

# QUIET WAYS

## SUMMER 2020 EDITION

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*I have never lost the enjoyment of sitting in silence at the beginning of a meeting, knowing that everything can happen, knowing the joy of utmost surprise; feeling that nothing is preordained, nothing is set, all is open. The light can come from all sides. The joy of experiencing the light in a completely different way than one has thought it would come is one of the greatest gifts that Friends' Meeting for Worship has brought me... [Ursula Franklin, QF&P 23.32]*

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### Editorial

Greetings Friends and welcome to the Summer 2020 edition of *Quiet Ways*, the quarterly newsletter of South East Area Quaker Meeting. Following positive feedback from several sources, I have retained the simple layout of the Spring edition. I hope it still meets with your approval!

The *Black Lives Matter* movement (along with COVID-19) that has risen up in the wake of the shocking death of George Floyd in the USA, highlights the fact that even in supposedly advanced societies there are still enormous prejudices and inequalities to overcome, as well as an ongoing disregard for the sanctity of human life by those in positions of power.

As Quakers, we understand the unacceptability of inequality and prejudice and can stand (or kneel) with those who, through peaceful demonstration despite the obvious risk of infection, strive to make their voices heard and their presence felt, calling for fundamental and long overdue recognition throughout society.

As we gradually move out of lockdown and seek to adopt the 'new normal', we shall be emerging into a world much changed; a world where we can only hope that kindness, compassion and justice will prevail in all things.

In Friendship,

*Sally Aviss* (Editor)

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Contributions for the next edition of *Quiet Ways* (coming out September 2020) are welcome from everyone – be it a photo, poem or something along the lines of the Afterthoughts from Rye LM included in this edition.

The Editor would love to hear from you – be it something profound, light-hearted or even a tale of technical disaster (after all, we’re all learning as we go!).

Contributions should be sent to [sally.aviss@btinternet.com](mailto:sally.aviss@btinternet.com)

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### Time between times

This is the time between times. A time when  
yesterday has fallen to nostalgia, and tomorrow  
fails imagination. Familiar places where we walked,  
talked, sat, rested our bodies and minds  
have become places of impossible pilgrimage.  
They rise up through sleep in the middle of the night  
before we recall this confining space, this enclosing moment.  
Faces appear out of the early hours, words form  
that we should have said, did not say, should not have said  
We fashion ghosts out of foreboding.

There were temples where we met to worship,  
and fruit trees forbidden that we dared to touch  
and we sailed around the world in arks and drowned  
in the exodus sea and saw if only for a brief moment  
a promised land inhabited already by the myriads of our longings.

But. Today I hear the birds. I am reminded that flight is possible,  
and song can be heard across fields, across rivers. I recall  
the sound of voices, the accents of my days, the languages

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I have crossed. They crowd me, they create me.

Now they are the beakers from which I drink what of light  
is still possible, the dawn, the heat of midday, the close  
of noon, the failing sun, the silent cry of night.

This is a time between times, the only time  
in which I can live, and move, and have my being.

It is always between.

*Harvey Gillman 04/04/20*



Photo courtesy of Harvey Gillman (from his garden: *white clematis montana*)

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### Sussex East Area Quaker Meeting

#### Local Meetings Lockdown Roundup

##### **Lewes**

John Thurley reports that Lewes meeting House is closed but the garden remains open. One Friend has had Covid-19 but has recovered. 3 MfW are being held each week on Zoom attended by 15-20 people. The website has been updated and all media communications are being carried out successfully. Key committees (Oversight, Resources Group, Nominations, Outreach etc) are functioning well using Zoom. The Project Group for the alterations to the Meeting House have asked for modified plans to (hopefully) bring to AM Trustees meeting in July.

##### **Eastbourne**

John Wilson reports that MfW is held on Zoom for half an hour each Sunday and is reasonably well attended – even attracting Friends from other Meetings e.g. Tunbridge Wells. Eastbourne Friends who cannot Zoom are keeping in touch through phone calls. There is a Zoom Social Meeting every Wednesday (tea and chat) which has proved to be popular, more so than the Themed Meetings which were not well attended. Necessary checks and light maintenance are being carried out on the Meeting House.

##### **Hastings**

Sally Phillips reports that the Meeting House is being checked on and cleaning carried out where necessary. Naomi Fairweather reports that Zoom Meetings have been successful with Friends learning as they go! 19-25 people have been attending MfW via Zoom every Sunday as well as a social gathering on a Wednesday evening. Elders, Healing Group etc etc have been successfully meeting via Zoom. John Lynes reports that one Friend has had Covid-19 but is now recovering.

