

# Lewes Quaker Meeting Newsletter

## May 2022



### Editorial - My thoughts on truth

Quaker faith is a search for truth – we don't offer neat creeds or doctrine but instead try to work out how we should live.

However, in this digital age I find it more and more difficult to know what is true. In the past – I always thought (maybe mistakenly) I lived in a country with an advanced democracy where there was a good chance that the papers, radio and television, and even Parliament, provided information that, whereas bias always existed, was basically true.

Sadly, I don't feel that now!! I live in a time of 'immediate news', political fury and hardening cultural divides and know that the news and information I receive as technology has developed is more biased by politics, vested interest and money than ever.

Whether it is the lies of Boris Johnson, the distortion of Nigel Farage, the emotional simplification of the Sun or the BBC's coverage of Brexit I am very much aware that the advice in Exodus 23: 'Thou shalt not raise a false report' is being ignored. Fake news is all around us.

So how do I, as a Quaker, not seeing the Bible as a textbook for living in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, find the truths to help me make decisions about my life? There is no easy answer but I hold fast to the tenet that uncertainty is not always a bad thing and value having a cynical side that asks ; - 'But is that really true?' – I may not get the complete answer, but the asking is what is important and hope that Quakers never give up on this seeking for truth no matter how difficult and confused this becomes.

### Meetings for Worship

**Sunday morning 10.30** in the Meeting House, garden, blended on Zoom or separateness together - please wear a face covering inside. Refreshments are served outside after Meeting and a donation bowl is there to cover costs.

**Sunday evening 18.30 & Wednesday lunchtime 12.30** in the Meeting House. These Meetings where fewer attend do not require the wearing of masks.

### Diary Dates May 2022

Walking Group: Tuesdays 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> May (see Notices for details)

Meeting for business and church affairs: Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> May at 14.30 (Zoom)

Meeting House open for Ukrainians: Saturdays at 10.30 – 12.30

Coffee at The Depot: Friday mornings at 10.15

Reading Group: Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May at 19.30 – blended

Gardening Group: 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays at 10.30

Poetry and Music Friday 6<sup>th</sup> May at 19.30 by Zoom

### SNIPPETS – contributed by Caroline Pybus

The May edition of *Which?* has a comparison of baked beans - our three local supermarkets read as follows on baked beans in tomato sauce:

Tesco 8p per 100g, Waitrose 10p per 100g, Heinz 24p per 100g

Of the three, Waitrose had the least amount of sugar and Tesco the least amount of salt.

## Walking Group:



Up Malling Hill and down again sounded fairly easy, but the protruding roots and steepness of the descent made for an interesting challenge for some, but it was worth it for the wonderful panorama of Lewes from the top! Thanks to John Thurley for leading this. Come and join us and bring a friend – details in the Notices.

## Lewes Meeting 'WhatsApp' group

Lewes Meeting has a WhatsApp group that you are welcome to join. This is an informal, friendly, supportive social media group that operates sporadically but can be a good addition to our current communication channels. WhatsApp is a messaging app, run on smart phones and you can download it from your App Store for free. You can send messages to the group and share photos. No commitment to the group is required, you can “mute” the conversation or leave the group easily. We've been up and running for over a year now and it has been a positive addition, with the sharing of uplifting messages, notices of events etc. If you would like to join the group, please contact Theresa on 07747 800609 with your phone number.

## Poetry and Music (David Hitchin)

I hope that we can all meet online on Friday 6th May at 7:30. The link will be:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83332581343?pwd=TVRSNERSVUgzU3RKMMlEVDRoWHpSdz09>

If you want to choose any music please let me know what it is as soon as possible, and certainly no later than Wednesday.

## Inreach/Outreach



Your first time at  
a Quaker meeting



The posters in the main notice board in the garden which are viewed everyday by many passers-by are regularly changed to maintain interest

Much work has been done on the limited library selection displayed in the Children's Room and Friends are encouraged to browse and borrow books.

We will continue to offer welcoming literature/pamphlets to newcomers who come to Meeting for Worship for the first time – a new Welcome Pack has been prepared.

The committee welcomes the return of coffee after Meeting for Worship which allows an opportunity to meet and chat with new attenders to ensure they receive a personal welcome. They also remind everyone that the book for recording the names of people who want to go on the mailing list is on the Meeting House table and hope this offer to go on the mailing list can be made to those attending on Zoom.

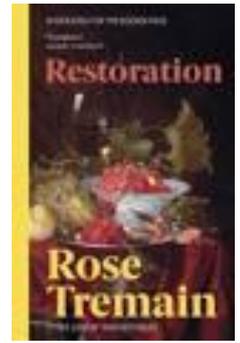
**Friday night talks:** a date for your diary, Friday 10<sup>th</sup> June 19.30 - an opportunity to hear a talk given by Robin Witt, the founder of CHASE Africa. The charity is set up to protect the environment in Kenya and focuses on health and family planning in the rural areas – an inspiring talk and well worth a listen.

