

Lincolnshire Area Quaker Meeting Newsletter



©

Prussia Cove Cornwall – Jane Harding.

Edition 9 December 2020

Welcome!

Welcome to Edition 9 of Lincolnshire Area Meeting Newsletter. I hope that you find this edition interesting and useful. If you have any comments or material for future editions, please send them to me before **** 13th February 2021 **** anne_bennett@yahoo.com
Temporary Editor – Anne Bennett

Dates for your diary

2020:

December 12th From 10.00am,

Craft day on Zoom (contact Alison Buckley-Jones).

This will be a “show and tell day” for those who make things, especially for Christmas, but all are welcome to join in to see what is happening in our area. This is an all age event and should be fun.

December 28th

“Hootenay” from 2.00pm, Bring your party piece!

Contact Alison Buckley-Jones for more detail and the link.

2021:

Area Meetings:- These Meetings may be held on Zoom or in our Meeting Houses depending on the COVID-19 regulations at the time or other requirements.

January 9th Fellowship Meeting : Gainsborough

This meeting is expected to be on Zoom but if we can meet in our Meeting Houses, it will be in Gainsborough. **Lee Taylor** will speak about **“working with Quaker partners in Southern Africa in pandemic times.”** She will bring the work of Friends of Hlekweni in southern Zimbabwe into her talk.

March 13th Meeting for Worship for Business :- Lincoln

May 8th Fellowship Meeting :- Spalding

July 10th Meeting for Worship for Business :- Lincoln

September 11th Fellowship Meeting :- Grimsby

November 13th Meeting for Worship for Business :- Lincoln

Elders and Overseers Meetings in 2021

February 9th, April 13th June 8th

September 7th October 12th December 7th

AQM Trustees Meetings in 2021

Sat 16th January; 10.30am Saturday 6th March; 10.30am Thursday 6th May; 6.00pm

Sat 26th June; 10.30am Thursday 2nd Sept; 6.00pm Saturday 6th November 10.30am

Britain Yearly Meeting 2021 July 31st to August 6th, hopefully at Bath University

We have only received news from Alford Meeting for this edition of the Newsletter.

Friends at Alford Meeting continue to meet via zoom every two weeks. We start with a period of silent worship and then either discuss one of the Advices and Queries or another topic chosen the previous session. This will continue until Alford Methodist Church reopens fully.

Article by Chris Rose – Newark Meeting

Explorers and Map readers

I recently came across some words written by George McLeod, the founder of the Iona community off the west coast of Scotland. He said that in our spiritual lives we need to be ‘explorers rather than map readers’ and I thought how relevant those words are to many Quakers today.

For some, having everything mapped out is a great support. Turning up for a regular Sunday service with its set order of service, its well-known hymns, prayers, and sermons offers a reassurance and support in their faith journey in these uncertain times, with creeds to recite and dogmas to adhere to. Many though, I feel, are looking for something different. Today’s Quakers are very much spiritual explorers rather than map readers. We have no set creeds, no written dogmas. When I turn up for Meeting on a Sunday, I have no idea of whether there will be any ministry. Will it be a totally silent meeting? Will there be ministry that ‘speaks to my condition’? Will I feel that presence, however we want to describe it? Will I feel moved to speak myself and what about? Will I find new insights to bring home with me?

We Quakers are very much spiritual explorers and it is not always an easy place to be. No one will tell us what to believe, and I hope sincerely as well that no one will also tell us what not to believe. We find our own spiritual path, our own way to God, to the spirit, to an inner love, whatever words we choose to use. Sometimes Friends can be incredibly frustrating. We are good at navel gazing and I wonder if I’m in the right place. Would I be better off finding somewhere that speaks clearly to my current perceived belief? But no, I remember a very elderly Quaker lady, who many years ago when she was in her nineties, saying ‘I’m well over ninety and I still don’t know all the answers and have doubts, but what a privilege it is to be always open to new light’. That for me was a kind of Eureka moment as, hitherto, I’d always wanted to cross the spiritual ‘t’s and cross the ‘i’s. We are all on a spiritual journey and if I was asked to describe my faith today, my description would not be the same as ten years ago. And I know if, in ten years’ time, someone asks me the same question, no doubt my answer would be not the same as now. We don’t always get it right, we sometimes get it wrong, but spiritual explorers we are, and we keep looking, learning and listening.

