charles II in 1661 that Quakers' opposition to conflict was their "testimony to the whole world". They were also led through an exercise about conscientious objection from the *Teach peace* resource and talked to staff about how current programmes of work are supporting Quakers in their peace testimony.

To find out more about the Library and to get in touch, see www.quaker.org.uk/library.



Find out more about including children in Quaker meetings by hosting a discussion.
Photo: Mel Cook for BYM

Come together to discuss community

A variety of facilitated discussions and workshops on the theme of community are now available for Quaker groups and meetings to book.

One set of options centres around coming together as an all-age community to discuss a topic. Subjects on offer include considering how everyone can be welcome at Quaker meetings, thinking about how everyone can worship together and exploring storytelling.

Other workshops for adults are also available that look at themes relating to children or young people. These include exploring the spiritual with young people, being ready for children and families, and welcoming babies and toddlers in Quaker meetings.

All events will require a suitable space and six participants, and typically run for a day on weekends. The opportunities will be facilitated by members of the Children & Young People's Work Training Team, a group of Quakers with experience in this kind of work, supported by Children & Young People's Work staff.

For more information and to make a request, see www.quaker.org.uk/cyptraining or call 020 7663 1013.

Nobel Peace Prize nominations requested

If you or your Quaker meeting has a suggestion about who should receive the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize, you have until 1 June 2019 to get in touch.

As recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1947, Quakers have the right to send a nomination each year to the Nobel committee in Oslo. We make our nomination each January, after a full discernment process. Unlike other nominating bodies, we publicly announce our nominee. In November each year, after considering all the nominations, the Nobel committee announces the name of the recipient of the prize.

Friends in Britain can participate in this process through the Quaker Peace & Social Witness representative to the American Friends Service Committee Nobel Peace Prize nominating task group. To see the criteria and make a nomination go to www.quakernobel.org or request a paper nomination form from Philip Wood on 020 7663 1071.



Welcoming Greta Thunberg to Friends House. Photo: Anne van Staveren

Working towards a new climate movement

In April two young Quakers introduced prominent 16-year-old Swedish climate activist and Nobel Peace Prize nominee Greta Thunberg to a packed Friends House in London. She talked about the ongoing climate emergency alongside Caroline Lucas MP and Anna Taylor from the UK Student Climate Network. Watch *The Guardian's* film of the event online at <http://bit.ly/GretaFH19>.

New resource offers eyewitness accounts of peacebuilding

Razor wire & olive branches is a new peace education resource that draws on the eyewitness accounts of human rights observers to explore the themes of identity, human rights and peacebuilding in Palestine and Israel.

Aimed at schools for use with 14- to 18-year-olds, the pack contains more than 80 activities and resources. As part of this it includes many inspiring stories of peacemaking in the region, from the young refugee who says “dance is my resistance” to the Women in Black who inspired a global movement.

The pack has been produced by Britain Yearly Meeting's Peace Education team together with the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) in line with its policy of ‘principled impartiality’. This means the resource is neutral about who is right and wrong, but rather focuses on the themes of human rights, international law and nonviolence. It includes both Israeli and Palestinian voices, with the aim being to neither sanitise violence nor glorify it.

During its development the pack was tested in schools and received excellent feedback from staff and students. One head teacher commented how it “brought a complicated international issue into the classroom in a way that made it entirely accessible to our young people” and provided “a really invaluable opportunity to broaden their horizons as well as to think about conflict in their own lives”.

As part of their engagement with the resource, schools are encouraged to book a visit from an Ecumenical Accompanier (EA) – a human rights observer who has spent time in Israel and Palestine witnessing life under occupation and providing a protective presence.

To find out more about the resource go to www.quaker.org.uk/peace-education. To learn more about the work of EAPPI or to volunteer as an EA see www.quaker.org.uk/eappi.

On the blog...

