

THE YOUNG QUAKER

For Young Friends Everywhere

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WALKING THE WALK: 100 YEARS OF PEACE WITNESS

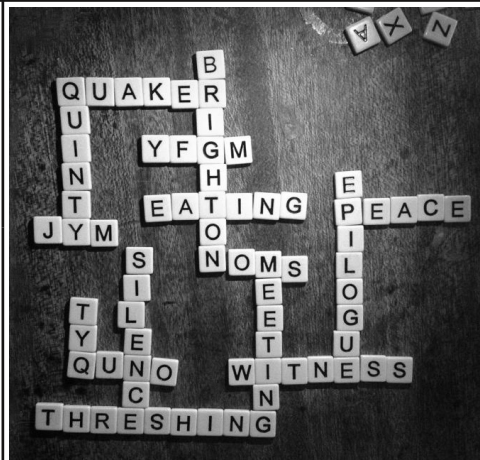
By PETER DOUBTFIRE

For a century, Quakers in the North of Britain have been supporting peace work through Northern Friends Peace Board (NFPB) and to celebrate this milestone, a group of Quakers will be walking for peace this summer.

In their centenary year, NFPB are looking back at their past achievements, and forward to their on-going peace work. Bringing these two strands together will be a walk joining two sites of peace witness that span NFPB's first 100 years. On Saturday 29th June a core group of 18 Friends will set off from Richmond Castle, where the 'Richmond Sixteen' (conscientious objectors in WW1) were imprisoned in the early days of NFPB's existence, following an open-air Meeting for Worship.

On Friday 5th July they will arrive at Menwith Hill, the US Air Force electronic communications base on the North Yorkshire moors (which is still the site of regular peace vigils) to join the annual 'Independence from America' protest. Along the way there will be a chance to reflect on the history and future of peace work, and day-walkers will be joining the core group.

If you are interested in joining either the core group, or as a day-walker, visit nfpb.org.uk/walk100



Picture from February YFGM, kindly provided by Jessica Metheringham

EDITOR'S LETTER

Hello from the TYQ editing room! In this instance, my bedroom. You join us at a very exciting period for TYQ as we find our feet and establish a routine.

At the moment there seems to be a lot of instability across the different spheres of life; how do we feel about the Arms Trade Treaty, Yes or No to equal marriage, In or Out of the EU, future energy plans in flux...

I think that's one of the things I like most about Quakerism however, that there is room for uncertainty. Indeed, I feel we benefit from recognising our heritage without being enslaved to it. Much of this issue is concerned with developments across the Young Quaker community,

I hope you find new thoughts and direction from these articles, and do please consider making your own contribution; just email us at youngquaker@gmail.com.

Tim Searle-Barnes, Editor at Large

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ARMS TRADE TREATY REPORT: SUCCESS OR BETRAYAL?

By Tim Searle-Barnes

I recently had the opportunity to attend an evening celebrating the recent UN agreement towards an Arms Trade Treaty. What might've been a jolly evening with my Amnesty co-conspirators was swiftly grounded by running into a couple of Quakers.

With them, they brought all manner of critiques; Was this a ham-fisted attempt by a Foreign Office to seem on the right side of Arms protestors for a change? By attending and celebrating the progressive regulation, was I implicitly legitimising war? How essential is compromise to being "in the world, not of the world"? Can we call the Wolf a friend to get the ends we desire? Would William Hague be interested in a children's bed-time stories narration deal?

Continued on Page 8

The Seed is above all. In it walk, in which ye all have life. Be not amazed at the weather; for always the just suffered by the unjust, but the just had dominion. And all along ye may see, by faith the mountains were subdued; and the rage of the wicked, and his fiery darts, were quenched. And though the waves and storms be high, yet your faith will keep you to swim above them, for they are but for a time, and the Truth is without time.

George Fox

THE YFGM CALENDAR

By JESSICA METHERINGHAM

YFGM has had the same calendar for at least the last 15 years. Over that time, YFGM committees have changed, roles and responsibilities have moved, and other Quaker events have shifted around us. If you were designing the calendar from scratch, how would you do it? What would be important to you?