For modern Friends, an acceptance of our shared spiritual exploration, an acceptance of the different words and languages we use, and above all a true shared support and Friendship in things eternal and on our faith-journey, is what unites and binds us. Being an explorer is where I feel happiest. Despite it all, I quite like being an explorer!

Next time – An Arts edition!

I am aware that within Lincolnshire Area Meeting there are many Friends who express their faith through their work and leisure activities. As an experiment, I would like to use the March edition of the Newsletter to give an opportunity for all who are involved with the **Arts in any form, including painting, craft, music, dance and writing etc.** to express ways in which their work is influenced by their Quaker faith. I would like to include as many contributions as possible but as we only have a few pages available, I hope that you will try to express your feelings in two to three paragraphs (difficult I know!!) and any photos would be much appreciated. Could you let me have your contribution **as soon as possible, but by 13th February** at the latest.

Anne Bennett – temporary editor.

Peter and Ruth's Australian journey – Part 2 – Western Australia

At the end of February, driving 1000km across the Nullabor, we crossed the West Australian border at Eucla, where the temperature soared, clouds built up and we were very obviously running into a thunderstorm. So we took a room for the night at the charmingly named Cocklebiddy Motel. It was good to sleep under a roof during the storm, and a welcome treat to have our meal that night in their dining room. The following day, we drove for hours through pouring rain, a truly rare occurrence in this waterless limestone desert. We were warned to drive slowly because of kangaroos coming to drink from puddles on the tarmac! There was an absolutely straight section of 146km (90 miles!).



Our next stop was Fraser Range cattle station where again we chose to stay under a solid roof – fortunately the “Overseers cottage” was free and we felt that was in order! We then decided to go north to the gold-mining town of Kalgoorlie for warmer drier weather. From there we drove even further north to another gold mining town, Leonora. The temperature was steadily increasing into the thirties and so were flies, into the hundreds! So much so that we bought Ruth one of the two last fly nets in town so that she could cook two-handed! After a fly blown day exploring the local gold mining museum we headed south again. On the way, we encountered Anthony Gormley’s installation of more than 50 steel figures in a dry salt lake bed at Lake Ballard. Very hot and quite extraordinary.



With the heat building up, we headed south to the cooler coast and the small port of Esperance, that we had enjoyed visiting with Peter’s Mum about 15 years ago. There are amazing white beaches and we enjoyed staying in a very friendly and well run caravan park – it even had cut flowers in the gents’ loos! Next we drove east towards the wild and remote Cape Arid National Park. Our favourite place here was Jorndee Creek camp, miles from anywhere, set in sand dunes behind a lovely beach and rocky mouth of a creek. We enjoyed two nights of total peace and quiet and then a fabulous morning watching dolphins fishing along the beach at the unfortunately named Poison Creek mouth. Peter was revelling (Ruth less so!) in the rough 4 wheel drive tracks that joined these places. After a fabulous few days exploring the area we returned to Esperance and civilisation to restock.



By now we were starting to hear about the effects and spread of the Coronavirus, although it still seemed very remote! We also met several families with school age children from the Eastern states who had lost homes in the bushfires. That brought home the severity of those fires which seemed just as serious as the virus. However, we were starting to get messages from our travel agent about the possibility of having to return to UK early. With our return flights only 3 weeks away and Singapore (our stopover point) apparently well in control of the virus, that did not seem too urgent, so we continued west to Quaggi Beach in Stokes National Park and then on to another remote camp at Skippy Rock (down a 5km long, sandy 4wd track, much to Peter’s delight!). It was here, standing on a rock close to the surf with just enough 3G signal to work Whatsapp, that we really began to understand the severity of the crisis as we found our flights through Singapore were cancelled. By now Peter’s daughter, a travel agent in Canberra, was holding reservations on four alternative routes back to UK via different airports in S.E. Asia. One by one, these closed leaving only one route via Tokyo still operational about a week ahead (25th March). So we made the most of our last few days exploring the Fitzgerald River National Park, before stopping over for a few anxious nights with Peter’s sister, packing and preparing the vehicle for storage with a nephew in Perth, all the time on tenterhooks that Tokyo might also close. It did, but fortunately after we had passed through an almost deserted airport, (very weird), and caught a BA flight back to Heathrow.