## Reading Group

Our current book is *Restoration* by Rose Tremain which tells the story of Robert Merivel, son of a glove maker and an aspiring physician who finds his fortunes transformed when he is given a position at the court of King Charles II. Merivel slips easily into a life of luxury and idleness, enthusiastically enjoying the women and wine of the vibrant Restoration age.

We meet next on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May at 19.30 in person in the Meeting House and on Zoom.

Jane Goyder has kindly offered to organise the books for this group, please contact her if you wish to join.



## Christian Aid Week 15 May: (Caroline Pybus)

Friends may like to know that this development agency is working with partner organisations in Ukraine to assist internally displaced people, as well as continuing their worldwide mission to help the poorest people to help themselves. This main part of Christian Aid's work continues to be increasingly important as food poverty is currently rising.

People living in Lewes will receive envelopes via *Lewes News*, and there will be a few available at the Meeting House. Info about online donations is included.

## Green Tips - number 3

In each newsletter we have been asked to provide a 'Green Tip' to make changes in the way we live and by doing so helping the environment and also meet a requirement of the Eco Church award.

Turn off the lights, recycle, run the dishwasher only when it's full etc. are the basic changes many have made in their lifestyles. Building up momentum with simple tasks is important but it's easy to believe we are doing our part and never go beyond the bare minimums. Maybe we need to go one step further to low impact living to really help the planet and many Quakers have realised this and are taking that extra step.



### How about we all ditch paper towels and kitchen rolls for clean-up rags?

In 2017, Americans spent nearly \$6 billion on paper towels for their homes.

Luckily, there's a dead simple solution to the paper towel conundrum: cloth rags - any absorbent cloth will do. It's a great way to reuse old hand towels, wash cloths, or even t-shirts.

Just keep clean rags in a readily accessible place, maybe in a pile under the sink or on the kitchen radiator and use a small bin to collect them when they're soiled.

This is a big step forward for those of us used to a plentiful supply of kitchen roll, but maybe is that next step to making a difference.



Just a note to say that all the coffee, tea and milk bought for refreshments after Sunday meeting are either Fair Trade, organic or both to fit in with the aims of the Eco Church movement and to help us move towards the standards we need to gain an award.

## Hospitality for Ukrainians in Lewes: can you help?



Our suggestion to host Ukrainians for an open morning at the Meeting House on Saturdays has been welcomed by LOSRAS members already busy helping them settle in Lewes. The idea is to be a welcoming space where our visitors can relax with each other and talk together in their own language. We hope they will let us know how we can be of help and support, and that they will soon become friends and not just visitors. We expect there will be children as well as adults.

Several Friends have already indicated that they would like to join the rota to open up and provide refreshments, and we think that LOSRAS members may also join in this.

We have agreed to start on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May, 10.30-12.30, and plan to continue regularly each week. If you would like to be included on a rota please email [christinam1905@gmail.com](mailto:christinam1905@gmail.com)

## Catching up on history - three important things that happened in 1784

In case you weren't familiar with it, Parliament passed the Commutation Act in 1784, reducing the tax on tea from 119% to 12.5%. This was important because tea then became affordable and popular. As it required the boiling of water, this led to a big improvement in public health, especially in areas of poor water quality. (I learned all about this by listening to the fascinating More or Less programme presented by Tim Harford. Follow [this link](#) to hear the programme.)

Also in 1784, a brick tax was introduced (bricks started to be taxed at 2s 6d per thousand). This had an impact on architecture as people returned to making buildings with timber frames, sometimes adding mathematical tiles which look like bricks.

The third important thing was that our Meeting House was constructed (with a timber frame and some mathematical tiles) at a cost of £229 8s 6d. Funds were raised from the sale of the previous building, and from the generosity of about a dozen Friends (mostly members of the Rickman family, now buried in the garden).

I recommend David Hitchin's history of Lewes Quaker Meeting House and a nice cup of tea.  
David Martin



## Don't forget the Friday Coffee sessions at the Depot

As Patricia Cockrell points out these sessions do quite a lot for outreach and support and it would be good if more people came. We had 8 there last week for a good chat! Time: 10.15



**Children's Meeting - Easter:** Children and older attenders took part in an Easter egg rolling challenge in the garden! The eggs were hard boiled, dyed and decorated and everyone enjoyed seeing how far their eggs could travel.

### **Beyond the Sunday**

**Meeting:** we were once told that to build a successful Children's Meeting needs community activities outside the Sunday session.



This led us to a picnic and games session after Meeting last Sunday. Children and adults enjoyed a picnic and games like 'Ring on a String'.



**'Never judge a book by its cover'** encouraged children to look deeper and think before making decisions about people, activities and life. It started with a challenge to eat from a tin of Waitrose dog food – which unknown to adults and children alike had been cleaned, sterilised and filled with chocolate ice cream with chocolate fudge pieces looking very realistic!



### **May's recipe: vegetarian scotch eggs**

Our journey from vegetarian to vegan has stopped off at the 'Plant Based Diet' which allows us to eat and enjoy eggs! I have always missed real scotch eggs, so this recipe is a real treat for me.

