

# Quaker News



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



Inspired by faith to work for a better world

No. 96 – Autumn 2016

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Cover image: One of Rob Pepper's illustrations from the set of posters he designed for Quaker Week 2016 (see pages 4 and 5).

## Editorial

*"Heeding the call to act can be exhilarating but also frustrating; we may be brimming over with happiness and at the same time feeling a great deal of discomfort. The process of recognising and testing what love and truth require of us may mean a long period of painful uncertainty; whilst recognising that it is possible we may be mistaken, we have to keep trusting and stay faithful to the leading. Faith is the first gift."*

From minute 34,  
Yearly Meeting 2016

Since the early days of Quakerism in the 17th century, the Society of Friends has been as much a movement as it is a faith group, a church. Next year, during Yearly Meeting Gathering at Warwick University, we will reconnect with those roots. The gathering will offer opportunities to meet, reflect, renew our leadings and create a revitalised Quaker movement together in an all-age community of 21st-century Quakers.

This issue of Quaker News takes us from those early days – when Quakers rode out from Swarthmoor Hall (page 11), the home of the burgeoning Quaker movement – to the present, where we establish and support partner organisations working with refugees (page 10) or in the peace movement (page 6) and use conferences (page

12) and online tools to coordinate social action (page 13). Our work for social justice now spans local actions like the Lancaster Living Wage Campaign (page 13) and international relations, such as at the United Nations (page 13).

Our life as a movement relies on involving all who wish to explore the Quaker way. This year's Quaker Week posters (pages 4 and 5) show how Quaker testimony arises from faith, aiming to draw in newcomers attracted to a life that includes not just contemplation but action in the world. Being a movement means including all ages, old and young. The Engaging Young Adult Friends Project (page 14) challenges us to find new ways of being inclusive and recognising the contribution everyone in our community makes to our shared life together.

Being a movement involves service: as a 'do-it-together religion' we rely on each other to commit time, effort and enthusiasm to corporate Quaker work. Our forebears left us structures and meetings that allow us to maintain our community, share our concerns and leadings and seek the will of God together. This means we all need to be prepared to shoulder our share of the work, especially when nominations committees (page 15) come knocking.

Paul Parker, Recording Clerk

## Quaker News

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A magazine about work supported by Britain Yearly Meeting.

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](http://www.quaker.org.uk).

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# Vibrancy project launches pilot phase

A three-year programme will explore how local workers can help Quaker meetings to thrive.

Rachel Matthews, Programme Coordinator: Vibrancy in Meetings

As we go to press, Quaker meetings in four areas of Britain will have access to something – and someone – new. After much careful research, development and discernment, we have launched the Vibrancy in Meetings Pilot Programme. The aim of the programme is to explore how placing local development workers in or near Quaker meetings can help meetings to thrive.

We hope the programme will empower meetings to become strong, confident, connected and sustainable communities by helping them connect with each other and access more effectively the support provided by Britain Yearly Meeting, Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre and other Quaker bodies.

Being a pilot, the programme is an experiment – it will respond and adapt to the needs and leadings of local meetings. As a starting point the local development workers will:

- provide a first point of contact for any matter on which meetings or individuals want help – they will advise on different sources of help from Britain Yearly Meeting, from Woodbrooke and from other Quaker groups
- work with meetings interested in developing a particular project or activity, helping the meeting to refine the idea before researching and suggesting help or support
- link up with meetings that are already doing innovative work – partly to support them in their activities and partly to record, evaluate and share ideas for the benefit of the wider Quaker community

- share new and developing initiatives arising from Britain Yearly Meeting and Woodbrooke with Quakers and meetings in their area.

The Vibrancy in Meetings Pilot Programme arose initially from a series of concerns about the future of Quakers in Britain, and also a desire for Britain Yearly Meeting and Woodbrooke to work more closely together to support Quakers in Britain.

A research phase in 2012 explored what it is that makes Quaker meetings vibrant, and a development phase in 2013 explored how Britain Yearly Meeting and Woodbrooke could shape their work so as to strengthen and support local meetings.

The pilot programme is being funded until September 2019 using money people have generously left to Britain Yearly Meeting in their wills. The amount we receive from legacies varies unpredictably from year to year,

## Vibrancy pilot areas

Local development workers have now been placed in the following parts of Britain:

- Devon, Cornwall and West Somerset – Pip Harris
- Kent, Sussex and Surrey – Carrie Comfort
- North West England – Wendy Hampton
- Wales and the Southern Marches – Helen Oldridge

so we use it for limited-term projects once we know how much we have. The funding includes a component for an external evaluation, which will measure the impact of the programme and how it was delivered, and develop recommendations for the future.

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The Vibrancy in Meetings Steering Group. Photo: Michael Preston

# Inspired by faith to work for a better world

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The theme for Quaker Week, starting on 1 October, focuses on how Quakers are inspired by faith to build a more equal, peaceful and sustainable world.

Anne van Staveren, Media Relations Officer

Believing that each life is sacred and of unique worth leads Quakers to work in countless ways for good – individually, corporately or as the concern of an area or local meeting. A brand new set of posters for Quaker Week focuses on faith inspiring Quakers to work for peace, equality and sustainability.

## Refugees

One poster shows a hand stretched out from a small boat, rescuing a person from the waves. It is a simple drawing of a complex situation. The plight of refugees has stirred many. Last summer, Cambridge Quakers Dan and Amy Ellis were returning from a family holiday in France when refugees, walking in the Channel Tunnel, delayed their journey. Ever since, the family has been responding to these vulnerable people. Jesus Lane Quaker Meeting supports Dan in making monthly trips to deliver essentials to the camp in Calais known as the 'Jungle'.