So, our adventure ended abruptly as we arrived back in the UK 3 days after lockdown, wearing facemasks and with spare toilet rolls in our luggage!

Tony Woodford - Newark Meeting, reports on the Area Meeting outing to Whisby Nature Park.

It would have been nice to have had a photo of the Legally allowed Group of Friends of 6 persons, and then a second photo of the other group of Friends. I am referring to the Friends social nature walk at Whisby Nature Park. The day was exceptionally pleasant, as it was a sunny warm day with little wind. I think that the last walk I did there was around 8 years ago or more. I was most impressed how the Nature Reserve looks now and how leaving dead wood and fallen trees to be naturally processed by fungi and all kinds of insects adds to the natural beauty of this wonderful Nature Reserve.

Two different walks were on offer, the longer walk was approximately 2 Km. A smaller group of Friends took a shorter walk, about 1 Km, around Coot Lake and West Lake and back to Whisby Natural World Centre.

I walked the longer walk, where we passed Coot Lake and Grebe Lake and saw Swans and other types of birds in the distance. We crossed over a well-made, new looking, steel footbridge over the main railway line to Lincoln. The walking was along well-maintained footpaths that allowed access for wheelchair users and electric scooters that could be hired from the Centre. We did not see many people as we walked round the Reserve, but they must have been somewhere as the car park at the Centre was busy. Leaving the footbridge, we passed Oakwood and Dragon Fly Lakes and then picked up a footpath heading eastwards through a silver birch and willow wood which looked very natural and lush with various ferns and other plants. Again, this was on a good footpath. No need for tough boots here as good robust trainers are adequate.

Further on we came to Willow Lake where again in the distance on the lake were many swans. We carried on through mixed woodland and then open ground called Sand Hills which was open heathland. We passed Long Pond and Plover Beach and Dragon Fly Lakes and then back over the steel footpath bridge and back to the Centre where we sat outside on chairs around tables and enjoyed a tea or coffee from a Kiosk and had a social chat. The Centre was open inside where you could wonder round the shop and the toilets were open too.

All in all, a very pleasant walk that was easy going and a worthwhile two hours spent at a Nature Reserve that attracts all kinds of bird life through-out the year. I would like to visit here at least once a month throughout the year, to see the ever-changing landscape, bird life and plants that flourish here.

Jane Harding, our Cornish Correspondent:

Greetings from Cornwall Friends.

What a strange year it has been for the world and even for the residents of Cornwall. Penzance Quakers have not met since the first lockdown as we do not have designated Church premises. However, we may be able to meet at the Newlyn Methodist church temporarily after this lockdown. Zoom has been useful for business meetings, but has not proved popular for Meeting for Worship. Friends have been phoning and supporting each other and I have really valued the wise words and comfort this has brought.

Despite having very low coronavirus figures, Cornwall has still been adversely affected. Tourism, which is a major part of the local economy, took a big hit despite visitors coming later in the season and, sadly, many who rely on seasonal work have suffered financially. Penzance food bank has been busier than ever with volunteers delivering to clients' homes as the premises are too small to cope safely.

Despite the problems, the community is looking after the vulnerable. I think we are so fortunate to be in such a beautiful area and we are counting our blessings, especially when seeing the news from 'up country'.

The autumn weather is upon us and I am still fascinated by the huge tidal surges and the strength of the wind which seems to hit us first. I managed to get to the Scilly Isles in late September and was amazed to see the first daffodils in the polytunnels, ready for picking.

