

THE YOUNG QUAKER

For Young Friends Everywhere

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DOES YOUR MEETING HOUSE NEED A NEW LOOK?

Yes! In a word!' says Deb. Deb is a meeting house manager these days, but that comes after previous incarnations as fine art student, interior designer, garden designer, entrepreneur and meeting house warden.

She's been given the green light to rant and, being a Quaker herself, she's got stuff to say on the image that our local spaces project. Widespread clutter, mismatched furniture, dog-eared noticeboards, dirty posters, out-dated info, broken crockery and manky curtains feature in too many of our centres of worship. 'Meeting houses should speak to our condition ... and all too often they do: shabby!'

Deb emphasises the meeting house's dual role: primarily a worship centre, but also a community centre. Its design protects the quiet space but should have room for activity too. 'Meeting houses should not be a private club and neither are they another church hall. We have a distinctive way of worship that everyone could share'. These days, meeting houses are used by groups from salsa clubs to political parties. 'They need to come here and have a distinctively "Quaker" experience.' If you visit Deb's stomping ground in Norwich, you can find Quaker Faith and Practice all over the wall. That's one way of doing it and she's got plenty of other ideas too.

Meeting house design needs to be informed by Quaker principles: that is our testimony to simplicity, and not resignation to the all-too-common view of 'this is how we've always done it'. Every new

generation needs to consider our home and how we present ourselves.



Credit: quaker.org.uk

Friends House has done just that. The Large Meeting House, now 'The Light', was refurbished last year. 'I would like a commitment that every meeting house in the country looks as good as Friends House', says Deb.

Meeting houses make their own judgements based on their finances and the character of the area and community – most meeting houses won't have the money or inclination to copy Friends House, nor should they need to! But Deb wishes to remind us not to overlook the role of outreach: the simpler and more open a space is, the more safe and welcoming it feels.

By BEATRICE SHELLEY

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WHAT YOU CAN DO

Lighting – get your entrance lit well. It provides info and it needs to be a safe place for the visually impaired.

Colour – lime loos and a red entrance exist in at least one meeting house; let's not take ourselves too seriously!

Noticeboard – Get it UPTO-DATE!

Walls – many meeting houses have a lot of wall space: project a film or hang some artwork from time to time. No art is a hangover from a time when it was considered a frivolity.

Rediscover the **history** of your local meeting – use that to bring your meeting house to life in a distinctive way.

Touchscreens – they provide information, and quietly! MUST'VE been invented by a Quaker!

Do not use 1652 as a door code! Esp. if you've invested in a touchscreen info point ;)

Try to make your home a place of loving friendship and enjoyment, where all who live or visit may find the peace and refreshment of God's presence.

A WORLD OF QUAKERS THAT YOU MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT ...

KRISTIN SKARSHOLT is on the planning committee for the next International Representatives Meeting. She travelled to Peru and reports on our global context.

Can you imagine a Peruvian Quaker? They don't have the same worship style as what we're used to in Britain or Europe: they frequently pray aloud, speak of Christ and refer to the Bible; they may pull out the guitar and invite you to sing hymns with them during any random break in the agenda. They may be the type of Quaker who evangelises in their village or city. They are part of the Peruvian Quaker church.

Gina and Nelly, whom I'm working with on the planning committee for the next International Representatives Meeting (IRM). In many ways they have a Quaker culture more in common with Cornelius and Churchill from Kenya than with me.

If you think about how the Quaker world has developed from its beginning and through migration around the globe, it's not so strange: the early Quakers in England whom we talk and hear so much about evangelised zealously. They knew they were on to something big and liberating, and they spread the word as much as they could so that more people could take part in that

who joined them. Meanwhile, Quakers in Britain were taking the words of their predecessors and moving along in a different cultural context, which leads to the Quakerism we're familiar with and practise today.

I'm on the International Planning Committee for the next IRM. The IRM calls together representatives from all the yearly meetings affiliated with the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC). When we're talking about how to schedule the worship of the different continents during the seven-day IRM, what we're actually speaking about are all the differences in theology and expression in which we want everyone to partake. We know that the European worship will be unprogrammed, while the Americas will probably include a pastor speaking, and the African section will definitely include dancing, band singing and lots of vocal praise to the Lord. When I first experienced the dancing, praising sort of worship, I was a little uncomfortable with the more 'extreme' (it's all relative!) levels of expression. Where did this fit in with me and the way I'd been taught to worship?! It makes international Quaker work seem more like interfaith work than anything. I'm still delving deeper into understanding South American and African Friends, while I'm also getting to become their friend.

You can come to the IRM too, as a representative of your yearly meeting or on an open place (self-funding, but remember there are loads of Quaker funds out there). The IRM will be held 19-27 January 2016 in Pisac, Peru. The beautiful invitation is out:

<https://youtu.be/cNKVPIyH3qg>



Credit: Kiristin Skarsholt

Back row, from left: Noé, Myron (Bolivia), Simon (Northern Ireland), Andrés (Peru), Jessica (Britain), Cornelius, Jesus, myself. Front row, from left: Antonella, Louise, Gretchen, Robin, Gina (USA).