Numerous Quakers, like the Ellis family, channel their efforts through Cambridge Calais Refugee Action Group and Cambridge Refugee Resettlement Campaign. Thousands of pounds have been donated to pay for legal documentation for unaccompanied children in the camps.

Amy explains: "Dan feels called to go. The people are being treated inhumanely, like vermin. It isn't an official refugee camp so few agencies are there. The people we meet are seeking refuge, from Afghanistan, Kurdistan, Eritrea, Sudan and Syria." Amy, Dan and their three teenagers have helped in the Jungle warehouse, building

shelters and simply helping to share basic information in multiple languages about toilets and water points.

Many Quakers around Britain have responded in generous and imaginative ways to this rising crisis of forced migration, some offering living space. Some area meetings are supporting individual Quakers to help refugees; some have made this a concern of the meeting. A survey of meetings shows many want to do more. Now Britain Yearly Meeting has created a new post, using legacy funding, to develop a centrally managed work programme on forced migration.

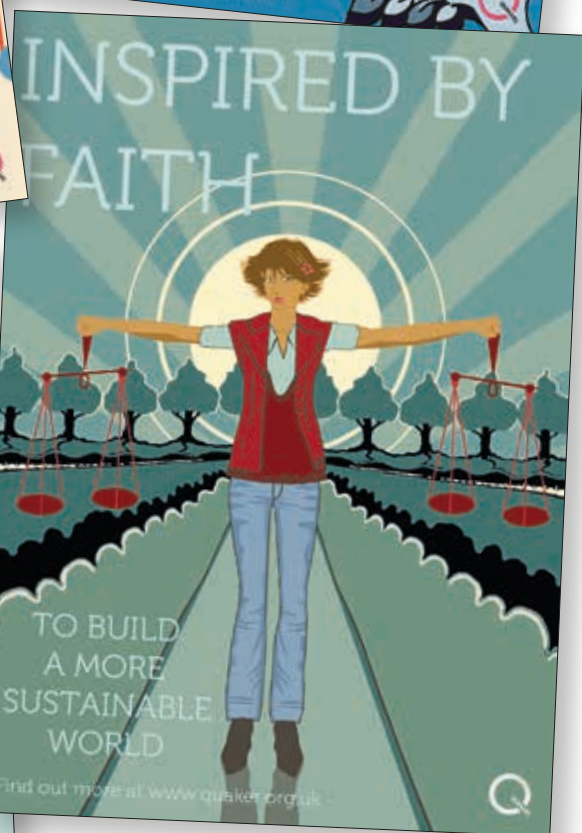
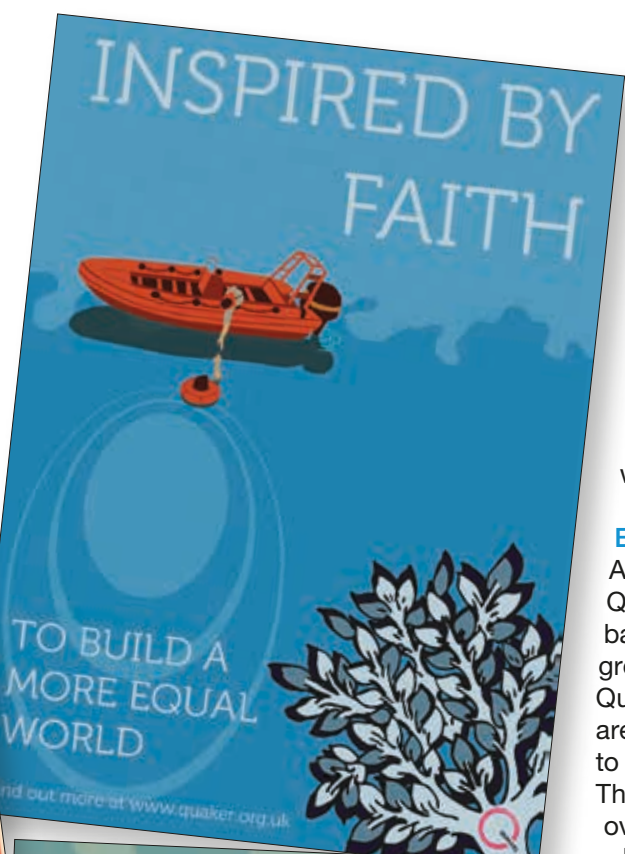
## Peace

One of the posters focuses on peace. Quakers have 350 years' experience of working for peace. One of the ways we do this today is through our Peaceworker scheme. We employ one-year workers and place them with peace organisations to support their work – at the same time the workers gain experience to help them build a career in the field of peace. The idea is to strengthen relations in the peace movement.

There have been around 50 peaceworkers in the UK in 20 years. New peaceworkers will begin shortly: Sarah Robinson with War Resisters International and Campaign Against Arms Trade in London; Philip Wood with Scientists for Global Responsibility, in Lancaster; Hannah Larn with the Tim Parry Johnathan Ball foundation for Peace.

Quakers strive for peaceful communities. Quakers from





Above: The four posters produced for Quaker Week 2016, designed by artist Rob Pepper.

Mid Wales Area Meeting have set up a voluntary programme delivering peace education workshops in schools. Cheshire Quakers, determined to offer an alternative to the armed forces at school career days, set up a stall promoting careers in peace. They gave advice and handouts to young people about how they could work for a safer world.

### Equality

A third poster looks at equality. Quaker meetings support food banks run by a range of faith groups and others. Birmingham Quakers' conference 'Food banks are not enough' stirred Ann Morgan to take action on the Living Wage. Thinking back, the emotion still overwhelms her: "As I sat listening, I had this incredible sense I had to do something," she remembers. "I was conscious of swathes of society affected by the low-wage economy but what could I do? I prayed and asked my meeting for support to test this leading. Two agreed to work with me and we made this the focus for a city-centre vigil." Interviews on local radio followed.