The Britain Yearly Meeting blog (www.quaker.org.uk/blog) is a place for insight, analysis and action. On it staff explain more about their work, explore how it relates to current events, and take a look at Quakerism more widely. Here are a few of the blogs from recent weeks:

- Tobias Wellner shares how he's using YouTube videos to help build skills in peace and nonviolence.
- From vegetarian lunches to campaigning on indefinite detention, we hear how Cardiff Quaker Meeting became a Sanctuary Meeting that aims to provide a warm welcome to people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.
- Jon Martin takes a look back at some of his favourite Quaker innovations through history, ranging from anti-capitalist boardgames to star-spangled banners to one very controversial line.
- Chloe Scaling reflects on conversations around class, race and gender at a recent Quaker gathering, and shares four things Quakers are currently learning about inclusion and diversity.

To receive a monthly update of published blogs, plus other news, events and Quaker content, sign up to our e-newsletter *Quake!* at www.quaker.org.uk/quake – you can unsubscribe at any time.



Heard the story about the Quaker apple? Find out more in our Quaker inventions blog. Photo: Roberta Sorge/Unsplash

Our faith, our work – a look back on 2018

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“As Clerk of Trustees, I feel privileged to have a bird's eye view of Britain Yearly Meeting's work, and to see the difference it is making. Our annual review gives just a small taste of the work done in the name of all Quakers in Britain in 2018.” **Caroline Nursey, Clerk of Trustees**



£2.8m

was spent on Quaker witness through action in 2018. This includes peace work in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and the UK, as well as work on peace education, disarmament, sustainability, economics, criminal justice, forced migration, housing and BYM's support of the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva.



52

social justice campaigns across Kenya, Burundi and Rwanda benefitted from support from our East Africa Programme, which in 2018 trained 1,105 people in nonviolent campaigning through local partners. Success stories include: restoring the water supply to several thousand people who had been cut off for eight months due to stalled government works (Kenya); raising awareness of domestic violence and resolving 15 severe family conflicts (Rwanda); and getting an entire village, two hospitals and one school reconnected to the electricity supply (Burundi).



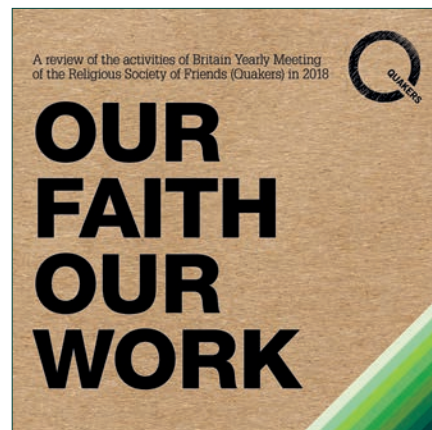
18

people travelled to Israel and Palestine to provide a protective presence to people living under occupation through the Quaker-managed UK and Ireland branch of the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme. As well as reporting human rights violations these 'ecumenical companions' (EAs) bring eyewitness accounts to the world's attention. In 2018 returned UK and Irish EAs gave over 200 public talks and had over 130 individual contacts with elected representatives.



6.94m

people tuned in to the BBC Radio 4 *Today* programme in the week that Paul Parker spoke about our decision to rule out any investment of central funds in companies profiting from the occupation of Palestine. The decision was rooted in our long history of working for peace in the region and made us the first UK church to take such a step.



You can read more about Quaker work in 2018 in the annual review – available at www.quaker.org.uk/annualreview.



1,000

schoolchildren came to Friends House in November for a 'Remembrance for peace' event. The event – which we organised in partnership with Corrymeela, Coventry Cathedral, Education Scotland, Oasis Trust, and Wales for Peace – used a mix of music, drama and reflection to help children consider what it means to stand up for peace.



231

hours of direct facilitation and training, provided through our Turning the Tide nonviolence programme, helped over 50 groups and individuals in the UK to take a stand for peace, justice and equality in 2018.

Get involved

Keep in touch

Connect to the work done in your name
Sign up to *Quake!*, the monthly e-newsletter for all Quakers in Britain, at www.quaker.org.uk/quake.

