

# **Lincolnshire Area Quaker Meeting Newsletter**



**Hats for Christmas ! ©Julia Richardson**

**Edition 10 March 2021**

## Welcome!

Welcome to Edition 10 of Lincolnshire Area Meeting Newsletter. I hope that you find this issue interesting and useful. I had so many fascinating contributions in my request for articles about creativity as an expression of our faith. Many thanks to all our contributors. This will be my final issue as temporary editor. It has been great fun to act as a 'caretaker' but you will be pleased to hear that Ruth Allen-Williams, who started the Newsletter, will be resuming her role. If you have any comments or material for future editions, please send them to Ruth, [ruthallwill@hotmail.com](mailto:ruthallwill@hotmail.com) before **\*\* 13<sup>th</sup> May 2021 \*\***

*Temporary Editor – Anne Bennett*

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**Local Meetings are worshipping in person, blended meetings and via Zoom. Government regulations are likely to change so please contact your meeting for the latest information.**

## Dates for your diary

### **2021 Area Meeting Dates – via Zoom, or venues as listed:**

Saturday March 13th	Lincoln	10.30	Meeting for Worship for Business
Saturday May 8th	Spalding	10.30	Fellowship Meeting
Saturday July 10th	Lincoln	10.30	Meeting for Worship for Business
Saturday September 11th	Grimsby	10.30	Fellowship Meeting
Saturday November 13th	Lincoln	10.30	Meeting for Worship for Business

### **Upcoming meetings open to all include:**

Newark Quaker Meeting Thursdays at 7.30pm

- 11<sup>th</sup> March **Living our Quaker Faith from day to day**
- 25<sup>th</sup> March **Personal Journeys.** Three more Friends will describe their journey to Quakerism
- 8<sup>th</sup> April **Hope, Spring, Light and new life.** Another opportunity for Friends to share ideas, readings, poems, experiences etc.

Any Friend wishing to join with Newark Meeting on Zoom contact Chris Rose for a link [chrisivyfarm@googlemail.com](mailto:chrisivyfarm@googlemail.com)

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### **Charlotte Whiting's report on a fun event hosted by Grimsby Friends.**



In recent years we have held a Christmas crafting event at Grimsby meeting house towards the end of November, at which Friends of all ages have beavered away producing a range of seasonal art and craft items, whilst enjoying plenty of friendly chat. Of course, our 2020 event had to be quite different, and, although the customary freedom to mix and chat was missed, participation for those familiar with Zoom was much easier. With less other seasonal commitments calling on our time, it was possible to hold

this event in mid-December – so we were definitely in the Christmassy mood! Friends were invited this time to share their own creations, taking turns to 'show and tell'. There was a lovely variety of crafts on display, and plenty of ingenuity at which to marvel! Some bravely took on the challenge of utilising a mystery package of Christmassy resources, mailed from our stock-cupboard in Grimsby. Every now and then, we had an update from Winston on his splendid gingerbread biscuits, which were being baked live on air!! It was wonderful that so many could join us – please put your thinking caps on for Spring crafts now!

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### **HOOTENANNY - Another enjoyable event - by Alison Buckley-Jones, Alford Meeting**

On Monday 28<sup>th</sup> December everyone from the Area Meeting was invited to a zoom Hootenanny to celebrate the end of the year. It was a fun afternoon with Friends informing us that it was such a good way for everyone to keep in touch, lifting spirits and buoying them up for the New Year. One Friend said that they thought it was wonderful and were thinking at the end, when has Area Meeting ever come together before and enjoyed themselves together in such a way?

The entertainment consisted of participants' party pieces ranging from singing and playing musical instruments, readings of poetry and prose and ending with a story from eastern Europe. Interspersed with these were "Simon Says" tasks, work out how the Christmas tree had changed and a treasure hunt with a difference, as everyone had to find various items around their own houses; these were along the lines of something that went round, too big, sparkly, red in colour or went pop.

In these trying times it is good to have something positive and enjoyable to look forward to and the "organising committee" are hoping that this year we shall be able to have our annual picnic on the beach at Moggs Eye on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> July – Covid-19 rates, vaccine and fingers crossed permitting!



### **A letter from our Canadian correspondent – Janette Fraser**

As I sit down to write to you from a snowy Montreal in January I am thinking back over the year. It is easy to become immersed in the present especially as we are in lockdown, with an overnight curfew at the moment and hearing today that its length may be extended.

We are fortunate in Montreal to have a very beautiful Botanical Gardens. For some strange reason they are classed as a museum so when all museums were closed in the pandemic so also was the Botanical Gardens. However, it was granted a reprieve and Montrealers immediately took advantage of this.