Her meeting supported her in calling on major retailers in the city to pay the Living Wage, celebrating local organisations that do pay it and informing the public about why a Living Wage should be paid.

Quakers are funding work for equality in Tanzania, where the entire Maasai culture is at risk because of climate change. Failed harvests after severe drought take men further distances to graze cattle while women and children are left, locked in a spiral of chronic food insecurity and poverty. A Quaker Peace & Social Witness Relief Grant (see page 10) applied for by Hemel Hempstead Quakers funds a project to provide training and support for Maasai women to

help them develop climate change-resilient income projects.

### Sustainability

Another poster focuses on sustainability. Quakers have a strong commitment to environmental issues and believe that all people have the right to affordable energy that does not harm the planet. Since 2011 Quakers in Britain have resolved corporately to reduce their carbon footprint and to divest from fossil fuels. One third of Quaker meeting houses now use renewable energy.

Quakers oppose the 'extreme extraction' of fossil fuels. In May Quakers joined hundreds taking direct action at Ffos-y-fran open-cast coalmine in Wales. Central staff have been encouraging meetings to write to MPs against the Infrastructure Bill. We have supported Quakers in Scotland to engage with MSPs to oppose fracking ahead of elections, and co-held an event for Scottish National Party MPs on opposing fracking.

When North Yorkshire County Council planning group approved an application to start fracking at Kirby Misperton, Pickering & Hull Area Meeting lodged objections with the local authority. They wrote this to the local press: "By leading simpler lives in a low-carbon society, we draw nearer to the abundance of peace, freedom and true community. Fundamentally we believe in sustaining life over profit."

"Despite the local decision about fracking, we can and will continue to promote the development of sustainable energy and reduce our dependence on a product which threatens the environment for future generations."

*A set of posters has been sent to every Quaker meeting in Britain. For extra copies please email [outreach@quaker.org.uk](mailto:outreach@quaker.org.uk) or phone 020 7663 1017.*

# Sowing the seeds of change

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Sometimes the best way to make a difference is just to help get the ball rolling.

Sam Walton, Programme Manager: Peace & Disarmament

In July Meeting for Sufferings – our national representative body – considered two concerns that had been raised by Quakers, supported by their area meetings. One focused on arms being sold by the UK to Saudi Arabia and then used in wars in Syria and Yemen – an issue that is the subject of the new lead campaign from Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT). The other was in support of Conscience's work to push for a system in which people are not forced to support the UK's military activities through their taxes. It was a neat coincidence that these topics came up at the same time, because Britain Yearly Meeting played a large role in setting up both CAAT (in 1974) and Conscience (in 1979).

We still work in partnership with both CAAT and Conscience today. They are independent secular bodies, but they each have Quakers on their steering groups and receive a grant from Quaker Peace & Social Witness every year.

Quaker Peace & Social Witness and CAAT are both part of the Stop the Arms Fair coalition, a group that aims to disrupt and ultimately shut down DSEi – one of the world's largest arms fairs, which takes place in London every two years. The coalition uses Friends House as its main meeting venue.

This summer Friends House also hosted the European Network Against the Arms Trade. We supported Quakers from across Europe to mobilise against the Eurosatory Arms Fair in Paris, and sent a young Quaker to formally represent our yearly meeting there.

The Quaker involvement in Conscience is even clearer. We have been supporting them through our Peacemaker scheme – providing them with an extra worker for a year, employed and mentored by us. With help from peacemaker Holly Wallis, Quaker MP Ruth Cadbury has put forward a Taxes for Peace Bill for debate in Parliament. The aim of the bill is to make it possible for taxpayers

## Take action

- Support CAAT's campaign on arms sales to Saudi Arabia: [www.caat.org.uk](http://www.caat.org.uk)
- Support the Taxes for Peace Bill through Conscience: [www.conscienceonline.org.uk](http://www.conscienceonline.org.uk)
- Find out more about Quaker action on the arms trade: [www.quaker.org.uk/arms-trade](http://www.quaker.org.uk/arms-trade)

to divert the portion of their taxes that would normally be spent on the military towards the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts. You can take action on this by urging your MP to support the bill and helping to raise awareness through local newspapers or public meetings.

Conscience and CAAT are just two of many independent organisations set up over the years with help from Quakers in Britain, including the Alternatives to Violence Project UK (enabling people to deal with potentially violent situations in new and creative ways) and Circles UK (working with released sex offenders to support reintegration and prevent reoffending). Individual Quakers were deeply involved in the beginnings of Oxfam, Child Poverty Action Group, Amnesty International and Greenpeace. It seems that we have a talent for helping to set up effective charities and campaigning groups. But it is the work itself that matters, not whether it is Quakers who are doing it – we *want* these initiatives to outgrow us: as others are drawn in, a movement is built.



CAAT protesters celebrate after their direct action deters arms dealers from meeting at the Savile Club, London. Photo: CAAT / Flickr CC BY-SA

# We need to keep talking

Interfaith conversations can be difficult, but in the pursuit of peace open discussion is vital.

Marigold Bentley, Secretary: Quaker Committee for Christian & Interfaith Relations

Earlier this year the Council of Christians and Jews approached Quaker Peace & Social Witness asking for a suitable person to join a study tour of Israel and Palestine for Christian and Jewish leaders from Britain. After careful consideration about who we might put forward it was agreed that I should go.

