

THE YOUNG QUAKER

May 2016 • Issue 12 • Free

the EUROPE issue...

This special Europe issue of TYQ marks the EU referendum which will take place on 23rd June. The referendum will be a once-in-a-generation chance to vote on whether our nation is in or out, and no doubt many of us will be thinking hard about our decision, and reflecting on its importance.

The referendum will take place in the context of two major trends: polarised reactions to the refugee crisis, alongside the increased level of migration from rich to poor countries globally; and the resurgence of a mass, more leftist Labour movement, alongside the development of a stronger hard right, both struggling to rediscover an authentic British identity.

The debate on EU membership in Britain is predictably tribal and many will know which way they want to vote, whether or not they have in-depth knowledge of the ramifications. In this issue we explore the arguments on both sides of the in-out debate, our direct relationships as Young Friends across Europe, and one of the greatest challenges to the EU. We hope you enjoy this issue!



MENTAL WELLBEING REVIEW FOR YFGM

The Mental Wellbeing Concern Working Group is leading a research project to find out how YFGM impacts its members' mental wellbeing. After receiving the go-ahead for the project at February's YFGM, the group hopes that the project will celebrate where YFGM promotes mental wellbeing, and identify areas where, as an organisation, we can improve in protecting YFGMers' mental wellbeing.

This follows poll findings which indicated that whilst all experienced positive effects on mental wellbeing at YFGM, there was a significant minority with experiences at YFGM which detracted from their mental wellbeing. It is notable that even fewer YFGMers are aware of others who are having a difficult experience. The working group has brought new experience to our Concern. They have explored and narrowed down options for research, investigated methods CONT on p9

Our vision of Europe is of a peaceful, compassionate, open and just society, using its moral influence to encourage other countries and peoples towards the same goals.

Extract from a statement issued by the Quaker Council for European Affairs in 1987

NEW FUNDRAISER AND NEW FUNDS FOR YFGM

By **Beatrice Shelley**

Nick Watts is YFGM's new fundraiser and starts in his role at a time when the source of YFGM's funds is changing. The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, currently the biggest single funder of YFGM's activities, is going to stop funding general Quaker activities (now only funding Quaker Concerns) and Nick is bringing lots of energy and enthusiasm to ensuring that we have enough money to sustain ourselves after 2016.

He has produced a 3-page Fundraising Strategy document which details what we need our money for, our fundraising opportunities and why people should fund us. Our religious community and the training, personal development and social witness we enable are our fundraising 'assets' which people will want to support.

The ultimate responsibility for YFGM's finances lies with the Trustees but as Fundraiser, Nick will be responsible for researching and writing the grant applications for funding. It'll be time-consuming initially but hopefully less so in the coming months after the first few applications are written.



Nick is YFGM's Fundraiser

Applying for Grants from trusts (Quaker and non-Quaker) is just one of the approaches Nick will take to raise the £45,000 we are used to. He says: 'Our religious activity is in and of itself charitable and there is Quaker money for that'.

Donations from YFGM members is a significant source of funds and a couple of

fundraising events per year would also help and would provide a positive contribution to the community. Although we all know YFGM's value, at the moment we have no evidence of our impact and outcomes and Nick's questionnaire (available at this YFGM and online) is part of his effort to make sure we have the evidence we need to provide to potential

fundraisers.

Nick says: 'YFGM is a charity and a really good one. I'd like to get us into a situation where we are getting medium sized donations from lots of different sources so that our funding can be more sustainable'. ■

YFGM STANDS ALONGSIDE OTHER YOUTH GROUPS IN OPEN LETTER TO UK POLITICIANS

By **Peter Doubtfire**

As part of YFGM's Concern against the renewal of Trident, we are keen to make a public statement alongside other groups of young people who oppose nuclear weapons. We're using a range of tactics to do that: from physically standing up to be counted at demonstrations, to this statement written collectively by YFGM in February. It's our contribution to an open letter addressed to the UK politicians who, later this year, will be making a decision about Trident

renewal that will impact the next 40 years of our lives. So far some of the other youth groups who have signed this letter are: the Student Christian Movement; Movement for the Abolition of War: youth movement; Plaid Youth; Young Greens and others. As part of our concern against the renewal of Trident, the working party has collected opinions from members of YFGM. We presented this minute as a public statement of our concern. See our contribution to the letter below ■

