

# Lewes Quaker Meeting Newsletter

## June 2023



*Gordon Square, London - May 2023, Liz Brooks*

“Kindness has a powerful impact and we hope to offer caring support to all, including those with whom we may disagree. Speaking from a faith perspective can carry weight. We try to let our lives speak ... but can we speak out more as Quakers? We can be a listening presence, creating a ‘kinder ground’, alongside speaking truth in public places and contexts. We are called to witness truth-telling, accountability, community-building, and to give messages of hope. Speaking truth to power with love is a ministry, and is vital in a time when truth is often corrupted.”

- *From the Epistle from Britain Yearly Meeting held in person and online 28 April - 1 May 2023*

### **Sunday morning Meetings for Worship**

10:30 a.m. start. A blended meeting, in person at the Meeting House and on Zoom. Zoom link available from the clerks on request; it is the same week to week.

The meeting room is only accessible at weekends. Please do not enter any part of the meeting house apart from the meeting room, whilst building works are ongoing. There is a port-a-loo in the garden. Two parking spaces are available on Sundays. Please give priority to those with mobility difficulties.

**Children’s Meeting** is held on the second and fourth Sundays of each month, at The Open Door (32 Church Twitten). Start time 10:30 a.m. Children and young people join Friends at the meeting house for the last five minutes of meeting for worship. Please email Sara at [saralucytodd@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:saralucytodd@yahoo.co.uk) for further details.

### **Wednesday lunchtime Meetings for Worship**

At The Open Door, 32 Church Twitten, Lewes. 12:30 p.m. Enter through the door marked “Thebes” and up the stairs to the first floor meeting room. Please bring your own drinks / refreshments. All are welcome.

**Meeting for Worship for Church Affairs (Business Meeting):** Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> June at 12:30 p.m. in the meeting house. Please bring your lunch and drinks, as the kitchen is not open. ~ Business meetings are held on the first Sunday of each month.



Lewes Friends **gather at The Depot** on Friday mornings at 10:30 a.m. for coffee and a chat. No need to book; just turn up and join in fellowship with Friends.

**Regional Meeting will be held on Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> June**, at Reigate Meeting House and on Zoom. The programme will centre on refugees and include a performance of “The Bundle” by the Journeymen Theatre. See Page 10 for further details.

There is no Area Meeting in June. The next **Area Meeting will be Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup> July**, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. via Zoom. All Friends are welcome to attend, and the Zoom link will be circulated nearer the time. See notices for further details.

**Open Garden on Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> June**, 1:30 - 4:30 p.m. At Barrack Cottage in Bishopstone, a special mid-summer open garden event in aid of **Homelink**. Set in 4 acres of downland chalk, this historic cottage has countryside gardens, quiet nooks, and an enchanting woodland walk. Owners David and Karen Allam are kindly hosting this charity fundraiser. Tickets £12 per person; free entry for children under 16. Price includes entry, afternoon tea (strawberries & cream, cakes and refreshments), live music and a second-hand book stall. To book, email: [admin@leweshomelink.org.uk](mailto:admin@leweshomelink.org.uk). For those with mobility issues, grounds are not fully accessible but there are some garden areas that can be accessed. Parking available in field on approach to Bishopstone.

**Continuing Explorers** will meet on Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> June, at 1 Anne’s Path, Lewes. The discussion will focus on the peace testimony. This group is for anyone new or relatively new to Quakers, and aims to answer questions and share experiences of Quaker faith and worship. It meets about once a month. Please speak to John Ashcroft or Theresa Samms for details, or if you plan to attend for the first time.



**Christ Church Thinktank:** Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> June, 7:30 - 9:00 p.m., Peter Shears: “**Lifelong Learning: what does it mean, who is it for and why does it matter?**” Peter teaches in a Catholic comprehensive school, with 30 years’ experience as an Assistant Head. He has an MA in *Christianity & the Arts* from King’s College London and also spent two years training for Reader ministry in the Church of England. He will share insights from his experience as a mature learner. If lifelong learning is important, how can it be made available to everyone? And what organisations should be responsible for provision and funding? ~ All are welcome, either in person at Christ Church or on Zoom. Email [j.d.smith@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:j.d.smith@sussex.ac.uk) if you would like to join by Zoom, or for any questions.