Historically Quakers have always had very strong relations with Jewish people and with organisations such as the Council of Christians and Jews and the Board of Deputies of British Jews. Quaker Peace & Service did much for Jewish–Arab dialogue in the 1990s. Quaker Sydney Bailey was actively involved in Middle East peace negotiations in the 1960s. And for many years the Quaker United Nations Office has provided a safe space for diplomats to come together for off-the-record talks. The role that Quakers in Britain played in the Kindertransport (an effort to evacuate predominately Jewish children from Nazi Europe) has always been of particular importance to Jewish people. But more recently the work that British Quakers have undertaken alongside Israeli and Palestinian peace groups to end the occupation of Palestine has shaken these relationships.

The trip took place over three days in May. It was remarkable the level of access the Council of Christians and Jews was given to some key people involved in the current challenging issues. We were taken by bus to meet with the Palestinian Authority representative in Ramallah, to St George's Cathedral in Jerusalem, to an Israeli settlement built in occupied

Palestine, to the Knesset and to two Christian-based projects focused on nonviolently challenging the occupation. Some activists involved in dialogue work visited us at our hotel. We also had tea with the UK Ambassador in Tel Aviv.

**Quaker history, faith and experience teaches that even in times of persecution, religious freedom and open conversation about shared humanity is a way out of the trap of fear.**

Between these visits, we all had conversations with one another about what we had seen and what we hope for. Many of the conversations were challenging. I had to think hard about how to raise the issues of human rights and humanitarian law as an entitlement for all.

Although I heard time and again that the only place many Jews feel safe is in Israel, I was also deeply

struck by the damage done by a national narrative that drives a permanent state of fear and a focus on military security. The impact on the Palestinians is clearly catastrophic.

Fear can be corrosive and poisonous in human relations – local, regional, national and international. Quaker history, faith and experience teaches that even in times of persecution, religious freedom and open conversation about shared humanity is a way out of the trap of fear.

I found that encouraging creative listening and asking questions rather than taking positions enabled a more honest and productive discussion. The conversation between those of us who went on the trip continues.

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The study tour group outside St George's Cathedral, Jerusalem.  
Photo: Council of Christians and Jews

# Looking forward to Yearly Meeting Gathering 2017

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This autumn bookings will open for the biggest gathering of Quakers in Britain – a chance to be together as a community and consider how we live out our faith in the world.

Clare Scott Booth, Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee

*“True godliness don’t turn men out of the world but enables them to live better in it and excites their endeavours to mend it... Christians should keep the helm and guide the vessel to its port; not meanly steal out at the stern of the world and leave those that are in it without a pilot to be driven by the fury of evil times upon the rock or sand of ruin.”*

William Penn, 1682  
(*Quaker faith & practice* 23.02)

Planning for Yearly Meeting Gathering 2017 is now in full swing. The gathering will be held from Saturday 29 July to Saturday 5 August 2017 at the University of Warwick, with up to 2,000 Quakers from across Britain expected, as well as visitors from Quaker meetings around the world.

This is the final year of three in which our theme has been ‘Living out our faith in the world’. In living out our faith in the world, we often work globally and locally with other people of faith and of none, who are seeking to address the causes and effects of systemic injustice and inequality in the world. What is our common vision for a better society? Are we ready for the spiritual challenge to build a true and just social order for our age?

## Movement-building

The focus of the gathering will be on movement-building as a process for bringing about lasting change. What can be distinctive about Quaker contributions to those movements and what can we learn from them? What are the changes we need and what are our priorities?

At the end of Yearly Meeting 2016, Tim Gee reflected on building movements, suggesting that in the context of cuts, of climate change, of poverty, a great people is gathering already. He challenged us: “And so friends, I have some questions for us. I want to ask, what is our role? How do you feel led to participate? How could your meeting listen to your local community and forge alliances, to understand the concerns of those who live around you? What kind of support could we offer – is it physical? Is it economic? Is it spiritual?”

And he asked some bigger questions as well: “Are we, like John the Baptist, more comfortable in the wilderness, existing prophetically but peripherally? Or are we willing to join with our communities to turn the tables at the temple, if necessary?”

## The gathering community

Our gathering aims to build and live an alternative vision of society: loving, inclusive and radical. It will include time to worship together, opportunities to learn, to discuss, and to share our experiences of our theme, with workshops and sessions throughout the week.

We will be an all-age community, with the children’s programme (for those aged up to 11), young people’s programme (for 11- to 14-year-olds) and Junior Yearly Meeting (for 14- to 17-year-olds) all incorporated into the gathering on the University of Warwick campus.

In addition to and alongside the main programme, Yearly Meeting Gathering provides the opportunity for many other events, meetings and lectures, organised by recognised Quaker bodies. We’ll be running a Groups Fair so everyone can find out about the activities of a range of Quaker organisations.



The Rootes Building is one of the spaces we will make use of during Yearly Meeting Gathering 2017 at the University of Warwick. Photo: Kyrosho / Wikimedia CC BY-SA



Yearly Meeting Gathering will feature activities for people of all ages, with dedicated programmes for those under 18, under 15 and under 12. Photo: © Mike Pinches

### The location

The University of Warwick campus has many advantages. It is level and relatively compact. There are large open spaces for picnics, opportunities for quiet walks in the surrounding meadows and plenty of places for conversations and informal meetings both indoors and outdoors.

The accommodation is a short walk from the Arts Centre, where our plenary sessions will be held, and close to the campus shops and food outlets. There will be a good range of accommodation available, including half-board and self-catering, with shared and en suite options, and we'll be setting up a campsite on a pleasant and sheltered former cricket pitch. For those who wish to attend the gathering but not stay on the university campus, there will be a non-residential option.