'As young Quakers we feel it is abhorrent that the UK should have the capacity to use nuclear weapons. We recognise that people with opposing views on Trident renewal can value life and the pursuit of peace. However, we believe that renewing Trident would be a step back from the pursuit of a peaceful world and, in its destructiveness, disregards that of God in every person. Renewing Trident would not provide any meaningful political status, and we believe that the UK should foster cooperative relationships with other countries rather than threaten them. As young adults, this decision could affect us for the rest of our lives. We feel that the UK's resources should go into something that sustains life, rather than destroys it. We urge the government not to recommission Trident and to focus on peaceful approaches to national security and conflict resolution.'

AROUND THE WORLD ON FOOT, TRAIN AND ANYTHING BUT A PLANE

By **Beatrice Shelley**

At the moment Ella is part of the cargo on a trans-Pacific container ship, at some point since last YFGM she was on a trans-Siberian Railway train, and the boat trip on the River Li in China (see left) came somewhere in between we suppose! Ella Booth is on a gigantic adventure to go once around the world and home again. She gave up work and left England back in February. She didn't let her no flying principles stop her from travelling the world - she just decided to take a little longer over it and go by railways, ships, boats and feet instead. She hopes for a journey full of personal growth and excitement. Check out her blog - it's ace. To quote her from it: Greetings traveller!

Find Ella's blog at: oncearoundtheworldandhome.wordpress.com ■

Ella on a boat down the River Li near Guilin in China with a fellow traveller from Macau.



HIGHLIGHTS: FINDING THE SPIRIT IN THE MELTING POT

By **Haifa Rasheed**

A course at Woodbrooke has made **Haifa Rasheed** more optimistic and confident in the value of her Quaker faith in today's world.

I attended 'Finding the Spirit in the Melting Pot' - a course that explored how Quaker work sits in our theologically diverse society. Chris Shannahan spoke of increasing diversity in the UK: 600,000 people identified as being 'dual heritage' in 2001 and this had doubled to 1.2 million just ten years later. He discussed the UK government's controversial 'Prevent' strategy against extremism, which disproportionately affects Muslims and asked the very important question - are we called to be pastors (caring for the marginalised without challenging those in power) or prophets (challenging social injustice)? I

Did you know? There are loads of interesting courses out there - if you need funding, YFGM can offer bursaries.

feel most Quakers would say the latter.

I really appreciated Tim Ashworth's clarity and hopeful vision for Quakers: Friends have over 3 1/2 centuries of experience of listening for the Spirit and not putting something in its place. He claimed that there was no other community that has had this experience, without then putting it into a fixed way - such as through hierarchy or a text. He stated that Friends are willing to let go of fixed positions so that something new can emerge. Listening to the voices on the periphery, making sure no one is excluded, learning how to challenge authority, not giving up and being in it for the long haul are all commendable Quaker attributes. I'm inspired - I hope you too! ■

EU vote: it's complicated

By Laurence Hall

It's ideological, it's emotionally charged, here are some of the main arguments before you get to the ballot box

In a few months time young Quakers in the UK will have to make one of the biggest decisions of our lives so far: voting on whether to stay in or leave the EU. To me, both the campaigns and voters seem to be basing their voting intentions on arguments which are simplistic, partial and highly questionable at best. Young Quakers are certainly not free from this behaviour so here I want to make you reflect more on your vote by challenging the common assumptions on both sides of the debate. As many Quakers I know are planning to vote IN for left wing reasons, this piece has a deliberately strong focus on challenging an IN vote from the left. However, the arguments for Brexit are challenged too. This is about reflecting on your vote because a little discernment goes a long way. I've set out the main arguments for leaving (below) and staying (opposite) and had a load of fun undermining them all (each to their own! – Ed).

We should stay in the EU because...

We should leave the EU because...