I have very happy memories of Brant Broughton Friends and hope that you all stay safe and well.

A contribution by Margaret Crompton ©

Light in lockdown

At Pentecost, we were sitting in sunshine in the garden. John was dozing and I read a chapter in *Haiku, the sacred art: a spiritual practice in 3 lines* *, (a present from an American F/friend whom we met as Friends in Residence at Pendle Hill, Pennsylvania, 2010).

In the midst of lockdown, these were a few precious days which combined motivation, energy and peace. My mind was very still. I noted that we were: 'surrounded by Valerian, Rosemary – became aware of the other herbs including small brave Sage – then of the shapes of pots containing different leaves – beans, strawberries, courgettes – and began to think of drawing them.'

The chapter on *Inspired Conversations* suggested *lectio divina* study of Matthew 5: 13-16. I found myself focusing on: 'A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house.' I noted that: 'this linked with my learning today *not* be paralysed, depressed, by the error of "needing" to justify myself, my life. Lovely discussion with John.'

Then I wrote: '- became aware of sunlight, then that solar panels heat our water *free* – then the great significance of water – and spirit. John says, ' "Be here now." The house is the world.' This links with other thoughts and writing about Light, (- a poem responding to words of Bishop Grosseteste in *De Lumine – On Light*).

Opposite that page of writing is a study of a lupin, which had occupied me through a morning; the next page is covered with efforts to capture the shapes of terra cotta pots and an old enamel coffee jug. Drawing entailed the same stillness as the poem. And as much discovery.

The haiku grew from this meditation.

Light freely given
Sun warms spirit and water
For all in the house.

At the beginning of (first) lockdown, I wondered what I could contribute. The answer I heard was 'your words.' Freely given.

Margaret Crompton

* Margaret D. McGee, 2009, Vermont: Skylight Paths Publishing, p88.

Do you want to know what is happening in Britain Yearly Meeting?

Quake! Is a regular update from BYM for all Quakers in Britain.

Sign up to get the latest news on: www.quaker.org.uk

Article by David Taylor – Brant Broughton Meeting

A Quaker Childhood.

Born in 1933, to parents who were both devout and diligent Quakers, reflecting the Victorian values of their parents, my childhood was, I think, so far from today as to be of interest.

My Mother had to persuade my Father that she needed to wear a wedding ring - he viewed it as a symbol of slavery and did not approve. She feared being thought of as a loose, unmarried woman (with children)!

Alcohol was an absolute no-no, 'of the devil', was an expression I remember. Mother wore a white ribbon, a symbol of total abstinence. I went nowhere near a Pub until my late teens, early twenties. We had family prayers before breakfast every day as well as silent grace before every meal. There were no games to be played on Sunday, excepting 'improving' ones, details of which escape me! I recall a box with rolled up biblical and Quakerly 'quotes', but just why?? Meeting, in 'Sunday bests', every Sunday morning, without fail and another in the evening, before bedtime and attendance at all Preparative, Monthly and Quarterly Meetings. Quakerism was central to our lives. (I remember a friend who, latterly, slipped me half a crown as a reward. A lot of money then). We lived, briefly in the Quaker's flat attached to the Brixton Hill meeting.

All this was an experience rich in care and love, but somewhat removed from the sad realities of day-to-day life. I had a brief pause when, at the start of the war in 1939, I was evacuated from our home in Birmingham to a remote farm in Worcestershire, near the Malvern Hills - where, sin of sins, I tasted real cyder, alcohol, made on the farm from a cow's horn. I still remember the sense of guilt vividly.

My dear parents were being true to themselves, as we all have to be. Surrounded by love, we were fully insulated from the troubles of the war. Father, registered as a conscientious objector, was excused military service, and had a difficult life as a government employee, being obliged to move from Birmingham to Bedford, where the staff were more supportive. His war service was as an air raid warden.