The University of Warwick is on the edge of Coventry, an area with a rich heritage, in English history, in its industrial past and in the development of Quakerism. Fenny Drayton, the birthplace of George Fox, is less than 20 miles away and Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre – originally the home of Quaker George Cadbury – is about the same distance.

There will be opportunities to visit nearby sites and attractions, to engage with the local community and, we hope, to visit and lend a hand with projects that local Friends are involved in.

The planning team are excited about welcoming Friends to the 2017 Yearly Meeting Gathering, and working together to “live now ‘as if’ the Kingdom of God were already fulfilled” (*Quaker faith & practice* 24.57). For those unable to attend in person, there will be various ways to keep up and engage with what is happening in Warwick – we will share details of these closer to the time. Whether or not you can come to Yearly Meeting Gathering, we hope you will be part of it.

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### Booking information

We have simplified the booking process this year so that you can book your place and know immediately what accommodation you have been allocated.

Bookings and allocation of accommodation will be managed for us by the University of Warwick. Please note that this means there will be two significant changes from how booking has worked in previous years:

- Full payment must now be made at the time of the booking.
- If you wish to be accommodated with a group, the whole group must be booked and paid for at the same time.

Details of accommodation types and prices will be available in the event brochure and at [www.quaker.org.uk/ym](http://www.quaker.org.uk/ym) from mid October.

- All bookings open: **21 November 2016**
- Junior Yearly Meeting bookings close: **31 March 2017**
- All bookings close: **30 April 2017**



Plenary sessions at Yearly Meeting Gathering will address the theme of 'Living out our faith in the world', with a focus on movement-building. Photo: © Mike Pinches

# A safe space for young asylum seekers

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By making grants we can support a wide range of work beyond our own programmes. After18 is one of several projects to benefit from a Relief Grant in 2016.

Ann Pfeiffer, Grants Programme Officer

Each year we support a number of projects that aim to make people's lives better through our Quaker Peace & Social Witness Relief Grants scheme. One of the projects we helped to fund this year was After18 – a Leicester-based charity that provides support for people aged 13 to 25 who are in the UK alone claiming asylum.

When a child arrives here fleeing war or persecution in their home country they cannot be returned to an unsafe place and so are allowed to stay in the UK. Once these children reach 18 they face many challenges – some may have to return to their country of origin while others will need to adapt to living in the UK more permanently. After18 provides information and one-to-one support to help them transition into adulthood and prepare for their future.

Many of the young people After18 works with are or were unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. Some of them are isolated because of disability, or because they have been moved to a new

city where they don't know anyone or speak the language. Some have experienced trauma and are afraid to mix with their own communities. This lack of contact and support can lead to mental health problems.

One of the ways in which After18 helps is by running weekly arts and crafts workshops – it is to help fund these that we made the Relief Grant, which follows on from a previous grant awarded in 2015. The workshops create a social group for the young people and provide a safe space for them to express themselves and be heard. The activities distract them from their worries and bad experiences.

Young people from a variety of countries including Albania, Bangladesh, Eritrea, Iran, Kenya, Oman, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe have taken part. Working together in a safe environment has enabled friendships to form and confidence to grow. Some of the group are even investigating the possibility of selling their craft products through a retail outlet in a nearby town.

## About Relief Grants

Relief Grants are given to projects for the alleviation of suffering as a result of war, conflict, natural disasters and climate change, but not for immediate crisis relief.

Up to £6,000 can be applied for by individual Quakers with the backing of at least one Quaker meeting. Application packs for 2017 grants are available between 1 October and 31 December 2016 at [www.quaker.org.uk/qpsw-grants](http://www.quaker.org.uk/qpsw-grants).

The workshops are based at Leicester Meeting House and St Martins House. This has helped to raise awareness of the difficulties faced by unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people amongst others who use these spaces. It has also enabled the young people to meet Quakers and members of the local community face to face. Young people from Leicester Local Quaker Meeting have regularly engaged with the group by baking cakes and participating in the workshops – a small but tasty step towards creating a more welcoming society.

*We are able to support After18 thanks to applications made on their behalf by Leicester Quakers. If your meeting knows of a project that could benefit from a Relief Grant please do apply.*

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Young people hold paintings they created during After18's 'Trails of Journeys' project, which was funded by a Quaker Relief Grant. Photo: Beate Dehnen

# A warm welcome in Quaker country

How Swarthmoor Hall is continuing its centuries-old reputation for hospitality and spiritual growth.

Jane Pearson, Manager: Swarthmoor Hall

Swarthmoor Hall's connection to Quakers stretches all the way back to 1652. So central was it to the building of the Quaker movement in Britain that it has come to be known as the 'cradle of Quakerism' – attracting Quaker pilgrims from all over the world who wish to connect with their history.

Today, people stay at the hall for many different reasons – as well as those on pilgrimages, courses and retreats there are tourists, holidaymakers and businesspeople. The accommodation has recently been refurbished and is gaining very positive feedback on travel websites like TripAdvisor and Booking.com. Guests comment on the hall's atmosphere, beautiful surroundings and the warmth of the welcome they receive. Quakers and non-Quakers alike are visibly moved by the experience.

The Barn Café we opened last summer and the offer of free entry to our garden and grounds have helped to attract day-visitors, who can also enjoy a tour of the old hall.

'Table talkers' in the café tell the Quaker story of Swarthmoor Hall and give information about Quakers today – including how to find a local meeting. The café welcomed 10,000 visitors in its first year.

Each week Swarthmoor Hall holds two half-hour meetings for worship followed by refreshments in the Friendship Room, and once a month a two-hour meeting for worship followed by a simple lunch of soup, cheese and bread. In this gentle way the hall lives out its Quaker values and reaches out to those interested in learning more about us.