It's very liberating for me to spend time with people like Noé, Jesus (that's 'Hesus'), Inez, Antonella,

revolution. American Quaker missionaries went to South America and Africa to spread their big truth and established churches with those

For my journey was not solitary, but one undertaken with my friends as we moved towards each other and together travelled inwards.

EMEYF IN GEORGIA

Embracing uncertainty and living adventurously

EMEYF is the community of Young Friends from Europe and the Middle East. Young Friends from Georgia have been prevented from joining us in the past because of visa regulations, so EMEYF decided to bring Spring Gathering to Ureki, Georgia. The following picture and captions are taken from the epistle of this gathering.



'Our community came into being while huddled under blankets at our very first meeting for worship, as it poured with rain outside ... lots of bad jokes about quaking and chattering of teeth in the cold, about the heat produced by a gathered meeting [and] spirit raising [had] some truth in them.'

'All around us we faced the uncertainty of being in a different culture, experiencing language barriers, yet feeling the certainty of the community we built, like a rock in the storm.'

'As we go back to our communities, we hold each other in the light, enriched by our week together, taking with us the spirit of embracing uncertainty and living adventurously.'

If you want to get in involved with EMEYF, you can! Please have a look at www.emeyf.org. Our next gatherings will be Annual Meeting in autumn 2015, probably in Belgium, and an all age gathering to celebrate EMEYF's 30th-ish birthday in the summer of 2016, in Germany.

YFGM-FREE – TRIDENT IN READING

Thirty young Quakers met for a YFGM-free (that's a YFGM free of the general meeting business stuff!) to learn about the UK's nuclear weapons system, its proposed replacement and how we can campaign to stop that replacement happening. We learnt lots and were inspired...

The best strategy when arguing against nuclear weapons?

Consider the immoral consequences. Highlight the benefits of not spending a lot of money on highly destructive weapons. These were pretty good responses to most arguments!

How does our spirituality motivate our activism?

We focused on this with the help of inspiring quotes. We also got thinking about how uncomfortable the thought of nukes makes us feel, what makes us angry and how that pushes us to try and make a change.

We're not on our own!

Rebecca Sharkey from ICAN (International Campaign to Abolish Nukes) shared positive news. Other non-nuke states are working towards creating a new treaty to make nuclear weapons outright illegal, just as has been done with other weapons of mass destruction.

How do you lobby parliamentary candidates and politicians?

Seek out common ground, present pragmatic arguments and build up personal relationships. Politicians may not always sign up one hundred percent to our point of view on Trident, but that doesn't mean that talking to them is a waste of time. A positive relationship with a local MP makes an impact on those who'll be making the decision to renew Trident or not.

Should I do a direct action?

An action like blockading a base can take your message to the heart of the issue but can potentially alienate the very people you're trying to convince. Sam Walton ran this session and reminded us that there's no hierarchy of activism: the people making the tea at a demo are just as important as those getting arrested.

How to do activism with social media

DAN BARRON from WMD Awareness gives six quick tips.

1. Make it visual

Use pictures, videos, graphics and visual links.

2. Keep it snappy

People don't want to read an essay! 100 characters for Twitter and 250 for Facebook max.

3. Call to Action

What do you want us to do? Ask us to retweet, like, comment, follow a link or do something offline. You're more likely to get what you want if you ask.

4. Not too often/ not too infrequent

Over-posting will cause your posts to be relegated in people's news feeds. One post daily is enough for FB. On Twitter you can post much more often but be sure to include comment on other organisations similar to you. This way people will want to come back to you to see what is going on.

5. Relevance

You don't have to post for the sake of it!

6. And if you're tweeting about nukes ...

Don't forget to use the same hashtags as everyone else! #NoNukes + #ScrapTrident

Dan is Communications Officer at WMD Awareness. Follow him in action @WMDAwareness or see more info at wmdawareness.org.uk

TOWARDS A QUAKER VIEW OF MENTAL HEALTH

RHIAN BLADES attended a weekend course at Woodbrooke where she found that our new Concern for Mental Wellbeing has company in the wider Quaker community.

As we gathered in Woodbrooke to think about *Towards a Quaker View on Mental Health*, we represented all ages and experiences, from patients to professionals, care givers to care receivers, and everywhere in between. There was something inherently powerful in that room, a strong sense of unity in purpose that I felt honoured to experience. Perhaps most powerful was the revelation that in being concerned about mental health,

YFGM is not alone.

I was overwhelmed by how far-reaching and diverse this concern is, not only within the realm of Quakers but also in the wider world through charities like Mind or other faith groups. At times it was challenging for those at Woodbrooke to find unity in so many different viewpoints - I will admit that we even experienced our moments of tension - but this is inevitable when people feel so

passionately about a subject. We don't need to worry about 'fixing' the world on our own when so many people are with us on that journey, and

we should avoid 're-inventing the wheel'.