I was going regularly for a walk with 2 Friends over the summer and into the autumn and winter. It was a delight to watch the changing of the seasons. There is a very beautiful lily pond, a delightful Chinese garden, an Indigenous garden, an alpine garden and a rose garden among other areas. The Gardens are a place where one feels at peace and at one with nature. We have enjoyed sitting quietly by the lily pond or wandering through the rose garden. In the summer we took picnics and one day were "told off" by the security person because we were sitting on the grass! In winter cross country skiers abound in the Gardens.

Living in a city, this space is a great escape from the built up areas and although there are many parks in Montreal my favourite is the Botanical Gardens.

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### **Mary Hartshorne – Brant Broughton Meeting**

There's a strong creative streak in me which all too often gets pushed out – almost as if it's a bit of a luxury. However, one of the things that I prioritise every year is designing and making my own Christmas cards – no matter how busy or distracted I have been. The process is quite drawn out, and I start it during the autumn, perhaps almost unconsciously as I look around for inspiration – textures, bits of things that I find, conversations I have. Eventually I sit down with a fledgling idea, and try things out. After a joyous few hours of dabbling, splodging, sketching, sticking, ripping-up-and-starting again, pausing .... I have the idea.

It's clear when I get there, and it's always very different to my starting point! I know this is going to happen, and I'm never concerned that I won't come up with just what I want.

Anne's email made me compare this process to settling in Meeting for Worship, centring down. It's a kind of waiting, seeking clearness and direction – being open to different ideas, knowing I will reach a certain place.

Here's this year's journey:



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### David Taylor - Brant Broughton Meeting

How do we define Art, where is the Spiritual dimension? I think that any Art is centred on the act of personal creation, of being 'ourselves', a personal expression of the deepest values in life. The 'art of cooking' is the most transient of art forms, sadly instantly demolished at point of creation.

Personally, experience tells me that making music comes a very close second. 'Music is the Sound of Love', words from 'Love Defined' (Stanley Oates) is a profound reality and truth. The creation of beautiful music, for me, transcends the understandings of notes and/or words. It may take on a Spiritual dimension. Musical expression, for me, is beyond intellectual understanding, giving a glimpse of eternity. I have sung, unaccompanied, for a number of years (about 40) and have found the sharing of the beauty, the need to always listen to the other voices, a fulfilling experience.

In the act of creation there can be moments of profound insight; in the process of learning new works and re-visiting known ones, there can be any number of mistakes. Performers recognise that we are working to an end which is the understanding and performing of the music. There can be moments of sublime insight through the blending of voices, the shared hope of creating excellence and finding eternal values.

We try to interpret the vision of the composer. Our task as singers, is to share that vision. After learning the notes (a first must), so much can follow. There are occasions when practising or performing, that the Spiritual insights and understandings emerge. Clearly, singing in a Quartet, members become close friends, created through this shared vision of beauty.

For me, Music is indeed 'The Sound of Love'.

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***The spirit of writing* - Margaret Crompton – unattached Friend.**

As I finished the final chapter in *Respecting Children* (1980), I realised that I had not, after all, finished. The book explores ways of communicating with children and young people, including art, music, play, stories, touch. But we had recently become Quakers. I added a single-page chapter: *Peace and Silence*. This has led to all my publications.

For over 30 years, I wrote and taught about communicating with children in social work contexts. A commission to produce training materials on *Children, Spirituality and Religion* (1996) stimulated me to pioneer attention to children’s spiritual well-being. We were invited to contribute to conferences throughout the British Isles, including ground-breaking work with Barnardo’s (Northern Ireland).

Publications as writer and/or editor include 13 substantial texts, of which the core is *Children Spirituality, Religion and Social Work* (1998). Contributed chapters include ‘Children’s spiritual well-being’ in *Spirited Practices* (2007: University of Western Sydney). Quaker commissions are *Learners All: Quaker Experiences In Education* (1986), *Meeting Safety* (2001) and Pendle Hill Pamphlet *Nurturing Children’s Spiritual Wellbeing* (2012: USA). Most are available in Woodbrooke and Friends House Libraries.

In my 70s, I’ve turned to exploring other forms of writing. Several stories are published in anthologies and/or online. One poem is included in *A Speaking Silence: Quaker voices of today* (2013), some have been set to music and sung in Lincoln Cathedral.

My plays have been produced by 3 theatre companies. In 2019, *Script in Hand* (which I direct) performed *Anne Askew*. This is a direct statement of my beliefs, challenging complacency about rights and freedoms, and celebrating courage, fidelity and truth. In 2016, a Cathedral priest had invited me to give the Eucharist homily on the anniversary of Anne Askew’s death. She had been harassed by priests for illegally reading the Bible in the Cathedral in 1545. Now I, a woman and a Quaker, read her poem, speaking her own words in the place where she had been persecuted.

Every word Anne Askew wrote expressed her faith, her belief, her life. I can do no other, whether in article, book or story, poetry, drama or prose.

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**Crafts - Anne Wood – Brant Broughton Meeting**

Spending time doing any craft gives me peace of mind and space when I can connect with or retreat from the world around me - the earth, trees, birds, creatures and people.