**“No freezer required”**

The children of Lewes Meeting gather on the second and fourth Sundays of each month at 10:30 a.m., at the Open Door.

And join adult Friends

for the last few minutes of meeting for worship at Lewes Meeting House, after their sessions.

Sara, the children’s worker, writes, “This [pictured] was an exciting activity. We made ice-cream from scratch without the use of a freezer. You can see they are all wearing gloves. Cream, milk, sugar and vanilla went in the inner bags, with ice and salt in the outer bags. The children shook the mixture for several minutes. It was delicious!” If you would like your children to attend children’s meeting, see contact details on Page 1 of this newsletter.



**Living Our Beliefs**, developed by young Quakers, contains an alternative version of *Advices & Queries*, published by Junior Yearly Meeting in 2015. Earlier this year the Continuing Explorers group delved into the original and compared it to the alternative. As a group, they felt the young people’s interpretation gained much by its simplicity. [Numbers 1 - 25 were printed in previous issues. Below are the final alternative advices and queries.] We hope Friends have found this series inspiring and thought-provoking.

Theresa Samms  
Pastoral Care & Eldership Team (PaCET)

- 26. Appreciate your family
- 27. Live adventurously
- 28. Life is full of learning. Change always happens
- 29. Don’t worry about getting old.
- 30. We all die; accept it and support each other
- 31. War is bad. No long-term good ever comes from it.
- 32. Beware of prejudices and try to work past them.
- 33. Try to understand the causes of injustice and change them.
- 34. Don’t just live in your own little bubble; there’s a big world out there.
- 35. Sometimes breaking the law is necessary. But think about it and get some advice first.
- 36. People worry about different things - help them make positive change, even if it’s not your worry.
- 37. Be honest, truthful and open.
- 38. Don’t give in to peer pressure.
- 39. Question the pressures of mainstream culture.
- 40. Be careful with drugs and alcohol.
- 41. Try to live simply.
- 42. Look after the world for the future.

**In April Friends raised £243.56 for The Green Olive Trust UK.**

The treasurer wrote to say, “The continuing support and generosity of the meeting is enabling students in Kenya to obtain education which otherwise would be beyond the means of their families and which we believe will be of lasting benefit to the region.” Many thanks to Friends for your generosity in supporting this good cause.



**Prints: Lewes Meeting House - for sale to raise money for the development fund**

This attractive watercolour of the Meeting House is by local artist Ruth G. Baker. She has kindly said the meeting can sell signed and numbered limited edition giclée prints for fundraising for



the development project. We will receive 30% of the usual selling price of £45 for each print. The print itself is 220x170 mm and the mount 305x245 mm. A sample is on display at Star Pottery in the Star Brewery in Fisher Street and one will be in the Meeting House on Sundays, to view. If you would like to purchase one please contact Chris Lawson, 01273 475490 or [c2lawson@care4free.net](mailto:c2lawson@care4free.net). More of Ruth's work and information about her painting classes can be seen on her website:

[www.ruthgbakerwatercolours.com/](http://www.ruthgbakerwatercolours.com/)



The Good Cause for June is Money for Madagascar, chosen by Friars Circle.

This UK-based charity invests in Malagasy-led solutions to reduce

poverty and protect the environment in Madagascar. It works with NGO partners to support local conservation and development in over 100 communities. MfM funds projects in conservation, education, disaster relief and sustainable development, and works to strengthen Malagasy communities to build their own resilience. Program activities tackle issues such as poverty, deforestation, food security, illiteracy and access to clean water. Founded in 1986 by Quakers in Swansea, MfM invests in Malagasy-led development. Donations can be made online: [MAKE A DONATION - Money for Madagascar](#), or on Sundays after meeting for worship.

**Development Project - June 2023 Update**

**Progress in May:** As well as the work beside the wall, good progress is being made in all areas. Valley's teams continue to provide the high quality workmanship that was evident to Friends on the walk-around on May 12. Repairs to the walls in the main Meeting Room are complete but redecorating will be left until near the end of the works.