What's more, we don't have to be certain in our course. A powerful and liberating realisation from the weekend was that we don't know where we are going, and there's nothing wrong with that. I felt lifted from my own anxiety and nervousness when I realised that I, like so many others, am still uncertain about what the future holds, what exactly we want to achieve or, perhaps most difficult, how we are going to go about achieving it. In many ways, YFGM is beginning to bang the drum on mental wellbeing, but we are yet to discover what the music will sound like.

One of the most poignant visions from the weekend (if you will excuse the many metaphors) was that we are not about rescuing sinking ships when situations are most dire, but

we must endeavour to build good boats.

We should be helping ourselves and others to develop healthy practices in mental wellbeing as a preventative process, and not only as a reaction to desperate need and mental ill health. Quaker meetings and communities should be resilient, encouraging communication between all members to raise awareness and understanding for everyone.

We seek to calm the seas.

As many of us know from experience, the world of today can be a dark and lonely place. While we may not yet have a clear vision of the future, we are passionate about change for the better. Sharing experience and knowledge can guide others onto safer routes, a simple act of kindness can help others when they need it most, and campaigning for change and equality of mental health with physical health may clear the storms away for future generations. We are not attempting to cure the issue entirely; mental illness and disability exist and always will, but stigma should not. Hopefully we can foster a world where development, growth and acceptance are available for all.



Credit: Woodbrooke, Rhian Blades; sunset, Hannah Brock

If you would like to attend a course that is not directly relevant to a role, you can apply for a bursary towards some or all of the cost: YFGM has a bursary fund to allow YFGMers to take part in activities they couldn't otherwise afford, which deepen their spiritual life and/or help them be part of the Quaker community. Woodbrooke courses are a great example of this type of activity.

When applying for a bursary, you will be asked for some basic information about your financial circumstances, which will be kept confidential. Finance Committee consider applications for bursaries and share out the available funds.

Remember that 18-30 year olds can get a 50% discount from Woodbrooke - if this applies, you can still request a YFGM bursary towards the remaining cost. In any circumstances, make sure you wait to hear from Finance Committee before booking.

By PETER DOUBTFIRE, Co-clerk of YFGM

BRITAIN, THE NATIONS AND THE ELECTION

*There be many Caesars, ere such
another Julius: Britain's a world by
itself*
William Shakespeare

The UK has always been an asymmetrical union of nations. Unlike the popular uprisings of Germany and Italy, or the revolutions of America and France, this island lacks a central founding mythology. The nation was formed by centuries of gradual conquest and coercion. Tony Blair was correct (on one thing at least) when he stated that we are a young country. It is always worth reminding ourselves that the UK in its current form only came to pass in 1922. The constitutional sands we stand on shift; this year's general election has seen the arguments push and pull in numerous directions between the nations on the island of Britain.

Last year's Scottish independence referendum re-ignited the constitutional discussion, rather than snubbing it out. In light of the 45% yes vote, the Smith Commission has recommended new powers for Scotland. Despite a unionist victory, large swathes of Scotland voted SNP including a majority in Glasgow and Dundee. Disillusionment has now crystallised against the Labour party MPs in Scotland, perceived to have lost touch with the electorate. As a result, the near-wipe out of Labour seats (including Scottish Labour leader Jim Murphy) has transformed the Westminster landscape radically. The SNP secured all but three Scottish seats, winning Glasgow north east with an astounding UK-record swing of 39%. Despite this 'strong voice for Scotland', it's always worth remembering the shortcomings of the unitary system, particularly that Scotland forms only 59 seats out of 650, leaving the SNP permanently outnumbered. Had every constituency in Scotland voted for Labour, the Conservative party still would have secured a majority. With the faltering of the Labour vote in England, sections of the SNP's programme may not be achievable, but what is certain is that a voice has

been given to those in Scotland with an appetite for more powers: a return to the status quo is no longer an option.

Whilst England has been the overpowering force in the union, and has just installed a thin-majority Conservative government based on English votes, England does not have a parliament for itself. Scotland's referendum loosened English tongues, and English Votes for English Laws (EVEL) in Westminster has been put forward by the Conservatives as a solution. This has not silenced the long-held murmurings for an English Parliament which would truly federalise the UK. It has been speculated that an English Parliament would persistently return a Conservative majority and regional assemblies have alternatively been proposed. It's worth noting that regional assemblies were rejected by referendum in the last Labour government, partly because they fail to acknowledge England as a contiguous entity. On the other hand, it has been argued that Westminster is already an English parliament, with an overwhelming majority of MPs in the House of Commons representing English constituencies. It's easy to forget that England already has devolution, in the form of the London Assembly and this may be used as a model for further possible 'city states'. It is also worth considering the implications for Cornwall. The Liberal Democrats announced plans for a Cornish Assembly in an effort to recognise the forgotten fifth home nation. With the total wipe out of all of the Lib Dem's Cornish MPs, any possible plans for England may now not take into account the Cornish nation.