Give money

Increase Quakers' impact in the world
Our central organisation gives us the means and the profile to make a difference – visit www.quaker.org.uk/givemoney or phone 020 7663 1015 to support it with a gift.

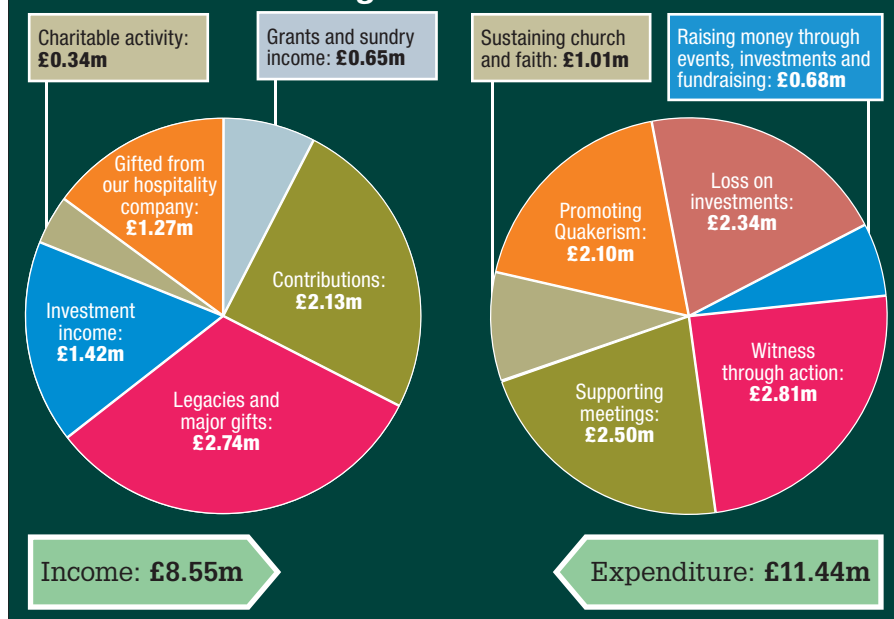
Give time

Meet people and make a difference
Join with Friends from across Britain to make positive change happen – to find out more visit www.quaker.org.uk/givetime or phone 020 7663 1115.

Leave a legacy

Give Quaker work a bright future
Your gift can help Quakers take action on the key issues of tomorrow – visit www.quaker.org.uk/legacy or phone 020 7663 1117 for more information.

2018 finances at a glance



Our finances

Most of our 2018 income was gifted to us by Quakers – a fantastic show of support for BYM's work. But it was a lean year for legacies, and contributions from Friends and meetings also fell slightly, leaving voluntary income down by almost £0.75m on 2017.

Fortunately, the hospitality company once again delivered a record-breaking gift towards Quaker work, as well as covering most of the running costs of Friends House. But this level of growth is not sustainable: we only have so much space and lettings will reach capacity in the next few years. At first glance there seems to be a big gap between our income and expenditure, but this is mostly accounted for by a loss in the value of our investments due to a fall in the stock market in December. We invest for the long term and expect to regain the value lost. For more about our finances, you can read the full 2018 report and financial statements at www.quaker.org.uk/annualreview.



300

Friends expressed their interest in serving on the committee that will take forward the revision of our book of discipline, *Quaker faith & practice*. The revision is a chance to rearticulate who Quakers are as a faith community today and incorporate the insights of younger and more diverse people.



£2.5m

was spent in 2018 on supporting meetings. This includes work with children and young people, the Vibrancy in Meetings pilot project, the Simpler Meetings and Property Support projects, plus support for a range of Quaker role-holders from clerks to prison chaplains.



2,360

people of all ages visited the Quaker 'ResisTent' at the Greenbelt Festival in August. Working with local Friends from across the country we created a vibrant, visible Quaker presence among a community of spiritual seekers, activists and artists. Over 80 per cent of those visiting the tent were non-Quakers, and a number of them went on to visit local Quaker meetings to explore Quaker worship.