...the UK will regain its border control

The UK could have an Australian style immigration policy if it left the EU. (Australia has one of the toughest policies to disincentivise immigration, including turning back migrant boats at sea and imprisonment of refugees in offshore detention camps.) However, this would not only lead us down a deeply immoral path but would also carry serious costs: economic (a deal with the EU to achieve this after Brexit would be costly) and cultural. In any case, refugee policy is legally governed by the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees and the **European Convention on Human Rights**, both of which are non-EU treaties.

...UK courts will become sovereign once more

The **European Court of Human Rights** is nothing to do with the EU. It is part of the **Council of Europe**, which the UK is certainly not leaving. So even if the UK leaves the EU, the highest court for UK law will still be on the continent.

...Brexit will led to economic prosperity

Economic growth is influenced by global economic trends and domestic economic structures and policy. Leaving or staying in the EU is a factor but not the key one. Some industries will be harmed by brexit but others will benefit. The bigger question is what kind of economy and society you want!

...the UK will be free to control its economic future

The reality of the current global economic system is that powerful trade blocs can and do impose their economic will on those small players which want to trade with them. Look at Norway, a country which, to gain free access to EU markets must follow almost all EU laws without having a say over any of them as it is not an EU member. In effect, if you want preferential trade deals with the EU then you will have to follow **EU directives** of which you have no say over.

...freed from EU regulations the UK's economy would take off

Actually, take a look at the argument above again. In addition, a great number of EU regulations not only help economic growth but also protect workers, consumers and our environment from harm and exploitation, with the **social chapter** and environmental protections being central.

...Brexit = end of austerity

Brexit will not save the UK money because any new trade deals with the EU will inevitably mean large financial contributions to it. In fact it is possible that an even harsher austerity regime will follow Brexit as the (admittedly small) EU protections for workers, consumers and the environment are lost.

...true Internationalists must vote in

The EU only cares for some Europeans. The refugee crisis has shown that the EU put small-minded prejudices of some Europeans above the real desperate needs of non-Europeans escaping wars created by EU member states. The EU's deal with the authoritarian Turkish government to forcefully expire all refugees in Greece shows this clearly. The EU displayed a total lack of solidarity to the people of southern Europe when it chose to put the interests of international finance before the needs of the common people. The EU does have an internationalism but that of the rich.

...the EU is a force for Democracy

The EU is a deeply undemocratic institution and its elected parliament is at best a rubber stamp. All the power is centred in the unelected **Commission** which makes and enforces EU laws and can reject any parliamentary amendments. Austerity and the **Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)** have exposed the undemocratic nature of the EU. Even when EU citizens vote against neo-liberal policies in numerous referendums the EU elite ignore them (remember Greece's bailout referendum in 2015?).

...the EU protects workers' rights and social justice

TTIP is a series of trade negotiations between the EU and the US that are mostly carried out in secret. TTIP totally undermines any sense of an EU that works for social justice: workers' and consumers' protections are ripped apart and profit is legally put before any sense of social justice. In fact we only know this through leaks as the people are shut out of talks but corporate interests are not. Furthermore, current EU law stops progressive measures such as common ownership of transport or energy, and real banking reform. The deregulation drive of the EU effectively means the ripping up of workers' and consumers' rights in slow motion. This EU abuse of social justice is all too real for the people of southern Europe. Tell them that the EU is a vehicle for social justice as their social and employment rights are destroyed by EU mandated austerity.

...the EU safeguards the UK economy

Economic growth is influenced by global economic trends and domestic economic structures and policy. Leaving or staying in the EU is a factor but not the key one. Some industries will be harmed by Brexit but others will benefit. The bigger question is what kind of economy and society you want! ■

...the EU protects our Human Rights

The **European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)** and the court that implements it – **The European Court of Human Rights** – are totally separate from the EU. In fact the EU, unlike the UK, is not a signatory to the ECHR and the EU high court ruled that the EU could not be restricted by the ECHR. There are various examples of where the EU has abused human rights: the rights of EU citizens are being lost to authoritarianism in Hungary and Poland and the EU has done virtually nothing. Also, certain EU directives allow mass surveillance of citizens' data. This not to speak of the legal obligations to refugees that the EU continues to ignore too.