These are a few things that we've paid particular attention to. For example, we thought that:

- Holding the biggest planning weekend on the first weekend in January doesn't seem to be very convenient. Might it be better for committees which only meet at one planning weekend a year to meet at a different one?
- Because BYM is now on the last weekend of May in two out of every three years, we kind of have to go for the first May bank holiday, which means a REALLY short gap between February YFGM and March planning weekend.
- Some people find YFGMs don't fit around University. University exams are in May. The start of the University term is in September/October.
- Having a YFGM over a bank holiday is kind of nice - and if we do want this then it means that one YFGM has to be in Easter, May, or August.

Suggestion One

(the same as it is now!)

- PW: early January (the "big" planning weekend)
- YFGM: mid February
- PW: mid March
- YFGM: early May
- PW: early September
- YFGM: early October (when the budget would go to YFGM)

Suggestion Two

(using the Bank Holiday in August, instead of May)

- PW: early-mid March (the "big" planning weekend)
- YFGM: April (not Easter)
- PW: early-mid July
- YFGM: late August
- PW: last weekend in October
- YFGM: mid December (when the budget would go to YFGM)

Suggestion Three

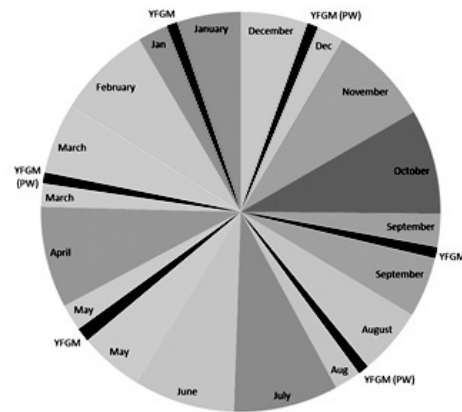
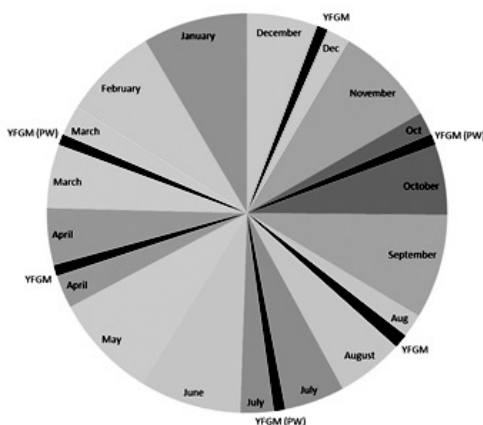
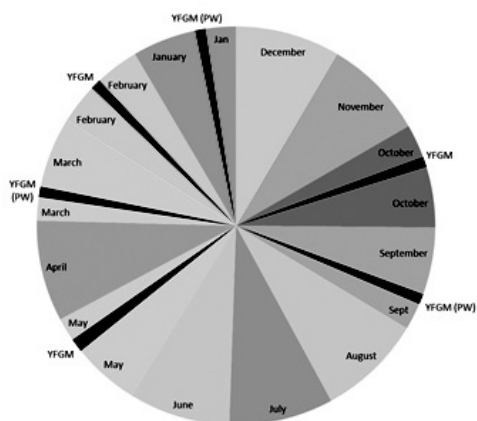
(using May, but moving the other dates)

- PW: early December (the "big" planning weekend)
- YFGM: late January
- PW: late March
- YFGM: early May
- PW: early August
- YFGM: mid September (when the budget would go to YFGM)

This is the current calendar. Maybe it's actually fine - maybe all we need to do is suggest that the big planning weekend is a different one from January. After all, it doesn't really interfere with Christmas, Easter, or the summer holidays.

This calendar is more evenly spread out. It's got a YFGM on the August bank holiday weekend, but that does mean that we avoid the May bank holiday. It also has a YFGM just before Christmas.

This calendar keeps the May bank holiday, and instead puts a planning weekend in the middle of summer. It puts a YFGM in January, meaning that the planning weekend would be in December.



The YFGM Calendar

What's happened so far?

Um, nothing really. The co-ordinator, the trustees and some of the other people at the January and March planning weekends decided that it might be a good idea to find out what people thought.

Instead of just giving you a blank sheet of paper, we've put a couple of suggestions to inspire you. There's no basis to any of this - yet!

What's going to happen next?

One of the trustees will take away the poster from last YFGM, look at all the things you've written on it, and do something about it. They might even come back next YFGM with a suggestion...