Wales occupies an unusual constitutional position in terms of devolution by sitting in front of England but behind Scotland. Unlike Scotland, Wales has recently been without a strong nationalist presence. The Labour party has been dominant in Wales for the best part of a century and has the power

to control the debate, but has resorted to framing it as a Labour/Tory exchange across a Cardiff Bay/Westminster dichotomy. Unlike the SNP, Plaid Cymru did not increase its number of seats in the election and its main target of Ynys Môn was held by Labour by a slim majority of only 229 votes. The strengthening of the Welsh Conservatives over the Welsh Liberal Democrats, seeing parts of Powys and Clwyd turn blue, has reduced the Lib Dems to a solitary MP in Wales. Liberalism has had a strong foundation in Wales since the upsurge of non-conformist, Welsh-speaking Liberals seized seats in the famous 1868 election over largely Anglican, English-speaking Tory landlord candidates. St David's Day saw the UK Government reveal plans for more powers for Wales including energy, elections and some tax powers. The proposed tax powers would have to face a significant hurdle in the form of a referendum. Welsh devolution therefore continues to significantly drop behind the powers enjoyed by Scotland, underlining a deliberate plan to oppose equilibrium within the union. Labour, the Lib Dems and Plaid Cymru have criticised the offer and it seems unlikely that powers over policing, justice, benefits and the Crown Estate will be arriving at the Senedd soon.

It's far too early to predict how the story will develop and what the Scottish and Welsh elections in 2016 will bring. A forthcoming referendum on Europe can only exacerbate issues with the devolved nations of Wales and Scotland (and also Greater London) showing a strong likelihood of voting to endorse EU membership, with England voting to leave. It's incredibly difficult to say what the answer is: Federalism? Confederation? A mutual end to the union? The only certainty is that the current system is not working, and we all agree that something needs to be done.

By ANON

Read the full version at tyq.org.uk

I LIVE ADVENTUROUSLY ...

I'm writing this on my lunch break on a Sunday afternoon: being self employed and working predominantly from home means that I work whenever I want. I am a Furniture Restorer and I'm working on a rush seat (a sort of weaving done with a synthetic reed) which is a repetitive activity that takes quite a long time and is a

to my home town before striking out on my own two years ago.

The majority of my client base is independent people with the odd small or medium sized job. Although I have an online presence most of my business is generated by word of mouth. I also receive some semi-regular work from some local

however the HMRC website makes everything pretty straight forward – the main thing is just remembering to pay!

One of the most difficult things I found about being self employed was learning to charge for my time – how much I should or need to charge per hour and how to balance that against what people are willing to pay. Earning enough money is a concern and there is no denying that being in control of my own wage is both liberating and terrifying. I'm always prepared to take on other part time work in case no one's cat has ruined their dining chairs this month!

My days are very varied and the creative outlet my job offers is incredibly rewarding. However working alone can be quite lonely: I have to be quite careful to ensure that I see friends or family at every opportunity as otherwise I realise I haven't spoken to anybody all day. That said, at the moment I love my work and the opportunities it brings. I would recommend working for yourself at least once in your life to everyone. It's good for the soul!



Rachael at work on a day bed. Credit: Jen Hampton

lovely opportunity to listen to the radio!

I first became interested in furniture restoration as a teenager. At that time, I had a French tutor who was also an upholsterer. I was far more interested in learning about his trade than learning verbs. He taught me how to cover a simple chair, I've not looked back ... and my French still isn't very good! I went on to study for a Foundation Degree in Restoration and then completed an informal apprenticeship with a restorer local

antique dealers. The job I have clocked the most hours doing over the years is treating various things for woodworm. If I was asked to give one piece of advice to a budding restorer it would be learn effective woodworm treatment sooner rather than later!

In the post yesterday morning was my most recent tax bill. This needs to be paid by July 31st and I am the only person who can do this – no boss to deal with it for me! Dealing with taxes is the most easily labelled downside of being your own boss,

BY RACHAEL
SWANCOTT

What would you like to see in the next issue of TYQ?

Do you know someone who is living adventurously? TYQ accepts contributions that are written by you, half written by you, you writing about your friend OR we'll even come and interview you about your adventurous life! (That would be no excuse, hm?! – Ed)

Email theyoungquaker@gmail.com

YFGM AND ME – 5 YEARS IN!

We've heard from lots of newcomers still in their 'YFGM Honeymoon' but this month TYQ is dedicating some column inches to the old-timers! Just when he thought that he might stop coming to our meetings, YFGM discerned RAJIT GHOLAP to be on Quinty (YFGM's version of Elders). He tells us what he gets out of YFGM.

I've been coming to YFGM for 5 years now and in that time I've had the pleasure of helping to facilitate the newcomer sessions. It reminds me of what it is like for someone new to YFGM or even a Quaker meeting! It's an easy statement to say that YFGM has changed in the time I've been involved. But it has in some ways: fewer acronyms, fewer business sessions on the agenda and new venues (including a lovely time at Woodbrooke). All this helps to bring in new people and allow more time for spirituality I think.