8

animated videos were launched in 2018 to help share the Quaker message with a wider and more diverse audience. There are four 30-second videos, aimed at those with no prior knowledge of Quakerism, and four animated 'Quaker journeys' telling the stories of real Quakers and what their faith means to them. You can find them at www.quaker.org.uk/journeys.



96%

of Friends surveyed rated the support they received from Vibrancy development workers as 'excellent' or 'good'. The Vibrancy in Meetings pilot programme aims to help Quaker meetings thrive by providing them with a dedicated development worker based in their region. It is run by BYM in partnership with Woodbrooke.



62,200

times our blog posts were read during 2018. Of the 72 posted last year, the top blog was on the subject "Could Quakerism be the radical faith that the millennial generation is looking for?"

"Britain Yearly Meeting, your national organisation, exists to nurture the Quaker community, to strengthen our faith, and to help all of us act on the promptings of love and truth in our hearts. Where we succeed, it's because Quakers guide us, work with us, and offer service, time and financial support. Thank you."

Paul Parker, Recording Clerk

Quakers: committed to caring for peace and planet

Quakers share a way of life, not a set of beliefs. Their unity is based on shared understanding and a shared practice of silent worship, where they seek a communal stillness.

Quakers seek to experience God directly, within themselves and in their relationships with others and the world around them. They meet together for worship in local meetings, which are open to all who wish to attend.

Quakers try to live with honesty and integrity. This means speaking truth to all, including people in positions of power.

The Quaker commitment to peace arises from the conviction that love is at the heart of existence and that all human beings are unique and equal.

This leads Quakers to put their faith into action by working locally and globally to change the systems that cause injustice and violence.

Quakers try to live simply. They are concerned about the excesses and unfairness of our consumer society and the unsustainable use of natural resources.

To find out more about the Quaker way visit www.quaker.org.uk or request a free information pack using the form below.



Request a free information pack:

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Email _____

Please send completed form to:
Quaker Outreach (QN)
FREEPOST QUAKERS

FREEPHONE: 0808 109 1651

E: outreach@quaker.org.uk

Meet James Davies



James Davies is a member of Leeds Area Meeting. He is a Young Friends General Meeting Trustee and has recently become clerk of Carlton Hill Local Meeting.

I was brought up with Quakerism as my mother joined the community when I was six years old, something my father supported. I shared a commitment to the Quaker testimonies but, when I was growing up, it just felt like something I went to on Sundays.

I attended meetings less at university, but still met with friends I had made from Quaker events, including my now wife. Afterwards I began attending a local meeting in Leeds and found I really connected with the people there. I could talk to professionals about my career, and share experiences of living in the area. I began to feel part of the community, not just someone who attended meetings. I began to feel I was a Quaker.

Community is for me the main draw towards Quakerism. It is a community where people can be authentic, and have ideals that I can relate to. I feel pride being with a group of people who range greatly in their daily lives, and yet all function from similar founding principles.

The support provided by my meeting is invaluable. Even at my lowest moments there is always someone who can relate and give guidance, both practical

and empathic. Receiving this help is great, and providing it for others is incredible. Being in an environment where I am able to support others in a multitude of ways is empowering and humbling.

It's great to be a young Quaker, though sometimes it means I'm asked about things like social media which my generation are seen to be very involved with. I don't like being a spokesperson, being 'the' young Quaker – we are all individuals with our own views.

Taking on committee roles has been both a selfish and supportive act. The experience I'm gaining is something I intend to build on in my career. I would normally be unsure about whether I could accomplish a role like this, but the community it supports gives me determination to succeed. Knowing that the work involved provides a benefit to so many is a reward in itself. It gives an extra level of purpose to my life and is a role I can take pride in.

If you are interested in serving on a national Quaker committee, please phone 020 7663 1115, email nominations@quaker.org.uk or visit www.quaker.org.uk/service.