...the EU protects the environment

EU environmental policy is crumbling under corporate pressure. Existing EU Green protections are either not being enforced or are greatly weakened under the 'better regulations agenda' which puts profit before the environment. The EU has great rhetoric on tackling climate change but unfortunately little of the real action needed – it only goes as far as big business, and TTIP will let it (see below left).

...the EU promotes peace

Cold war structures, relative economic prosperity, the rise of welfare state systems, increased international connections through new technology and the collapse of European colonial power are just a few factors more important than the EU in keeping the peace in Europe. As good pacifists we should be outraged that the EU has NOT stopped the involvement of its member states in countless wars from the bombing Syria to the funding of conflict in Ukraine. EU member states are among the biggest military spenders and military manufacturers on earth. The EU's European defence agency uses vast resources to support coordination of military capability, production and sales as well as funding military research and development. In effect, the EU is a major global force for promoting militarism.

Violence in Europe

Renke Meuwese is co-clerk of European and Middle Eastern Young Friends meeting. He has been back to the Jungle camp in Calais several times in 2015 and 2016 to volunteer and reports to *The Young Quaker* on the violence that refugees face there now.

Back in August 2015, when I first came to volunteer in the Calais 'Jungle' camp, about 3000 people were living there. The only other volunteers were local French people who had been working in the camp for years, and a few volunteers from other countries as well. By the end of last year, the number of refugees in Calais increased to about 6000 and many new volunteer organisations have been set up to help these people survive, live a more dignified life and provide them with legal information.

The refugee camp exists because the UK border is there. The people who live there have many different stories, but they have one thing in common: they all want to go to the UK. Over the years, the local authorities have repeatedly chased the refugees away from other camps in and around Calais. In spring 2015, police explicitly told people to go to the area of the current refugee camp, promising them that there they would not be tear gassed. As late as September a group of about 100 Syrian refugees who were staying in central Calais were moved by force by the police into the current camp.

Changing police attitudes: tear gas and demolition

By November the police attitude towards the Jungle camp had changed. Tear gas and water cannons were being used almost every night, more and more frequently inside the camp. So it shouldn't be too surprising that by January the prefecture (the local government authority) wanted to clear a strip of 100 meters of the camp, along the motorway. Ostensibly this was meant for the safety of the motorway — refugees would often attempt to climb into lorries going to the UK. But a few weeks after this clearing had happened, the church and mosque that had been explicitly allowed to remain standing were also demolished. And then a second phase of demolition was announced, in which over half of the remaining area of the camp would be cleared.

Court ruling

While the refugees and volunteer associations had mostly cooperated with the first clearing, they felt they could not do so with the second. Many essential facilities, including the women's and children's centre, the school and library, the theatre, community kitchens, as well as the first church of the camp were in this zone. Also many unaccompanied minors lived in this area. The volunteer associations went to court, challenging this decision. Ultimately the court in Lille delivered a very complicated verdict, in which the houses could be demolished but the social spaces could not, and in which the government could use no force to remove people from their houses. The prefecture and the minister of the interior responded that they would use persuasion for a humane, gradual dismantlement of the south side of the camp. They even claimed that people would be allowed to stay, if they truly wanted to.

Another broken promise and renewed demolition

But once again the state broke its promise. Four days after the judge's verdict the police started to clear the camp with their usual tools: tear gas, rubber bullets and water cannons. Once people were thus driven away, the houses were immediately demolished, the debris cleared and the skips guarded by police, to prevent people from reusing the wood. For weeks hundreds of riot police officers helped the prefecture to clear the camp by brute force.

In the meantime the number of volunteers and donations has dropped dramatically. It seemed that people were either scared or thought that the demolition meant an end to the problem in Calais. But destruction like this has happened many times before. Help is still needed. See calaidipedia.co.uk if you want to know how you can help.

Twelve refugees in the camp are on hunger strike, having sewn their lips together. Conversations with the authorities and organisations like UNHCR so have so far been frustrating, because they assume these men merely call attention to their own individual plight. In fact they want a safe place for all the refugees in the camp.