There are a number of ways in which it hasn't changed at all though: the originality of many of the spirituality sessions, the

impossible-to-guess link between the group names but most of all the building of a community in one weekend. This is a community of some shared interests and experiences from around the country. Each person brings their gifts to the group in communal meal times, cabarets or deep and meaningful chats. I'm thrilled when new people come and find a spiritual group that they can make their own, just as I have done.



MWWG

(yaa! another Quaker acronym is born!! – Ed)

Joint YFGM and Woodbrooke Mental Wellbeing Weekend. It's open to all (inc. over 30 ish) and is provisionally booked for Sept 2016. The MWWG wants to know what you want from it. Is there something you want to learn?

Look out for more YFGM speaker sessions relating to mental health.

The MWWG have a Facebook page. It's intended for bouncing ideas on, gathering opinions and talking about mental wellbeing.

A logo for MWWG is in the pipeline.

"3 steps to good mental wellbeing" – a mental wellbeing 'card' is in production.

Becky, Catherine and Ellen are super-active and super-OPEN to your ideas so do go and chat to them.
Email: bexriddell@gmail.com

THE INTREPID

DENOMINATIONAL EXPLORER

He is International Quaker of Mystery. TYQ's VERY SPECIAL SECRET AGENT leaves the meeting house and ventures out into all varieties of Christian faith to report back.

Dispatch 1: C of E.

Quakers can sometimes forget that there exists a whole world of Christian faith beyond the meeting house. I mean, when was the last time you actually went to a church other than to bury your aunt or marry your uncle? Some of these other Christians even do activism n stuff n shit too.

So like Ross Kemp, I will take my life into my hands and visit some of

these other churches. This week I went to the Church of England.

(Anglo Catholic) Church of England, High Mass @ All Saints Church, St Margarets Street, London.

I visited this church four times because it was basically like watching Wicked but in a church. Though instead of Idina Menzel we were given Father Alan Moses, who was a top bloke and explained to me the ins and outs of Anglo-Catholicism.

The service itself was 90 minutes, and involved your classic High Mass fare. Incense, creeds, prayers, readings, a sermon, the Eucharist, hymns and choral music. The choir was brilliant. The incense was also brilliant. During the service it became increasingly obvious that George Fox got it totally wrong

about this simplicity thing. At one point during the Mass the priest strides out into the crowd and sings the lectionary bible passage WHICH IS SO DAMN COOL.

Theologically, a bit too much Augustine for my taste, but that's the case with most Western Christianity. Interestingly, quite a large chunk of Mariology, which would be the Anglo-Catholic thing. The sermons I heard were genuinely engaging, substantial and rather thought provoking.

I also learnt the what-and-how of genuflecting. I've been genuflecting loads since; it's turning out to be a really useful skill.

Overall, I'd give the entire Anglo Catholic tradition a whopping 8/10.

Next time: Hillsong.

HOW TO MAKE A Y F LOCAL M

London has one.
Manchester has one. Oxford
has one. Now Nottingham

has one too: its very own

Young Friends group.

IWONA LUSZOWICZ caught

up with founder Abigail

Rowse to find out more.

What made you decide to form a Young Friends group?

Since I started going to meeting in Nottingham four years ago, I've always wanted it to have a greater sense of a young Quaker community. It's difficult, though, because there aren't many young Quakers who attend meeting. Through the years I've been going, a few young people might turn up, but even then we'd all be there on different weeks. Then eventually there was one Sunday about two months ago when there were six young Friends attending all at once. It was amazing and I just said, 'Right. We are all meeting up.' And we did.

What do you think is important about meeting with young people specifically?

As young people, we're at a pivotal stage of our lives. It's a different stage to a lot of the other Quakers at meeting, many of whom are retired, or have grown-up children, or are very high up in their careers. On the other hand, with young Quakers, many of us are students or are new to jobs or careers. We're all finding ourselves and what we want to do.

Also, for the past few years I've been attending Young Friends General Meeting (YFGM), and it's where I've had my most spiritual experiences... in the epilogues, in the spirituality sessions, in the conversations you have before bed with someone new or when you're walking somewhere. I want to bring some of that to Nottingham.

Could you describe the sessions so far?

For the first session, we met in a pub and talked a bit about our backgrounds and what we wanted from the group. The general sense was that people wanted spirituality but they also wanted social stuff.

I decided to run an epilogue for the second session. It wasn't something I'd done before and I was waiting for inspiration... and it came! I happened to listen to a song called 'Let's be still' by The Head and the Heart and I knew I had to base the epilogue around it. We met at Nottingham Meeting House, and after I played the song we did an activity on stillness, and I laid out some quotations on stillness from Quaker Faith and Practice, the Bible and various secular sources for people to look at in their own time. At the very end we had some silence and worship sharing.

The third session was a social. We met up in a pub again and played 'Unable and Willing'.

Who can join the group?