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### **Seaford**

Margaret Brandram reports that MfW is held via Zoom every Sunday and is usually attended by 12-13 people. This takes the form of a more 'social' kind of meeting with Friends describing how they came to Quakerism. Friends who cannot Zoom are communicating via phone or letter.

### **Herstmonceux**

Jean Farebrother reports that so far they have held one Zoom MfW. Friends seemed reluctant at first so they looked at Advices and Queries and thought about each other separately in their homes. Around 5 Friends have been meeting once a fortnight. The Meeting House is being maintained while closed.

### **Rye**

Martin Wimbush reports that Rye Friends are holding weekly MfW in 'separate but silent togetherness' in their own homes rather than on Zoom, holding each other in the Light. They are then sharing Afterthoughts – inspirational thoughts, poetry, pictures and so on – via email. The weekly contribution to Tilling Green Community Centre (where MfW is usually held) is being continued.

### **Bexhill**

No formal MfW since lockdown started and some Bexhill Friends have gone to worship via Zoom with other Meetings. No one has been ill but many Friends are finding the situation difficult.

### **Uckfield**

Theresa Buss reports that initially they set everything up using WhatsApp. Now they have virtual MfW on a Sunday and any inspirational thoughts/music are communicated via WhatsApp. Keith Harcourt gives a reading from QFP during MfW. 2 Friends have had Covid-19 and have recovered but it's a long journey back to full health. Friends who don't have access to the internet are kept in touch with via phone calls.

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Hastings Friends 'obeying' social distancing rules  
in inimitable Quaker style!

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### Zoom Deeper

#### Seaford LM

Daily life isn't easy for most of us now, of course, and for some of us it is very difficult indeed – even if they and their families remain well, which must always be uncertain. But many of us do have more time than usual, and we can use it to get to know one another at a deeper level than we might otherwise find time to do. I want to describe one way in which we are doing this in Seaford Meeting, you may have found other ways.

In addition to weekly Meeting for Worship on zoom we have had several sessions when Friends have given a short talk about their lives, sharing their Quaker journey. Often the Friend talks about how they came to Quakers and what Quakerism means to them, laying out their faith and sometimes their doubts about their faith. We are finding that we are getting to know one another at a different and deeper level.

After the talk Friends comment and share their own experience - until after 40 minutes zoom cuts us off! We circulate the talks by email so those who cannot join the afternoon session can read what was said, and recently we have printed some out for Friends without email. You may have read the first talk by Mary de Pleave as it was published in *The Friend* of 24th April.

There is so much we cannot do just now that I believe it is especially important to do what we can. Getting to know one another better, even if we are not meeting face to face, helps us build and maintain our Quaker community. Six months ago, who would have thought of using zoom to “seek to know one another in the things which are eternal”!

*Deirdre Morris (Seaford LM)*



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### Triennial Report to Sussex East Area Meeting, May 2020

#### Seaford Local Meeting

During the previous three years, Seaford Meeting has reviewed its activities, laid down some and reorganised our way of carrying out others. We laid down our website, reorganised our way of dealing with unsolicited appeals and recorded our readings from Advices and Queries. Elders and Overseers have established a WhatsApp group to assist in their communications. We purchased a machine and set of headphones to assist Friends with hearing loss. It has been used regularly during Meeting for Worship and business meetings.

Seaford Meeting joined with other community groups and individuals and purchased a Sardine for the new community bench at Splash Point. The Sardine has the message 'Live adventurously... let your life speak'

Outreach activities for which we were responsible included a visit by The Journeyman Theatre, vigils in the Peace Garden, a talk by a returned EAPPI volunteer and a series of talks to Seaford U3A about Quakers in Russia. The Peace Garden has been refurbished in partnership with Seaford Town Council and an event was held to mark this.

We received an invitation to visit Brighton and Hove Progressive Synagogue which we accepted. The day of our visit was the occasion of a young person's bar mitzvah.

We recorded the death of our Friend Bob Booth in December 2018. A Memorial Meeting was held at Hillcrest Community Centre in Newhaven. Bob was closely connected with the Centre and had been a trustee.

Friends have attended course/weekend events at Woodbrooke and Swanwick (Debys). Attendance at Meeting for Worship has averaged 15/16 and at times exceeded 20. During 2019 our Friend, Tony Webster, agreed to become a SEAQM trustee for which we are grateful.