Throughout the year we run a programme of residential events. This includes courses run in partnership with Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre – this autumn we'll be covering subjects as diverse as finding time for stillness in a busy world and Quaker missions to European Jewish communities in the 17th century.

We offer guided pilgrimages that take in many of the significant

## About Swarthmoor Hall

Swarthmoor Hall is a 16th-century house in Cumbria that was the home of early Quaker leaders Margaret Fell and George Fox. In the 17th century the hall was at the centre of a national and international network supporting the growing Quaker movement.

Now owned by Britain Yearly Meeting and run by its hospitality company, the hall is open as a historic visitor attraction as well as offering courses, accommodation and conference facilities.

Quaker sites in the area. This year our open pilgrimages have attracted Quakers from the UK, America, Canada and Australia. We also host pilgrimages organised for specific groups, including schools, international visitors and local and area meetings.

Our courses and events work well for individuals furthering their spiritual journeys, or for groups taking time out together to deepen their knowledge of each other in matters of the Spirit. We also put on days aimed at engaging with the local community – we've just taken part in the Heritage Open Days scheme and have special events planned for Quaker Week in October – including offering visitors the chance to experience Quaker worship.

Perhaps you or your meeting could benefit from a visit to Swarthmoor Hall? You can find our programme for the rest of 2016 and a preview of 2017 at [www.swarthmoorhall.co.uk](http://www.swarthmoorhall.co.uk) now.



Guests entering Swarthmoor Hall. Photo: Alexandra Bosbeer

# News in brief

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## Young Quakers Participation Day

A participation day for young Quakers will be held alongside Meeting for Sufferings in December. The day will look at young Quakers' engagement with their meetings and the challenges and opportunities there are for them as members of a Quaker community.

It will take place on 3 December 2016 at Friends House, London. Each area meeting can send two young people aged 14–18 and two aged 18–21. Visit [www.quaker.org.uk/events/young-quakers-participation-day-2016](http://www.quaker.org.uk/events/young-quakers-participation-day-2016) for more information and to book. Bookings close on 20 November.

## Being Friends Together training day

This November a training day offers you the chance to explore how to use the *Being Friends Together* resource as a tool in your meeting's learning and growing together.

It will take place on 10 November 2016 at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, Birmingham. It is free to attend but advance booking is required. Visit [www.quaker.org.uk/events/being-friends-together](http://www.quaker.org.uk/events/being-friends-together) for more information and to book.



**Being Friends Together**  
a learning project from Woodbrooke and Quaker Life  
Supporting Quaker meetings in their ongoing development as living communities of faithful people

<http://together.woodbrooke.org.uk>

## Activist Gathering

Now in its third year, the Quaker Peace & Social Witness Activist Gathering is a day for Friends taking action for social justice in all its forms to connect, share ideas and inspire each other.

We'll explore our place and role in movements, and give time to sharing the skills we use to make change happen.

The gathering will take place on 3 December 2016 at Friargate Quaker Meeting House, York. It is free to attend – visit [www.quaker.org.uk/events/activist-gathering](http://www.quaker.org.uk/events/activist-gathering) to register or to find out more.

## New economy reading programme

Many Quakers feel there is much wrong with our economic system, but don't know what could be put in its place. During 2016 and 2017 we are publishing a series of seven booklets exploring how a more Quakerly economic system might work in practice – and how we can get there. Two of the booklets are already out.

To help Quakers get to grips with this important subject, we're launching a reading programme to accompany the booklets. Session plans will guide groups through the material, encouraging group discussion to help clarify ideas and make space for reflection.

You can take part by setting up a group in your meeting and signing up at [www.quaker.org.uk/new-economy](http://www.quaker.org.uk/new-economy) to receive the session plans when they become available. If you have any questions you can contact Cait Crosse at [caitc@quaker.org.uk](mailto:caitc@quaker.org.uk) or on 020 7663 1035.

## Grants for Quakers who are currently unemployed

Two types of grant are available for Quakers who are currently unemployed. Hope Grants (up to £750) aim to improve quality of life. Prospect Grants (up to £4,000) are designed to support the move from

unemployment to self-employment and are aimed at those intending to set up a new business.

See [www.quaker.org.uk/grant-making](http://www.quaker.org.uk/grant-making) for more details and application forms, or contact us on 020 7663 1053 or at [grants@quaker.org.uk](mailto:grants@quaker.org.uk).

## White poppies

As Remembrance Day approaches many Quakers choose to wear a white poppy either instead of or alongside a red one.

A leaflet explaining the origins and symbolism of the white poppy is now available at [www.quaker.org.uk/leaflets](http://www.quaker.org.uk/leaflets). Hard copies are available from the Quaker Centre Bookshop (020 7663 1030; [quakercentre@quaker.org.uk](mailto:quakercentre@quaker.org.uk)).

The leaflet was originally produced on behalf of General Meeting for Scotland, Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre and the Women's International League for Peace & Freedom. Last year copies were sent to all Scottish elected representatives to raise awareness of the meaning of the white poppy.



Photo: Stewart Black / Flickr CC BY

## Seeking stories of militarism

There is a special section on our website – [www.quaker.org.uk/stories-witness](http://www.quaker.org.uk/stories-witness) – where Quakers and Quaker meetings can share stories of how they live out their faith in their communities.

One of the most recent stories concerns a Quaker parent and her 10-year-old daughter's experience of a class trip to a local army base. We're keen to hear more stories about experiences of militarism in

society and the efforts Quakers have made to question it, especially in schools.

If you have a story to share please contact Isabel Cartwright (020 7663 1087; [isabelc@quaker.org.uk](mailto:isabelc@quaker.org.uk)) by 28 November 2016.