At the moment most of the people in the group are in their twenties and thirties, but the age range we've decided on is 16 to 35. Other than that, it's open to anyone who's interested. We have a lot of people who are very new to Quakerism, some really established Quakers, and a few people who are not

Quakers at all but are interested in spirituality.

When and where do the meetings take place?

Probably one of the biggest challenges for me as convener is that there's not really a regular day that everyone in the group can do. Another difficulty is the students: half our members are students and so aren't around in Nottingham during the holidays. At the moment, I think we'll end up meeting around once a month, but it won't be at a set time or day. Hopefully we'll be able to use the Nottingham Meeting House for the spirituality sessions and other locations in central Nottingham for the socials.

How can people find out about the group?

I've been advertising the group through the Nottingham Meeting facebook group and also on the Nottingham Quaker website. Details of any upcoming meetings will go on the website, and my contact details are on there as well.

Lastly, any sneak peeks on what's happening in the next meetings?

I'm hoping for us to continue doing spirituality sessions. I know some people are busy or shyer than others, but I want to help people share their experiences and spirituality in a friendly environment if they want to. I'd like us to build a community and come together and have that same sense of fellowship as at YFGM.

www.facebook.com/FriendsMeetingHouseNottingham
www.nottinghamquakers.org.uk

We are all called to participate in building a responsible and caring community.

QF&P 15.02

HILARY BOTWRIGHT

Hilary sadly passed away on Tuesday 5th May. She had lots of ideas and energy for this magazine, and her role on the Mental Wellbeing Working Group. The articles that she leaves show something of her valuable contribution to our community.

PANIC AND ANXIETY

By HILARY BOTWRIGHT

Mental Wellbeing is a new concern for YFGM. Just from the initial conversations I have had with people on this topic I have been overwhelmed by the number of people who experience panic, anxiety and even panic attacks in everyday life, and the randomness with which they can come on can leave you feeling vulnerable and scared.

I have found over time a few positive steps to counter the onset of panic. First of all, fears are often most frightening if you can't name them. It can help to write down anxieties as soon as they come to mind (no matter how trivial they may seem!) – especially if you are worrying through the night. As soon as they are named it often takes the power away from the anxieties and you can try to understand and manage them. It can be helpful to make lists of things you can and can't control, and then try

HOW I CAME TO THE QUAKERS

By HILARY BOTWRIGHT

Growing up in a Rectory with an Anglican Rector as a father, my mother's enthusiasm for the Quakers was a source of great amusement within the family; a stream of eccentric people would regularly cross our threshold for various meetings! As a young teenager, I staunchly vowed never to be part of such a group. Fast-forward ten years, factor in a degree, world travel and a prolonged stay in hospital and here I am – a part of that eclectic bunch! I first arrived at a Quaker discussion group in a very low, frustrated place and initially the meeting just provided a space where I felt safe. However, the unconditional

objectively to ask yourself if this is a realistic concern, and if it is, is there anything you can do to alleviate some of the worry – for example being prepared for the day ahead.

I have also found it useful also keep a panic attack bag with me, in which I keep things that help to ground me – scents that are familiar, pictures, quotes and so on. It often helps for me to repeat to myself 'this too will pass, this too will pass.' It also helps to remind myself that the duration of panic or a panic attack is naturally limited by the body's ability to produce adrenaline and it can be helpful to know that the heightened state cannot last longer than twenty minutes.

However, if the feelings of adrenaline are particularly persistent - I call them energy surges – they can be channelled in the way of my choosing. Sometimes I sing at the top of my voice, ride my bike- anything that lets off some steam or even I just take myself off somewhere quiet to give myself some space and silence to locate that 'still small voice of calm.'

welcome from the Quakers was indescribably uplifting and I felt acceptable in whatever state I happened to be in. It provided the foundations for the beginnings of my journey into discovering that 'something' that I spent my early twenties pursuing. The Quaker ethos resonates with how I would like to live my life and I was especially attracted by the Quakers' activism; the courage to stand up and say things are not right as they are, even if a solution is not always clear. The Quakers have helped me to understand patience and hope, and I found it inspiring to be amongst people living out their faith, guided by principles of love. From initially demanding nothing of me, Quakerism has introduced me to a way of living that is loving, wholesome and positive.

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING CORNER

By HILARY BOTWRIGHT

For January this year rather than give something up as a New Year's Resolution, I decided to make time and space to allow myself to view something afresh. Inspired by Rumi, ('The breeze at dawn has secrets to tell you, don't go back to sleep') I have been going out to the same place every morning to observe and enjoy the sunrise – a daily miracle so often taken for granted or overlooked in the chaos and busyness of our lives.

By viewing dawn from the same place each day I really notice the colours, the silhouettes of branches, the changing fullness of the moon, the birdsong. Some dawns appear silently, with pale colours that gently coax me into the day, and others announce themselves in a blaze of colour and offer themselves as an exciting, empty canvas to be filled. Each is unique and each is wonderful and I'm yet to not be rewarded for my efforts. Aside from watching nature and the seasons change, I also love seeing a different side of life; dustbin men, people sweeping shops, feeling a part of the day as it gathers itself for the day ahead.