*Margaret Brandram, Clerk*

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### Some Afterthoughts from Rye LM

*From Martin (Wimbush):*

Dear Friends,

I was thinking today how much I miss hugging people, shaking hands, being close - that sense of a gathered silence, that we share with each other on a Sunday - that we now have to share, in our own separate ways, in our own homes, even though we are thinking of each other, as we do - and as I was thinking this, our cat climbed up on my knee and settled itself down, purring and breathing in that gentle way that cats do - it was very comforting - perhaps, that feeling of touch and understanding that you get from a pet.

When we ring our grandchildren, we often say, we send you lots of 'air hugs' down the phone - well, I send you lots of 'air hugs' through this email and whoever your close too, give them a special hug today - and, if you can't do that, ring someone up and give them a special 'air hug'.

Stay well.

Yours,  
Martin

*Also from Martin:*

Dear Friends,

I was talking to Harvey the other day about our Sunday morning worship and he said that during his silence he looks around his room and visualises each one of us. I said, I do exactly the same thing.

That sense of visualisation is very important. It's as though we're holding each other in the light - and when we do that, even though we may not be together physically, we are together in spirit - very aware of each other and the love we share for each other - and that inspires us and leads us forward.

Just before he died, the great jazz pianist Bill Evans, rang Tony Bennett – they'd just completed a recording one of the best jazz albums ever - and said these words: 'Forget about everything else - just concentrate on truth and beauty, that's all you need to know'.

It is... sometimes the simplest statement, is often the best.

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*From Harvey (Gillman):*

Dear Friends,

Colin and I sat for meeting for worship in our sitting room yesterday. This enabled me to look out onto the marsh in sun, rain, sleet, and wind! At one moment I was caught in an overwhelming feeling of tenderness for the marsh, an almost elegiac wistfulness for the world which we all at times take for granted. It has come to me recently that in Martin Buber's words, we spend most of our lives seeing the world around as an 'it', a means to an end, rather than a 'thou', with which we are in a relationship. If anything, this lock down is making me realise that I can't take anything at all for granted. I hope it will also give me a sense of solidarity with people who never can take anything for granted - shelter, food, companionship.

Love, Harvey

*From Sally (Aviss):*

Dear Friends,

I know it might seem a truism, but the thing that struck me again this morning while reading *The Friend*, was the diversity and breadth of Quaker concerns and Quaker actions – for example, from the work of the Joseph Rowntree Trust in supporting the charitable work of those who are living out Quaker testimonies by seeking 'peace, equality, integrity, sustainability and addressing the root causes of conflict and injustice', to the Loving Earth Project which uses a variety of creative, spiritual, practical and community means to address some of the challenges of environmental breakdown.

These messages remain universal and relevant even in today's unusual circumstances, offering hope for the future and emphasising absolutely that, once this crisis is over, we as human beings have a unique opportunity for social change and environmental protection as we begin to re-build the economic structures of the world.

In Friendship with love,  
Sally

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*From Harvey:*

In this week's Friend, Joe Jones, the editor ended an article with the words:  
"Our first responsibility, then, is to grieve."

I was so moved in fact that I immediately wrote the attached. It is not a poem,  
but not not a poem!

### Grief

Yes, I grieve, not out of duty, or because I feel I ought, but because I am part of  
the cycle of things, their pain, their birth, their death.

Yes, I grieve each evening at 6 pm when the news begins again, when tired  
faces speak the facts they cannot understand, when the numbers fall upon me  
like lava from an inevitable volcano.

Yes, I grieve, and touch my partner's hand, and think, so far, yes, we have  
reached so far. We, for the time being, are here.

Yes, I grieve, for the numbers I cannot comprehend, and the faces I have never  
known, the names I do not recognise, and the ones who love them, loved them  
and called their names.

Yes, I grieve, for those who visit my mind from the rooms of almost oblivion,  
who have touched my life, and I wonder.....

Yes, I grieve already that when we leave this house of confinement, we may  
meet again the old greed, bitterness, the fears that we have known so often in  
the old world.

Yes, I grieve, at the old walls, fences, frontiers, grieve that our hopes may be  
snatched from us, dashed to earth.

Yes, I grieve, but at this time I also know that grief is a sign of love, and that  
love can give birth to hope, and that without hope we cannot live.

I grieve, therefore I love.

I love, therefore I hope.

I can do no other.

*Harvey Gillman, May 2020*

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*And, finally, from Peter (Avis), an old Gaelic Prayer:*



As the rain hides the stars,  
As the autumn mist hides the hills,  
As the clouds veil the blue of the sky,  
So the dark happenings of my lot  
Hide the shining of your face from me.  
Yet, if I may hold your hand in the darkness,  
It is enough, since I know that,  
Though I may stumble in my going,  
You do not fall.

*Stay well, Friends, and walk cheerfully! Ed.*