Tomorrow (March 20), I'm returning to Calais once more. The work continues. ■

EU vote: the need-to-know terms

If all the euro-jargon on p4-5 got a bit much, take a look at this cheat-sheet of all the need-to-know terms (for those of us who aren't doing a PhD in politics – Ed)

EU Commission. It's responsible for both proposing and implementing laws and treaties, as well as managing the everyday business of the EU. The 28 commissioners (one from each member state) are each responsible for a policy area except for the president. The president appoints the other commissioners based on suggestions from members states.

EU Directives. These are EU laws that member states must follow and enforce.

Court of Justice of EU. This ensures that all EU institutions, member states and citizens follow EU laws as laid out in its legislation and treaties.

European Central Bank. This controls the production and interest rate of Euros and the financial regulations.

EU Parliament. Effectively the lower house of the EU. It can amend and reject legislation proposed by the EU Commission and co-constructs the EU budget, together with the Council of the EU (centre middle). It is made up of 750 representatives directly elected by EU citizens, weighted by each country's population.

Qualified majority voting. In most policy areas when the Council of the EU makes a decision it can pass over a member state's veto if it meets two conditions:

1. 55% of member states vote in favour (16 out of 28).
2. those member states represent at least 65% of the total EU population.

Council of the EU. The upper house of the EU: it can amend and reject legislation and co-construct the EU budget, with the EU parliament (below left) as well as constructing international agreements and working under the European Council to enact EU defence and foreign policy. It is made up of the ministers of the EU member states.

Social chapter. Part of EU law that set out the fundamental rights that people have at work including minimum maternity leave, paid holiday, regular breaks as well as health and safety standards and equality at work.

European Council. It appoints senior EU positions in the EU Commission and European Central Bank as well as controlling EU defence and foreign policy and constructing EU treaties. It's made up of political leaders of member states.

TTIP. The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership is a potential trade agreement between the USA and the EU currently being negotiated by US and EU officials in secret along with corporations and their lobbyists. There is very limited input from consumer groups, trade unions or elected representatives: most of the public's knowledge of the negotiations is through leaks. The most controversial parts are the likely lowering of regulations and labour rights, and the Investor-State Dispute settlement (ISDS). The ISDS means that businesses will have the right to sue for damages if it suffers losses because of any laws or measures of the EU or individual member states. For example a country's labour, environmental and consumer protections could become reasons to sue its government.

Non-EU bodies & treaties

Council of Europe.

A non-EU body made up of 47 European states whose function is to promote democracy and human rights. It provides the institutional framework for the European Court of Human Rights.

The European Convention on Human Rights.

An International treaty to protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of citizens within all member states of the Council of Europe including the UK.

The European Court of Human Rights. An international court to ensure the enforcement of the European Convention on Human Rights within all member states of the Council of Europe. It has no institutional ties with the EU. ■

Any thoughts on what you've read in this issue?

Comment online or email
theyoungquaker@gmail.com

PS:

We've finally got with the times! Make Friends with us on Facebook. Follow us on Twitter.

The Interview

Maria Martinez Garcia-Armero is 25 and from A Coruna in Galicia, Spain. She is a PhD student, studying education through drama and teaches undergraduates at the University of Granada. **Alice Crawford** interviews.

When and how did you discover Quakerism?

When I was about twenty I decided I wanted to address my faith. I have always had the feeling that God is real and that Jesus saved us from our own hate, but I'm sceptical that the salvation of my soul relies on performing so many rituals.

I was raised a non-practicing Catholic, so my parents never made me feel I needed to attend mass or confession. They taught me that what's important is what lies within each person and that my relationship with God is personal. I never felt part of the Catholic Church but wanted to 'practise' my faith. My godmother is a Baptist and I attended a Baptist church for almost a year and felt I belonged, but then one day I just realised that there were as many rules and rituals as in Catholicism. I stopped attending any church and felt kind of lonely. But one day I read an interview with a nun, and she was complaining about Catholic women's services and said: 'you start considering becoming a Quaker'. I looked up that alien word, found out who Friends are, their beliefs and what they do and I said: this is it.

What is your experience of being a Quaker in Spain?