Although so far I've made dawn every morning, I'll let you know whether or not my enthusiasm carries on into summer as the dawn breaks earlier and earlier...!

A memorial service for Hilary will be held at 1.15pm on 24th June in Rippon Cathedral.

Everyone is welcome to attend.

My favourite QF&P is ...

Have you ever sat with a friend when in the course of an easy and pleasant conversation the talk took a new turn and you both listened avidly to the other and to something that was emerging in your visit? You found yourselves saying things that astonished you and finally you stopped talking and there was an immense naturalness about the long silent pause that followed. In that silent interval you were possessed by what you had discovered together. If this has happened to you, you know that when you come up out of such an experience, there is a memory of rapture and a feeling in the heart of having touched holy ground.

Douglas Steere, 1955

Chosen by BECKY RIDDELL



TYQ reports love!

One of Feb's personal ads has LOVELY new boyfriend and the other one is going on many hot dates! Don't say TYQ personal ads don't work – this one has 100% success rate! OKCupid and Match en't got nothing on that :)

#justsayin

(Changed your mind and want to write an ad for TYQ? – email it to theyoungquaker@gmail.com. Write it with friends – it's kind of fun!)



Did you know that TYQ is online?

It is! tyq.org.uk – check it out for all the fun extras! :)

Meeting for Sufferings

YFGM's rep to Meeting for
Sufferings, IWONA
LUSZOWICZ, reports on
March's meeting

I attend Meeting for Sufferings on behalf of Young Friends General Meeting (YFGM). As in my last report, I will discuss two issues that I hope will be of interest and relevance to the YFGM community.

Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture

Juliet Morton and Jane Laxton from Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture (Q-CAT) spoke to a report outlining the group's aims and current activities. In discussing the importance of the Concern, they emphasised the damage torture can cause, both for the tortured and their torturers, and also for those trying to put things right. Q-CAT's aim is 'to educate Friends, other churches, other faiths and the public at large on the absolute nature of the ban on torture under international law and the realities of the present situation in the world in this regard. At present, there are only three Area Meetings carrying the Concern (Central England, North Wales, and Wirral & Chester), and Q-CAT wants to ensure that the abolition of torture is not just a minority interest among Quakers. To this end, they are undertaking a range of activities to raise awareness of their cause, including developing an interactive play and running a workshop. The latter will hopefully be delivered at one of the next YFGMs.

Interim Report on the Long Term Framework

Peter Christy spoke to an interim report on the Long Term Framework, a topic that has received some consideration at recent

Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) is the standing representative body entrusted with the care of the business of Britain Yearly Meeting throughout the year. It is made up of representatives from Area Meetings and groups such as YFGM. It plays a vital role in reviewing and testing concerns referred to it by these meetings.

YFGMs. For those of you who (like me) didn't attend any of the sessions, the Long Term Framework is in essence an attempt to describe the priorities of the work of Friends at every level, whether in local or regional networks or nationally. Friends from across Britain were invited to enter into discernment on this undertaking and submit responses to the Long Term Framework Working Group; the interim report discusses the direction of the Long Term Framework as a result of the responses received. The report's key point is that 'the long term framework must focus on how we work rather than what we do,' stating that it is 'unlikely that the final document will contain a list of priorities for action [...], since priorities will change through time as we are led by the spirit to respond to changing needs.' While this was met with a general sense of agreement within Meeting for Sufferings, there was some concern among Friends that a failure to discuss the 'what' as well as the 'how' will make the Society more opaque to newcomers. One suggested solution to this problem is the provision of supplementary documents detailing specific issues raised in the consultation, alongside a much shorter guide (possibly as short as one side of A4) focusing on the way Friends work.

For more information on Q-CAT:

<http://www.q-cat.org.uk/>
(N.B. new site currently under construction)

For more information on the Long Term Framework:

<http://www.quaker.org.uk/way-ahead>

REPORT FROM CENTRAL NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE VISIT TO YFGM

Central Nominations Committee (CNC) came to February's meeting to discuss its work with YFGM.

In the Quaker tradition the work which an ordained clergy might carry out in other churches is carried out by Friends who are 'called to service'. This ministry will be for a limited period of time - maybe a few days if a Friend is asked to attend another Yearly Meeting or

take on a role at our own Yearly Meeting, or for one or more years if they are asked to join a committee and will need time to gain skills and knowledge and contribute to the group.

The twenty members of Central Nominations Committee could not possibly know well every member of Britain Yearly Meeting, nor their skills and interests. So Friends are asked to complete a 'Quaker service information form' (QSIF), which is held on a database at Friends House. It is quite usual to find it difficult to identify our own gifts and there may be opportunities to ask for help from supporting Friends or others in your meetings who know you well, or YFGM. When CNC are searching for Friends for central service we consult the database then we talk to

two Quakers the Friend has identified as their 'supporting Friends'.