In using simple materials such as paper, fleece, yarn, and paint, I experience a fascination and spiritual connection with the source of creation, God, Spirit? You might call it something different but we are looking to connect with it in Meeting for Worship as well.

Spinning and weaving, in particular, also gardening, take me to a different world where time doesn’t exist. Working alongside other spinners and weavers or teaching the crafts leaves me, at the end of the day, with love in my heart.

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A beautiful and moving poem by **Graham Lewinton Lincoln Meeting** – too long to include in the Newsletter, but please click on this link: <https://grahamlewinton.com/?p=980>

## **Why I dance - Barbara Miller - Brant Broughton Meeting**

If all of life is sacred, is dancing any different from washing up? Do I like dancing more than washing up? Yes, but don't I use my brain and body for both. The intention and the emotion are there, too often when washing up it is resentment, impatience, frustration instead of love and delight in being alive. Is the difference from dance just my failure to recognise that everything I do is a dance?

I am not a dancer, but come my mid-fifties the leader of our singing group invited us to join her circle dance evening once a month. I accepted the invitation to the dance. The music, the energy of the circle of held hands and stepping feet, the absorption into the embrace of each dance and the shared space in the held silence after each dance drew me to the community of dancers, as the intensity of silent worship keeps me coming back for more with Friends. Twenty years later, after dancing with groups in lots of places, I am circle dancing and Chantraine dancing on Zoom, my spirits lifted in a celebration of the soul through movement, part of the world community whose stories and festivities are portrayed in the steps and movements of body and arms. As a movement goes into my body it becomes part of me.

Is the difference that while I dance my ego disappears, whereas, while I wash up my ego often thinks that I have more important things to do. More important than to be? Dancing is a transcendental experience. Everything else could be too if I remember what a miracle breathing and moving is.

Paragraph 21.39 of Quaker Faith and Practice corresponds to my experience of dance, but I think I want to replace the word "religious" with "spiritual".

How lovely it is to be able to talk of and share the "spirit" with dancers, just as we can with Friends, because it is a reality to us. A group of dancers is generous, and a group of Friends too.

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## **Early February by Peter Jackson – Lincoln Meeting**

First the yellow Aconites  
'That's Buttercups, no need for fright'  
The bright bed of yellow, a clarion call  
Better times ahead for one, for all  
Next the Snowdrops purest white

Modest heads drooping away from light  
Symbolising Hope in the coming season  
As a purpose in life, an excellent reason  
Now Crocuses push up through soggy ground

Nature is so varied, haven't you found?  
Their subtle colours a joy to behold  
'Winter retreats', this is better than gold.

**Mark Smith - Lincoln Meeting** wrote this poem shortly after his conviction in Oct 2015

**“A Seeker’s Declaration”,**

I am a Methodical Seeker,  
Of the Truth and the Divine.  
To seek these is Leading a life,  
Made in mould of both,  
Simple and moderate design.  
From an Opening of light,  
Cast and crafted by time,  
Carved deep within me,  
Peace is what I find.

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**Hats for HMP Wandsworth, Julia Richardson – Newark Meeting**

I enjoy keeping in touch with friends on Facebook and one day, in November, up on my page popped a link to a new page called ‘Hats for HMP Wandsworth’. I discovered that this was a project run by the Chaplains to provide warm woolly hats for the 1500 or so men in the prison. Having spent over 10 years working as a Quaker chaplain in an old prison, I knew how cold they could be in the winter. Also, knowing how security-conscious our prison system is, I was surprised that they had obtained permission for this project!

Out came the knitting needles and all those odd balls of wool and the knitting began. Other Friends joined in and our Newsletter editor included it in the last edition. It was a lot of hats and only a few short weeks to Christmas. However, people all over the country were also knitting, buying and donating hats so by Christmas, the target was reached with plenty left over.

The task of sorting, searching and packing into authorized bags began. These went through scanners and sometimes a dog search. After that they were repacked into small see-through bags, one for a single cell and two for a double, each carrying a message for a ‘better 2021 and best wishes for warm heads from warm hearts.’

On the two days leading up to Christmas the hats with their messages, were hung on the doors of each cell. There was great excitement as the men came out for their exercise and examined their bags. There was a very cheerful atmosphere with hats bobbing about everywhere. Pompoms vied with hand-knits, while some with brand new hats wanted to keep the labels on to prove that they were new! There was a huge amount of gratitude, amazement and pleasure. Some had not had a Christmas present for years and for many this would be their only present this year.

Thank you to all who contributed to this project. The hats left over will be distributed to those in need and no hat will go unused. Thank you to Liz Bridge the Quaker Chaplain at Wandsworth prison.

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**Thank you for your contributions – so many that there was no room for a Personal Profile.  
My best wishes to all as we step forward to embrace the new normal – whatever that looks like!**

**Anne Bennett**