It would also be very useful to know if there are people in YFGM who would like to be more involved in coming up with a new timetable.

So...what do you think?

Is there anything else you'd like to say? Are we going about this in the wrong way? Have you got any suggestions?

And remember, these three suggestions are only what we've thought of so far - you may well have a completely different and much better suggestion.

Let us know your thoughts, comment on the facebook page (tiny.cc/YFGMcal) or email youngquaker@gmail.com

YFGM CATERING RECRUITMENT

By TOM ROWLANDS

Hi all, I'd like to recruit some caterers for the coming YFGM.

You will be catering alongside the excellent and experienced Andrew Rendle and I'll be working with you to develop a menu, order the food and get the food cooked. Ideally we'll get a team of three for the long weekend, and if you can get there reasonably early on Friday that would be excellent, but we can worry about such details later.

If you'd be interested please email me on yfgmcatering@gmail.com. It's great fun and a chance to get to know people while chopping carrots.

PEACEFUL NOT PASSIVE

By LAUREN PARKES

This summer The Leavers (Quaker Community Arts) are using theatre to explore what it means to live peacefully in modern British society. The residential weekend for 16-25 year olds is taking place in early July at Reading Quaker Meeting house, and is a great opportunity for Young Friends interested in peace work and/or performing to develop their performance skills, learn about Forum Theatre and find out how it can be used as a form of active non-violence.

Forum Theatre was developed as part of Augusto Boal's 'Theatre of The Oppressed'. The rules are simple: a play is performed showing the negative impact of 'oppression' on a protagonist - twice. The second time through, at any point, an audience member can shout "stop", and take the place of the protagonist. They can then act out a different way of dealing with the situation the protagonist is in. The other actors on stage remain in character, playing out the scene as if it is real.

The same scene can be done again and again, exploring different ideas and strategies - a chance to 'rehearse' real life. The 'oppression' can be anything - a difficult boss, controlling parent, a bureaucratic organisation, a social pressure, or even an entire political/economic system. Forum doesn't pretend to try and find the 'ideal' solution - it simply aims to start a conversation between actors and audience, and to say yes, our behaviour can change things. It's simple, yet powerful.

No prior experience of performing, peace work or The Leavers is necessary to take part in the project - simply interest and enthusiasm. It will be an engaging and thought-provoking weekend. As Boal said, "Theatre is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society."



Picture kindly provided by The Leavers

Peaceful Not Passive: A residential Forum Theatre project for 16-25 year olds is running from Friday 5th-Sunday 7th July 2013, at Friends Meeting House, Reading. Places are still available, and cost £60/ £40 (recommended/minimum fee). For a booking form or more information email lauren@leavers.org or call 01214140099. Find out more about The Leavers by finding us on Facebook!

AT MY FIRST YFGM...

By KATHRYN HARDING

Arriving at Lancaster Meeting House (conveniently located around the corner from the station) I was warmly greeted and welcomed to the event, although I was a little early. There were a few people milling around to talk and explain a bit about how the event works. I was invited to sit down and help with some of the tasks that needed doing. I immediately got stuck in, helping to write up timetables and lists to stick on the walls, whilst having a chat with others that were arriving. The first evening was a lovely blend of drinking tea, eating great food and meeting new people.

Saturday started with a hearty breakfast and a welcome to the event and the Quaker business method. This was inventively and succinctly explained (the best explanation I have ever been given). The outreach committee welcomed us newcomers with some Tunnock's tea cakes and a visit to a local coffee shop. Saturday made history with an online meeting for worship - it was great to feel connected to people who were all over the world, knowing that they were joining you in the silence and sharing the ministry. Hopefully something that can be continued at other events.

Sunday night finished with some epic entertainment, with different YFGMers bringing their personal talents to the cabaret - opera, poetry and circle dancing ensued. The weekend passed very quickly, it was relaxed and interesting, there were special interest groups, talks and business meetings to get involved with if you wanted, or you could go for a walk, catch up on some reading or have a chat.

Ben Pink Dandelion gave us some interesting statistics about Quakers and Quaker history, and there was a lively discussion on Young Friends' attitudes to alcohol, drugs and gambling. The session of forum theatre was great fun and tackled some interesting current issues. The epilogues each night gave a delightful, and thoughtful closing to each day.