There are very few Friends in Spain. I found groups in Madrid, Barcelona and Málaga, but they are quite far from home, so I can't go to the meetings. I'm thinking of starting a Quaker meeting in my village in the future, when I have more experience myself. I think many people here are willing to explore their spirituality away from set religion and dogma.

What brought you to YFGM and what was it like?

My first YFGM was in February this year! I decided to go because I had been postponing it for a couple of years (to be honest, I was so happy with the idea of Quakerism I was afraid that it would end up being same old church).

It was better than I could have ever imagined! I met a lot of good, kind, interesting people, and I found my place. This is how I understand a Church or Religion: as a group of people who share similar values and want to use them to make the world a better place. I also acknowledged how arrogant I had been towards Catholic faith; it was a much-needed humbling experience.



How do you explore or sustain your faith?

I try to find a balance between what I feel and what I've been taught.

I started reading the Bible this year for the first time (Catholics read catechisms). I try to understand the purpose and lesson of each story, and what it meant when it was written. Then I stay silent for a while and try to understand what it means to me, in particular, and I write about it.

The Bible helps me question some things in my life, but it's not the main source of my faith: my parents are, and all the good people I know. I can see the light of God through them, and it becomes impossible for me to question that God works within us. When you allow yourself to stop and feel marvelled by the world it is nearly impossible not to feel the Spirit. I feel most connected to God when I'm at the sea.

What is it like knowing you are part of a wider community across the sea?

It feels warm and exciting! When I think of Quakers I feel like they're a part of me, all around the world. It's going to sound cheesy, but it feels like you can't ever be lonely, and that feeling of unity is just amazing.

This special issue of TYQ marks the referendum on EU membership in Britain. Do you have any thoughts on this that you'd like to share with other Young Friends?

I believe the idea of Europe is a good one: unity of many countries that maintain their independence. It starts with the European Union as we know it and, who knows, in a couple of years it could include Asia, Africa and the world. Unity is tough, sometimes, but it's always worth it. ■

QUAKERS FOR EUROPE

Peter Mills from the group 'Quakers for Europe' discusses an ethical case for the EU

As Quakers, we believe in 'that of God in everyone' and want to see a Europe which is peaceful, compassionate, open and just in its dealings within the EU and throughout the world. Quakers for Europe (www.quakersforeurope.com) is not an official Quaker body but a group of individuals acting in our personal capacities, who passionately hope that the UK will remain in the EU.

The ethical and moral dimensions to EU membership are in danger of being overlooked. However, the EU is an organisation founded on ethical as well as economic principles to promote peace, solidarity, sustainability and community in Europe after the second world war. These core Quaker principles are put into practice for us by the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA qcea.org) whose aim is to bring a Quaker vision of just relationships to the work of European institutions.

Consider some key achievements of the EU since its foundation:

- More than 50 years of peace, stability and prosperity, which has improved the living standards of millions of Europeans.
- Supported 13 former dictatorships in Western and Eastern Europe to become democracies.
- Freedom for all EU citizens to live and work elsewhere in Europe and help to study in other European countries.
- Free movement of people, money, goods and services.
- Some of the highest consumer safety and environmental standards in the world.
- Common foreign and security policy giving a greater voice in world affairs.
- Support for European countries and regions in industrial decline.
- EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights which underpins all EU law, promoting human rights, dignity, freedom and the rule of law.

There are many myths about the EU and how it works. A common misconception is about the democratic nature of the EU. The European Parliament is directly elected by voters in all 28 member states, and the EU Commission is appointed by all 28

CONT from p1: and potential support. Members of the working group will conduct this research through surveys and case studies in the next few months.

A member of the working group says: 'We feel that as a working group, we have the skills and resources needed but are very happy to have the help from YFGM!' You can contact the working group at mentalwellbeing@quaker.org.uk. ■

governments and approved by the Parliament.

All EU laws have to be approved by leaders of member states, who participate directly in negotiations and Subsidiarity – a fundamental principle of EU decision making from the start – means that decisions are taken at regional and national levels as far as possible. We recognise that the EU has flaws that need to be addressed, but we believe the most effective way to encourage change is to stay in, strengthen our relationships and win the argument by persuasion. ■

Let's explore Quaker Faith and Practice in a weekend of guided discussion, resources & activities to discover how our book relates to our lives.