### Unattached Quakers

How can we support people who are associated with Quakers but are not able to commit to belonging to a single meeting? Quaker Life has set up a working group to look at this and would like to hear from Quakers who self-identify as 'unattached' or loosely-connected.

If this describes you, and you would like to help the group in its work, please contact Michael Booth (020 7663 1023; [michaelsb@quaker.org.uk](mailto:michaelsb@quaker.org.uk)) or Judith Roads ([judith.workinggroup@gmail.com](mailto:judith.workinggroup@gmail.com)).

### Teach Peace Pack now available in Welsh

The revised and updated *Teach Peace Pack* has been fully translated into Welsh with thanks to volunteers from Wales for Peace, and support from Cymdeithas y Cymod (The Fellowship of Reconciliation in Wales).

The pack, a set of ten assemblies (plus follow-up activities and resources) to use with 5- to 12-year-olds, can help to ensure peace is a key theme in our children's education. The materials are available to download for free in Welsh or English at <http://peace-education.org.uk>.



### New website for nonviolent social action

Turning the Tide has a brand new website – [www.turningtide.org.uk](http://www.turningtide.org.uk).

Turning the Tide is a Quaker-run social action training programme. It offers a range of workshops and resources focused on supporting nonviolent social change at the grassroots.



### Britain Yearly Meeting is under new management!

Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees have agreed changes to how Management Meeting – the senior staff team at Friends House – is organised. Taking effect from January 2017, the changes are intended to help Britain Yearly Meeting become a more strategic, well-integrated organisation, to strengthen its work with and for Quakers in Britain, and to make sure the aspirations set out in *Our faith in the future* are realised.

The Recording Clerk, Paul Parker, will continue to be the senior staff member responsible for the whole organisation, assisted by Deputy Recording Clerk Juliet Prager. Helen Drewery will take on a new post as Head of Worship & Witness, working with Quaker Life and Quaker Peace & Social Witness central committees. Paul Grey, as Head of Operations, will be responsible for the running of Britain Yearly Meeting's facilities and commercial activities at Friends House and Swarthmoor Hall. Lisa Kiew will be Head of Finance & Resources, with oversight of the organisation's finances, properties and personnel.

### QUINO issues new report on climate justice

The Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva has published a new report exploring how human rights obligations can be used to support policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions in a just way.

You can read the report at [www.quino.org/resources](http://www.quino.org/resources).

### Quaker Living Wage Campaign

During Living Wage Week 2016 (31 October–5 November) Lancaster Quakers will celebrate those Quaker organisations accredited as Living Wage employers and encourage others to seek accreditation. Eight Quaker organisations have been accredited so far and several others working towards it.

Quaker Peace & Social Witness has supported Lancaster Quakers in producing a pack for meetings considering their own wage policies or campaigning for the broader adoption of the Living Wage. The pack is available at [www.lancsquakers.org.uk/livingwagecampaign.php](http://www.lancsquakers.org.uk/livingwagecampaign.php) or you can email [livingwage@lancsquakers.org.uk](mailto:livingwage@lancsquakers.org.uk).

The Living Wage – currently £8.25 per hour (£9.40 in London), is based on research into what the average household needs to have a minimum acceptable standard of living. This voluntary rate is significantly higher than the statutory £7.20 'National Living Wage' recently introduced by the government for workers over the age of 25.



### Toolkit for action

Quaker Peace & Social Witness has put together a 'Toolkit for action' to help Quakers take effective action on issues they care about. The toolkit covers topics ranging from how to plan effective action for change and organise actions to reaching the media and engaging with elected representatives.

You can access the toolkit online at [www.quaker.org.uk/toolkit-for-action](http://www.quaker.org.uk/toolkit-for-action). For paper copies you can phone 020 7663 1056 or email [mayaw@quaker.org.uk](mailto:mayaw@quaker.org.uk).

# Reaching out to young adults

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New work is being planned after a consultation reveals the challenges faced by today's young adult Quakers.

Georgina Bailey, Recording Clerk's Office Intern

A new project will seek to increase the involvement and visibility of young adults in the Quaker community in Britain. The Engaging Young Adult Friends Project will span three years, beginning with an initial scoping phase this winter. Working with Quaker young adults, national and local young adult groups and local Quaker meetings, the project will devise and implement a strategic plan to better engage young adults in the life of our yearly meeting.

The project follows research that took place earlier this year in which we asked people aged 18 to 35 with a present or previous connection to Quakerism to tell us how they relate to and engage with their Quaker identity. We wanted to find out what encourages them to become more involved with Quakers and what prevents them from doing so. The response was staggering, with over 160 interviews, survey responses and submissions from young adults and other associated groups or individuals.

The results revealed that many young adults have a strong sense of Quaker identity and an emotional and spiritual attachment to the Religious Society of Friends. However, there are a number of factors that mean that young adults (both as individuals and a group) are effectively precluded from taking part in many aspects of Quaker life in Britain. Whilst these factors are not exclusive to this age range, the more transient nature of young adulthood in the 21st century means that young adults are more affected by them.

The main issues raised were:

- Young adult lifestyle traits like shift work, travelling at weekends and having a less settled location make early morning Sunday meetings for worship harder to attend.
- Because membership is held at area meeting level, young adults who cannot commit to a particular local meeting feel barred from becoming formal members – despite being committed to Quakerism.
- There is a lack of support for young adult groups.
- The material cost and time commitment required for attending events or getting involved in central work, particularly during the week, can be too great.
- Traditional communications channels do not reach young adults consistently.

Young adults were asked how important they thought different aspects of Quakerism were to

Quaker identity. For many, the most important aspect was actually living out Quaker beliefs every day; membership was seen more as commitment to a local or area meeting, and considered much less important. Community was also seen as important, including local and national cross-generational communities, and dedicated spaces and groups for younger Quakers. However, many felt there were practical obstacles to becoming involved in these communities and that more support was needed to enable involvement.