In the past I have made it with 'Soxmix' available in Health Food shops but this uses a homemade crust.

### **Ingredients for the 'meat crust':**

- tablespoon flaxseed meal
- 2.5 tablespoons water
- 425 grams can red kidney beans
- 2 tablespoons cilantro/coriander
- 1 tablespoon cumin powder
- 80 grams gluten-free flour
- (Eggs hard boiled)

### **Method:**

1. Combine flax meal and water in a small bowl for 5 minutes.
2. Process red kidney beans, cumin powder, flax meal mixture, salt, and pepper into a paste
3. Transfer to a bowl together with the chopped cilantro and flour. Mix into a dough.
4. Mould this mixture around the hard-boiled eggs
5. Fry gently in a lightly oiled pan and then bake in at 180C/360F for 15 minutes.

Let us know if you make and enjoy these – and we would love a sample!

In this terrible war, our thoughts turn to the victims - how to rescue and support those who survive the bombings? - and Lewes Friends have responded generously.

There are other less evident victims: the young Russian conscripts who have been taken from their families and trained to kill; the opponents of war who are arrested and fined for demonstrating in Russia (they could get up to 15 years in prison for mentioning the word 'war'); the general public in Russia who have been brainwashed to believe what they see on Russian TV and deprived of alternative sources of information. Many, including some of the people I worked with for 30 years, have told me there is no war, no maternity hospital, no siege of Mariupol: Ukrainians are bombing themselves and Russians are saving the world from fascism.

FHM has been promoting conscientious objection for more than two decades, so it's likely that at least some young men will have managed to avoid the draft; FHM has been supporting the Alternatives to Violence Project which encourages critical thinking and an increased awareness of manipulation; FHM has established an online library of Quaker literature in Russian which is available to anyone interested.

Many of the peacebuilding projects continue in difficult circumstances, and meeting for worship is still organised by zoom fortnightly.

As I write this, a message from FHM has just dropped into my phone in spite of the fact that so many means of communication have been blocked in Russia. The message is entitled: *The Power of Nonviolence*.

It was my job as an employee of Quaker Peace and Service to work with others to set up FHM in the mid-1990s. I hope Lewes Friends will want to support its message of peace.

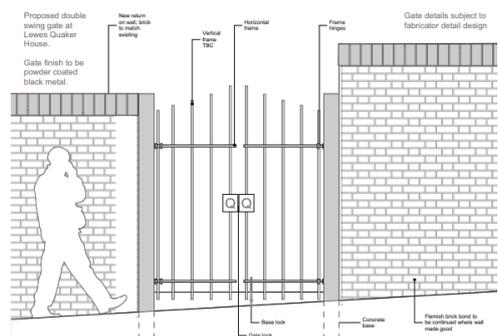
Patricia Cockrell on behalf of Nevill Winterbourne Circle

## Development Project: May Update

*News of progress over the past month from members of the Hub. Computerised picture by Ecotecture of the new gate from Styles Road and the detailed drawing of the design (with "Qs" on the handles).*

### Overall plans and progress

The architects continue to finalise their drawings and get necessary technical information from the structural engineer. The detailed final plans have been submitted to the Council as required and approval is hoped for by the end of May. A specialist firm has checked the building for asbestos and found no major issues. Another has advised on the best way of getting sound insulation between the upstairs apartment and the rooms below. The Quantity Surveyor is ready to do the updating of the costings once a few more design matters are completed. Getting approval from the Meeting, Area Meeting and Trustees on moving ahead is fairly well on course therefore for seeking in the coming month or so. Getting tenders from builders would follow if the go-ahead is given.



## Meetings for Worship during the building work

The Hub is looking in detail at the implications of the possible ways in which Meetings can continue for adults and children. There are also issues of storage of the furniture and contents of the Meeting House, including the Library, which will need solving. A report will be given to Business Meeting before any final decisions are made.?

## Fund-raising

A further large donation of £25,000 has been received from a charitable trust since last month's report, so we now have over 90% of the funds required. Donations also continue to come in from members of the Meeting, but more are very welcome! Please remember to add Gift Aid to your donation if you are eligible. Speak to [Patricia Cockrell](#) 01273 474884 or [David Martin](#) 01892 663522 if you have particular suggestions or thoughts. For ways of giving, look on the website [www.lewesquakers.org.uk](http://www.lewesquakers.org.uk) or [www.justgiving.com/campaign/LewesMH](http://www.justgiving.com/campaign/LewesMH)).

## Lewes Meeting Contacts

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Eldership and Oversight Resource Group (EORG): Chris Lawson, Bob Harwood, David Hitchin, Theresa Samms, Nancy Wall. Circle convenors: Brighton - Veryan Greenwood; Castle – David Tinsley; Cliffe - Berta Busby; Needlemakers & Wealden - Geoff Halsey; Neville & Winterbourne - Patricia Cockrell; Wallands - Bob Harwood.