17th-19th June
Arrivals from Friday evening
Nottingham Meeting House

Interactive sessions on ...
...the story of 'Quaker Faith and Practice'.
... QF&P: how would you write yours?...
... Advices and Queries...
...creative responses to Quaker Faith and Practice...
... Global Faith & Practice: different countries different voices

Speakers to be confirmed

There'll be time for fun and fellowship too: join in the outdoors picnic with pick n mix lunch, a meal out at a local Malaysian restaurant, games and a half hour break between every session.

Nap room available!

Please note: it is likely that there will be a small cost for this event. However there will be bursaries for this and train travel if you need them so don't let money worries prevent you from attending.

If you have any questions, feel free to message Abigail Rowse on Facebook or email yfgmfree@gmail.com

My Favourite QF&P is...

Each of us is responsible for our own actions and our own reactions. We are not responsible for someone else's actions and reactions. This is very important for women especially because most women have been taught that they are responsible for the happiness of everyone in their family. They are taught that all family unhappiness and discord is their fault. But responsibility rests within each individual.

Alice Wiser, 21.16
Chosen by: Naomi



Some from the men this issue!
NB: see new key below for extra acronym clarity. Love :)

Hidden Treasure

Kooky fund manager with a way with words WLTD sensitive Friendly brunette YFF.

Willing and Able

"Ey up!" from YFGM's heartbreaker-chairbreaker, possessor of great height and great shorts. This Giant Yorkshire Gent WLTM sporty lady to put the Fling back into yFgm.

Key:

YFF: young female Friend
YMF: young male Friend
WLTM: would like to meet
WLTD: would like to date
GYG: giant yorkshire gent



Meeting for Sufferings

By Laurence Hall

I went into my first Meeting for Sufferings (MfS) as a rep with more than just a few nerves. MfS is the representative meeting of British Quakers which discerns corporate decisions when yearly meeting itself in not in session - it's a big deal! But once the meeting got going my nerves melted away as we tackled important items.

The first item we discerned recalled the origins of MfS - registering the sufferings of Friends living out their witness. We registered the punishment of Sam Sender for living out his witness through environmental activism.

We heard the Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) trustees report which focused on managing risks: reputational risk, property risk, risk of HS2 to Friends House and the long term risk due to ageing Quakers.

The treasurers' 2015 report on BYM's finances showed the overall financial situation of BYM is stable and positive but for Quaker work to expand, a target of £1 million more in annual contributions is needed so please give what you can!

Yearly meeting's three year programme 'Living Out Our Faith' led to a call to all British Quakers to give examples of how we live out our witness. The response of different Quaker meetings was a true inspiration in its breadth. In response to this celebration of Quaker activism, MfS focused on how meetings could be better supported in constructing and enacting their tested Concerns through sharing knowledge, know-how and spiritual

values. I stated that involving Young Quakers more in meetings and their social witness is key to any success. So please get involved and show Young Friends are key to the future of Quaker witness.

The new Quaker World Relations Committee (QWRC) give its first report to MfS. QWRC's is like the Foreign Office for Quakers - its main task is to enrich the relationship between Friends in Britain and Friends in the rest of the World. They reported back on the world Quaker gathering in Peru and celebrated the minute on sustainability which was achieved by deepening understanding and coordination of Friends. Another key reflection of their report was the role that Young Friends played both in Peru and QWRC. They called for all Quaker meetings to involve Young Friends more in the roles in committees and communities. I gladly added to that call as Young Friends' empowerment will benefit all Quakerism.