Overall there was a desire for more recognition and support for the way young adults can and want to engage in the life of the Quaker community in Britain, and this is what the Engaging Young Adult Friends Project is being set up to address. You can read the full report of the research at [www.quaker.org.uk/young-quakers](http://www.quaker.org.uk/young-quakers) or email [youngadults@quaker.org.uk](mailto:youngadults@quaker.org.uk) to find out more.



Young Friends General Meeting in Nottingham. Photo: © Mike Pinches

# How you can help with Quaker service



Photo: © Mike Pinches

Our tradition is that any Quaker may be called upon to help with the work being done by the Society of Friends locally, nationally or internationally. Our nominations committees, with the help of others, have the task of identifying and developing the gifts of Friends. There are varied and interesting opportunities for service, requiring different skills and experience.

Those who serve on national committees and groups find it richly rewarding. They get to know Friends from around the country, learn lots, develop new skills, and feel they are making a contribution to Britain Yearly Meeting.

Central Nominations Committee nominates Friends to serve on many of the bodies that govern centrally managed Quaker work. You can help us in three ways:

- You can tell us about yourself, your interests and your skills by completing a Quaker Service Information Form (You will find this at [www.quaker.org.uk/service](http://www.quaker.org.uk/service)).
- You can encourage Friends in your meeting to complete forms – even if they are shy or unaware of their own gifts.

- You may be asked to be a ‘supporting Friend’, one who helps in identifying a role that will be just right for someone you know well.

This year the work of Central Nominations Committee has been reviewed and we are developing some new ways of working.

These include talking early in our discernment to those being considered for service about the role we are considering them for. We will be trying to develop our links with local and area meeting nominating groups and advertising some roles more widely.

We are particularly keen to find opportunities for younger Quakers to serve the yearly meeting. For these Friends, service may offer a chance to develop their Quakerism and learn skills they can take into paid and unpaid work both within and outside Britain Yearly Meeting.

To find out more about Quaker service, you can visit [www.quaker.org.uk/service](http://www.quaker.org.uk/service), email [nominations@quaker.org.uk](mailto:nominations@quaker.org.uk) or phone 020 7663 1121.

Christine Habgood-Coote  
Central Nominations Committee

## Contribute to Quaker work

Join the Quaker Life Network: phone 020 7663 1007, email [qlnetwork@quaker.org.uk](mailto:qlnetwork@quaker.org.uk) or visit [www.quaker.org.uk/qlnetwork](http://www.quaker.org.uk/qlnetwork).

Make a donation or leave a gift in your will: phone Leslie Bell on 020 7663 1019, email [leslieb@quaker.org.uk](mailto:leslieb@quaker.org.uk) or visit [www.quaker.org.uk/givemoney](http://www.quaker.org.uk/givemoney).

## Subscribe to Quaker News

Subscribe to Quaker News by email, access electronic back issues or read online at [www.quaker.org.uk/qn](http://www.quaker.org.uk/qn).

Subscribe to Quaker News by post, make changes to your subscription or request paper back issues by contacting Leslie Bell on 020 7663 1019 or at [qn@quaker.org.uk](mailto:qn@quaker.org.uk).

## Connect with Quakers in Britain

Phone us on 020 7663 1000, email [enquiries@quaker.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@quaker.org.uk) or write to Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ.

Enter your postcode at [www.quaker.org.uk/meetings](http://www.quaker.org.uk/meetings) to search for a Quaker meeting near you.

Find us on Facebook and Twitter: click the icons at [www.quaker.org.uk](http://www.quaker.org.uk) or search for ‘Quakers in Britain’.



## 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 violent conflict.

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](http://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](mailto:outreach@quaker.org.uk)

## Meet Adwoa Bittle



Adwoa Bittle is a member of East Scotland Area Meeting. A lifelong Quaker, she has served on a range of national Quaker committees as well as taking on roles within her area meeting.

I feel so lucky to be able to say that I have been a Quaker all my life. I attended Dunblane Meeting from infancy until I was around 18 years old. During this time I took part in a wide range of events organised by my local meeting, area meeting, General Meeting for Scotland and Britain Yearly Meeting. These experiences led me to apply for membership when I turned 18. I was visited by someone who had himself been visited by my grandfather. It felt like a good circle.

I have been involved in central Quaker work since my early twenties, serving on a range of committees such as Quaker World Relations Committee and the first Committee on Eldership and Oversight. I've enjoyed other roles more locally, including serving as a clerk, an elder and on nominations committees. For me, being a member means giving and receiving. I give by serving in these roles but I receive so much more: enrichment, learning, spiritual guidance and love.

I have a strong feeling that there is a light within us all that guides us and – if focused on

and nurtured – is a strength that enables each of us to live a life that is full and balanced.

The feeling in my heart, when listening to God as part of a gathered meeting for worship, is one of the most important feelings I have ever experienced: it sustains me.

Being a Quaker is central to my existence. I am never more recharged and whole than when I am with like-minded Quakers. Completing a piece of work, chatting at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, teaching at Swarthmoor Hall, worshipping in a gathered meeting, working on nominations... the list goes on.

I feel so blessed to be on this path, so lucky to have met so many very special people and so grateful to be able to apply my Quakerism in my working life as a primary teacher and at home with my family.

*If you would like to find out more about serving on a national Quaker committee, please phone 020 7663 1121, email [nominations@quaker.org.uk](mailto:nominations@quaker.org.uk) or visit [www.quaker.org.uk/service](http://www.quaker.org.uk/service).*