All in all I had an interesting, entertaining and enjoyable weekend. It was lovely to meet, and connect with other Young Adult Quakers. I have always found a special sense of community and connectedness with residential Quaker events - something that was absolutely there at YFGM.

BYM SPECIAL: YFGM INTERNSHIP

Are you interested in working for YFGM and BYM? Right now, BYM is recruiting somebody to take up a Communication and Services Internship for YFGM. This is a new role, taking the place of the YFGM co-ordinator.

The job will involve providing organisational support to YFGM in fulfilling its long-term strategic goals, and helping to foster and strengthen relationships between YFGM, BYM, and other organisations within the wider Quaker community. 40% of working time is allocated to BYM and a programme of work which both benefits BYM and develops the intern's existing skill set will be devised.

It's essentially a grounding in charity management, and anyone who does it will stand an excellent chance at getting themselves into any sort of practical charity work in the future, be that research or fundraising or whatever.

Does this sound like something you want to do? If so, better hurry: applications close **Friday 31st May 2013**

More information at
www.quaker.org.uk/jobs

EQUAL MARRIAGE BILL PASSES THIRD READING

Last issue, we reported on the efforts to pass the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill in Parliament. The Bill, which would end the legal discrimination that prevents same-sex couples from getting married, successfully leapt the latest hurdle on 21st of May, when the House of Commons voted to approve its third reading by 366 votes in favour to 161 against.

The Bill allows same-sex civil

marriages, and religious bodies are permitted to opt-in, something BYM will no doubt choose to do in light of our 2009 corporate decision to treat same sex committed relationships in the same way as opposite sex marriages.

However, the Bill will not provide opposite sex couples with the right to have a civil partnership. The amendment which would have provided for this was tabled by a Tory MP who is personally opposed to the Bill, and was widely considered to be a wrecking amendment.

However, such a move would provide legal equality for all couples, and the call to both allow same-sex marriage and allow opposite-sex civil

partnerships was an important part of the Equal Love campaign, which many Quakers support.

In November 2010, YFGMers Ian Goggin and Kristin Skarsholt applied unsuccessfully for a civil partnership, but were turned down of their differing genders. As part of the Equal Love campaign, this decision was later challenged at the European Court of Human Rights.

Most MPs who voted against the Bill were Conservatives opposed to their party's leadership. The Bill must now pass through the upper chamber, the unelected House of Lords, before it can become law. It is expected to face heavy scrutiny there before passing into law.

MEETING FOR SUFFERINGS

By RACHAEL HARRISON

Rachael is one of YFGM's representatives to Meeting for Sufferings, the body which takes care of Britain Yearly Meeting's business throughout the year, when BYM is not in session. In this article, she shares her thoughts on some of the issues that MfS has considered recently.

The Israel-Palestine Conflict: Should we boycott Israeli goods?

In April 2011, Meeting for Sufferings decided to boycott all settlement goods from Israel. This April, the question was put to the meeting; do we want to extend the boycott to Israel?

My heart raced and I spoke sharing my feelings on the matter... I posed the question of *what is it that we mean by peace*, and that to me peace building is about bringing people together a heart space, calling out against injustice but also recognising the complexities of a situation. I spoke about the importance of actively recognising and supporting the peace movements in both Palestine and Israel, of recognising the humanity on both sides, and the difference between the Israeli state, the acts of injustice, human rights and the individuals that live in each area. My feeling is that a boycott on Israel as a whole could ostracise people, and groups already doing positive work in this area, creating more feelings of divide.

Also, whilst a boycott on the settlements is actively saying "We do not agree with these illegal settlements", I wonder what an overall boycott on Israel would be saying...?

I think that MfS boycott on settlement goods is a way of making a national stand against the illegal settlements and the human rights violations that are continually taking place against Palestinians. That speaking out as a majority can have a bigger impact than individual decisions.

- The MfS question is whether to extend the boycott to Israel. How do **you** feel about this subject?
- Friends at MfS also challenged the use of the term 'boycott' because of the negative connotations that it has had in history against the Jewish community, and a phrase 'trade justice' was suggested as an alternative. What are your thoughts on this?
- My question is also this: is there anything more that we can be doing as a society to support positive changes in this situation; a boycott is a 'negative' act of protest in the sense that it is a rejection of something. What positive forms of activism are open to us? Last year we heard from Hannah Brock about the amazing work that Ecumenical Accompaniers are doing, and there are many other groups working to create positive change and uphold human rights in this area, some of which are creative and innovative and based on reconnecting hearts and minds, such as the Barenboim-Said Foundation, an organisation that facilitates music education projects in the Palestinian territories. What are your thoughts?