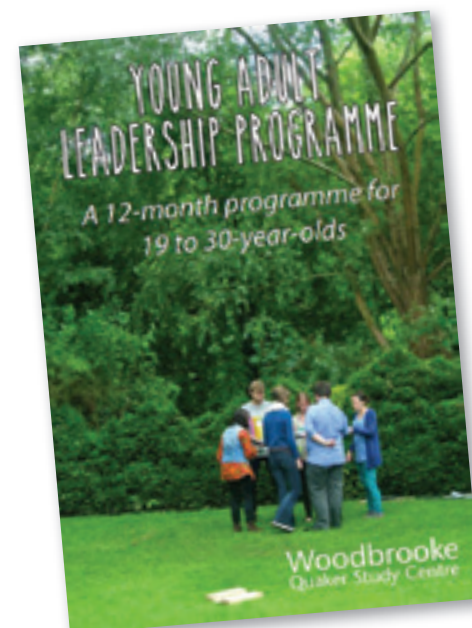
Finally we received and approved minutes from area meetings and BYM central committees (the arms trade; the Conscience Objection peace tax bill; the criminal justice system; sustainability).

All in all this MfS session showed the rich variety of powerful witness in British Quakerism but also the real need for Young Friends to shape it. So if you want to do more, please do! old.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/giving/quaker-service ■

YALP 2016-17

Young Adult Leadership Programme at Woodbrooke

APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN



Visit www.woodbrooke.org.uk/youngadults to download a copy of the YALP booklet.

Woodbrooke's year-long Leadership Programme for Young Adult Friends (YAFs) is a fantastic opportunity for YAFs to strengthen their knowledge of the Quaker faith and its history and develop many practical skills to help them in the workplace and in their day to day lives.

For more information visit
www.woodbrooke.org.uk/youngadults

"YALP has been a good chance to take a step back and reflect on how I live, it's been a great experience and great to meet everyone."

Courses run by Young Adult Friends

Food, Faith, Virtue: Eating in the light of our commitment to sustainability

13 May - 15 May 2016
James Surry and Michael Eccles

Living, loving and engaging with each other and the world together: parents, sons & daughters

3 June 2016 - 5 June 2016
Becky Riddell and Roger Riddell

A Retreat for Young Friends

26 August - 29 August 2016
Rachael Swancott and another tutor



Young Adults at Woodbrooke

Woodbrooke
Quaker Study Centre



@YAFsWoodbrooke

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!

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 2016. We would welcome any submissions for this edition no later than 1st September 2016.

Co-editors for this Issue:
Beatrice Shelley, Alice Crawford and Laurence Hall.
With special thanks to all the Writers.

Front page illustration credit: Tim Rouse

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

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

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

What is...**Young Friends General Meeting?**

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, 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.

Who are...**the 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.

YFGM Catch Up: *The Clerks Offering from February's meeting*

We have come together this February in Bournemouth. This weekend we have focused both on our own community and on our place in a global community. Members of YFGM have shared their experiences of attending the World Plenary Meeting in Peru, meeting Young Friends from around the world, and plans to maintain and nurture these new friendships in the future.

Holly Wallis from Conscience, along with Hannah Brock and Laurence Hall, led a session on conscientious objectors in which we remembered those who stood against militarism 100 years ago and were challenged to consider our own acts as conscientious objectors in the modern world. We were reminded that challenging militarism is most successful when we work together as part of a wider movement. We have acted this weekend to share our concerns about the renewal of Trident with those outside of YFGM and Quakers. We hope to join with other groups of young adults to express our vision for the world we want to create for our future, one free from nuclear weapons.

Quintessential led us in a spirituality session exploring silence, ministry and Advices & queries. In worship sharing, discussion and creative exploration, we shared some of the challenges and joys of these intangible aspects of our Quaker faith. We also spent time considering our nominations process, as Nominations Committee opened the door to their sometimes mysterious meetings and helped us to see how they connect with our whole community.

Our Mental Wellbeing Working Group similarly helped us to connect with their work as a community. Our decision to research how YFGM affects our mental wellbeing invites us to explore our processes, celebrating the positive experiences that living and worshipping together can bring, and helping us to find ways to support each other even more in the future.

Throughout the weekend we have strengthened our community through sharing meals, games and conversations over cups of tea. We have appreciated the opportunity here in Bournemouth to take trips to the beach, even if some of us returned wetter than planned. We leave grateful for each other's friendship, and look forward to gathering again in May.

Peter Doubtfire & Brigid Stoney, Co-clerks
February 2016, Bournemouth