During this phone call we try hard to work out not only whether you have anything to contribute but whether this particular task or committee matches your enthusiasms and will offer you opportunities for development. Many committees are really keen to see some younger faces and can offer support and mentorship from more experienced committee members. Tim Rouse (YFGM coordinator) can be contacted for more information about completing a QSIF.

By CATHERINE PUTZ & CHRISTINE
HABGOOD-COOTE
Central Nominations Committee

QUAKERS AND ANONYMITY

TYQ publishes articles anonymously when writers request it. We asked JULIET PRAGER, Deputy Recording Clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting, to consider why she finds this uncomfortable for Quakers.

Quakers have a longstanding commitment to truth. We try to be honest. We are encouraged to follow 'openness, accountability, transparency and integrity in all our affairs' (Quaker Faith and Practice 14.38).

So why might a Quaker write anonymously? Anonymity might seem an option if the subject is sensitive or taboo; I can think of times when it might be helpful to write about a very personal experience in order to help or support other people who might be facing a similar situation.

A writer might be worried about possible negative consequence, and want to protect something or someone - possibly themselves. If so, I'd hope they'd ask themselves whether publishing is appropriate.

An anonymous article can too easily create or escalate conflict. If brave things are written which could be said in no other way, the words might touch the reader and help them see things in a different way. But the reader has nobody to respond to - nobody with whom to discuss, question or explore further. And this becomes more of a problem if, from the reader's point of view, the words seem inaccurate. That can lead to frustration, resentment, anger - the bedrock of destructive conflict.

It's tempting to think that an anonymous article will help 'blow the whistle' on bad practice. But especially within Quakers, George Fox emphasised the Christian tradition of mutual accountability, drawing on Matthew 18:15-17:

If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be

confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

(NRSV - New Revised Standard Version of the Bible)

Another important Quaker practice is not taking the oath, because we believe there is only one standard of truth. Does anonymity allow a double standard of truth - things one will say publicly, and things one will only say if they're not attributable?

What's great for us as Quakers is that we have so much practical experience to draw on. Kathleen Lonsdale wrote of how small actions 'count for happiness in living together as persons' (QF&P 20.69). And, in Isaac Pennington's words, our Quaker life is not about 'laying accusations one against another' but about 'love, and peace, and tenderness' (QF&P 10.01). It's not always easy, but it's an inspiring and nourishing approach to life.

WHAT IS THE YOUNG QUAKER?

The Young Quaker is a magazine for young Friends everywhere, produced in print and online. Published by YFGM, TYQ comes out three times a year, to coincide with YFGM weekends – meaning that you can expect a new issue in February, May, and October, full of news, comment, and more.

We're always looking for new material. If you've got an idea for an article you'd like to see in *The Young Quaker*, get in touch with us at the email address below. If you're able to write it, even better!

WHAT IS YFGM?

Young Friends General Meeting is a community for young adult Quakers aged 18-30ish, in Britain. Our main events are the three General Meetings which take place at Quaker meeting houses around the country in February, May, and October each year.

If you'd like to get involved in YFGM, to come along to a YFGM event, or simply find out more, then visit the YFGM website at yfgm.quaker.org.uk or email yfgm@quaker.org.uk. You can also find the YFGM group on Facebook.

WHAT ARE QUAKERS?

Quakers, or the Religious Society of Friends, are a religious group with Christian origins. Quaker worship is mostly silent, with people speaking when called to do so by the 'Inner Light', sometimes called 'that of God within everyone'.

Central to Quakerism are the Testimonies of Peace, Equality, Truth and Simplicity. A commitment to these principles has put Quakers at the forefront of political and social issues; campaigning for the abolition of slavery and more recently for the legalisation of same-sex marriage.

Live adventurously - buy a YFGM hoodie!



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All hoodies £15

(plus P&P if posted)

Please contact the YFGM office for availability and information on how to order:

yfgm@quaker.org.uk

Young Friends General Meeting



Scan this QR code with your phone to experience the digital edition of TYQ

The Editors would like to thank all those who have contributed to this edition of *The Young Quaker*. It would be impossible to produce the magazine without the ideas, articles and photographs that you send in.

Please get in touch if you would like to contribute to the next issue, due out in time for the next YFGM in October 2015. We would welcome any submissions for this edition no later than 10th September 2015.

Co-Editors for this Issue:

BEATRICE SHELLEY and HILARY BOTWRIGHT

Special thanks to IWONA LUSZOWICZ

The Young Quaker can be found online at www.theyoungquaker.org.uk

For all enquiries, including advertising enquiries, please contact TYQ by emailing theyoungquaker@gmail.com

The Young Quaker is produced by Young Friends General Meeting www.yfgm.quaker.org.uk

MEET THE YFGMERS:

RHIAN



"I'm Rhian, an ex-Overseer. I like reading and board games. I'm currently training to be a lawyer and volunteer a lot with the Scouts."