Revising Quaker Faith and Practice

In a couple of months, MfS clerks are going to send out a document to all area meetings and YFGM reps with guidance on asking YFGM/area meetings whether now feels like the right time to start revising Quaker Faith and Practice. The main question being "Does the current version reflect where we are now as a society?" I've learnt that Quaker Faith and Practice is revised in every generation and is a long process, the last revision took 9 years and it is a reflection on how we are now, rather than where we want to go.

This is a document and session that I will bring to the next YFGM so that as a community this will be something we create space to reflect on.

Government Cuts

We heard statements from different area meetings about the difficulties being faced by those affected by the government cuts: welfare reform. Quakers spoke of the effects this is having on individuals and communities, on the negative connotations and language expressed in popular media linked to those affected by poverty and on benefits. A Friend raised a very interesting point where we were asked to think about the issue of inequality with sustainability. Currently value is monetary, however if it was based on your carbon footprint, many people with little money may have a high status in terms of their contribution to lowering the UK's overall carbon foot print and having a positive role in the future of our planet. I feel there is so much more that can come out of this way of thinking, and am reminded of the importance of turning society's value systems upside down as much as possible in order to shake the truth out and remain in touch to the reality that lies in front of us.

Arms Trade Treaty Report

(continued from page 1)

All facetiousness aside, the evening was becoming a moral minefield. However, part of a speech by Anna Macdonald, Head of Arms Control at Oxfam, brought my conflicts together; "this is a floor, and not a ceiling".

We will not rest on our laurels, we will be glad the world may be a little safer for our work, and we will continue to hold a world free from the injustices of warfare at the forefront of our campaign.

Do let me know how you feel about this issue, as I recognise there are strong emotions on all sides. An open dialogue is hereby started!



Picture kindly provided by Natasha Pietta at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

BECKY AND ROGER'S EPIC USA CYCLING ADVENTURE FOR CHARITY

By HOLLY ALCOCK

The lovely (and in my opinion rather brave!) Becky Riddell and her father Roger will be cycling across America to raise money for the fabulous charity Mind. (www.mind.org.uk/about).

Becky is a Young Friend of Oxford Quaker Meeting and also regularly attends Young Friends General Meeting.

Having previously cycled from Lands End to John O' Groats in 2007 Becky was looking for a bigger challenge and being half American felt this was it!

Becky and her father feel they are privileged to have the time and resources to be able to complete this trip so want to use it as an opportunity to raise money for a cause they are both very passionate about.

Mind works to support people with mental health difficulties. Mental health is not only a major issue in this country with one in four people experiencing a mental health problem at some point in their lives, but also the problems of mental health are insufficiently recognised, talked about and funded.

Becky and Roger will be starting

from the Pacific Ocean in Los Angeles on 11th May, and all being well, will arrive at the Atlantic Ocean in Boston on 29th June. The total distance is 3,415 miles!

Over 50 days, they will cross 15 states, pass through deserts, navigate mountain passes and experience all that Middle America has to offer: breath-taking scenery, rural "railroads", wild dogs, fast food and American hospitality.

If you'd like to sponsor them, their Just Giving Page is www.justgiving.com/beckyandrogerriddell

This is an incredible challenge and such a wonderful cause. Look out for their blog! (riddellcycle.webs.com)

The Young Quaker is looking for regular writers on a variety of topics, including politics.

Interested in journalism? Got three or more opinions per year? Want to make your case to other young Friends?

Get in touch with us at youngquaker@gmail.com (or talk to the editors at YFGM)



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The Co-Editors would like to thank all our contributors, particularly Jessica Metheringham for her support, and Hannah Brock and Hugo Finley for their continued advice and support.

For general enquiries, to obtain additional copies of TYQ, or for a digital/access copy, please contact the TYQ team by email.

Please get in touch if you would like to contribute to the next issue, due out in time for the next YFGM, taking place between 18TH-20TH OCTOBER 2013 in Bristol.

The Young Quaker is produced by Young Friends General Meeting

www.yfgm.quaker.org.uk

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