All this made for an interesting and very protected childhood, a fact I remain deeply grateful for. It can be guessed that massive adjustments for the family were needed when I started a career within the Catering/Hospitality world... That's another story!.

Julia Richardson

CALLING ALL KNITTERS!!

The Chaplains at Wandsworth prison wish to provide a hat for every man there this Christmas. So that's 1476 in total. Knitted, bought or pre-loved and in good condition – all are very welcome! **HOWEVER**, please be aware that there are some rules from the prison in order to keep everyone safe.

These are:

- * NO black hats
- * NO peaked hats
- * NO ear pieces
- * NO hats with slogans

But YES PLEASE to lovely warm beanies or bobble hats!

Please send hats to:

- Visitors Centre, Wandsworth Prison, 17 Heathfield Rd, London SW18 3HR or to
- 13 Fawe Park Road, SW15 2EB

However, I am very happy to be a collector and it makes sense to gather up from a number of people and post together so if you live near Newark you could drop them into the Bookwise shop or my flat. **Julia Richardson 01636 918256** or jnrich@phonecoop.coop

Quaker Profile. Julia Richardson.

Newark Meeting and Incoming Clerk of Lincolnshire Area Meeting.

I was born in Newark in 1947. My parents were devout Christians and members of a Pentecostal Church. This formed a central part of my early life. As I grew up, I began to explore other denominations - finding great help and support in both the Nurses' Christian Fellowship and later in the Social Workers' Christian Fellowship. These groups gave me a wider view of life and concentrated on the things we shared rather than differences of belief, which seemed less important than trying to make sense of the world we live in from the perspective of the career I was following. We considered life and death issues thoughtfully and prayerfully and supported each other when encountering difficult problems or decisions in our work.



At university in 1978 I went with a small group of students to visit a home for older people. I was not enthusiastic and expected to find old people sitting round the walls with a television on in the corner and no one watching. However, we were all pleasantly surprised to be greeted by residents, shown round by them and offered tea. This was not an atmosphere I had encountered before and as it was a Quaker home, I became interested in finding out more about Quakers. The course I was taking involved a lot of group work and it seemed sensible to value the contribution of everyone in the group. Leadership is not the prerogative of one person but can move around the group as different people take on the role for different tasks. I was pleased therefore when I found that Quakers have no hierarchy, no appointed clergy, but all have an equal part to play.

As I found out more about Friends, I became more and more convinced that this was where I belonged. I began to attend the Quaker Meeting in Sheffield, becoming a member in 1984. Shortly after this I was appointed as an administrator for the Quaker home in Bristol. Living and working with around 50 old people – about a third of whom were Quakers and having a Quaker management committee was an enriching experience for me – though not always an easy one! It was while I was at Bristol that I met and later married Norman in 1988. A Meeting for Worship and celebration of being ‘nearly married’ was held on the Saturday followed by a Quaker wedding in Sheffield on the Sunday. Planning for and being part of our wedding formed a focus of interest for the elderly people who had seen it all coming and were delighted for us!

Leicester Meeting were looking for Wardens and as the Leicester Quaker Housing Association had property next to the Meeting house we decided to move to Leicester where we spent around 3 happy years being wardens and getting involved in various other roles within the Meeting. After ceasing to be wardens we lived in Rutland and attended Oakham Meeting until 2001. We then moved to Ross on Wye to live next door to the Meeting House there. After around nine years we moved three miles out of Ross to live in a cottage belonging to a dear Friend and as Norman’s health gradually deteriorated, I spent more time caring for him. We lived in a beautiful rural location and Norman was able to stay there until he died, thanks to the help of Hospice at Home who supported us for the last five weeks of his life.

Following Norman’s death, I decided to move back to my home-town of Newark and bought the shop next door to the new Newark Meeting House. With the help of Andrew James this was converted to a comfortable flat with a shop below.

In my life with Friends, I have always found that, through service, I receive far more than I am able to give and I look forward to getting to know Friends here better. I love the words of Isaac Pennington,

“Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another: but praying one for another and helping one another up with a tender hand.” QF&P 10.01