The flat is being redecorated; doors and kitchen fixtures have been delivered and will be fitted in the coming weeks. Advice has been given on fire safety measures needed to make it possible to let the flat as an independent unit. This and some other aspects are being worked on following the decision at the May Meeting for Worship for Business that receiving income from a commercial letting will be needed to complete financing for the project.

The framework for partitions needed under the gallery has been made and advice given on

the type of flooring materials for that section. Samples of possible vinyls and carpets will be provided for all areas. Sample boards for proposed wall paints have also been received. The project group believes that for economy and long-term maintenance a uniform light colour scheme throughout will be best.

A blacksmith is liaising with Ecotecture about the new entrance gates. The aim is to match the design of the existing ones but with a discreet Q for the handles. A high-level flip-over fastener (such as we have at present) is included for child safety.



A welcome sight! This photo was taken on 26 May of work under-way beside the high wall. The line of steel helical piles which will give firm

support to the foundations for the lobby and corridor and provide strengthening for the wall can be seen here. Drain pipes in the foreground are for the accessible toilet. Valley workers are busy preparing for the concrete work, due to start on 1<sup>st</sup> June

**Costs:** Savings have been made recently thanks to the builders and Ecotecture finding that expected items are not needed or that a different source of supply could be used. There are other, unforeseen areas with costs associated. Apart from the major extra expense due to problems with the wall, all involved hope that overall costs can now be kept within budget.

**Fundraising:** The need to keep up donations for the project is clear, so thanks

to those who can give to it or add to what they have already given. For ways of giving, please visit [www.lewesquakers.org.uk](http://www.lewesquakers.org.uk) or [www.justgiving.com/campaign/LewesMH](http://www.justgiving.com/campaign/LewesMH). If you have ideas for fundraising you can discuss them with Patricia Cockrell 01273 474884 or David Martin 01892 663522.

We were pleased to be awarded a grant of £5,000 towards the fundraising appeal, from the James Reckitt charity. James Reckitt was a businessman and philanthropist whose family had been Quakers since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He died in 1924 and the charity that bears his name continues his good works.

We thank the In-reach / Outreach Committee for the fundraising event in Anna's lovely garden on the sunny Spring Bank Holiday Monday.

The Project Group

#### **Update: Yearly Meeting - extra session**

There will be an additional Yearly Meeting session on 1<sup>st</sup> July, both online and in person at Friends House. This is being held to discuss the Trustees' report & financial statement and "Patterns of membership & the tabular statement".

The main Yearly Meeting sessions, held at the end of April, introduced ideas for new simple, sustainable and inclusive Quaker structures. Friends attending on 1 July can explore these ideas further and be able to offer guidance to those taking the work forward.

The session will start at 10 a.m. and finish at 2.30 p.m., followed by a short open session of Meeting for Sufferings from 3 - 4.30 p.m., which will hear a report of the Loyal Address to the new King. All Friends are welcome to attend.

More information on registration will follow shortly on the Quakers in Britain website: [YM2023 extra session](http://www.quakersinbritain.org.uk/ym2023-extra-session)



## Reflections on Yearly Meeting

Some Friends from Lewes were able to attend Yearly Meeting at Friends House this year. Below are a few reflections on their experiences:

### Why did you attend YM in 2023?

“I wanted to reconnect with Friends from all over Britain and people I have served with on various central committees.”

“To experience the very large meeting for worship in The Light ....”

“To support BYM and be a part of worship [with] a large gathering of Quakers.”

“To be part of the decision-making [and] spiritual basis of decision-making.”

“To enjoy the upgraded Friends Centre.... [and] meet old Friends and make new ones.”

### What did you enjoy?

“Sitting in the garden talking to old and new Friends while eating my packed lunch.”

“Seeing Friends greeting me at the door on arrival - and getting hugs! Catching up with Friends over coffee, lunch and at other times. Reconnecting in person after a few years of only seeing each other on Zoom.”

“The skill of the clerks ... in selecting and encouraging a wide and varied ministry, and judging that the meeting was not ready for a minute.”

“Meeting Friends face to face. Evening worship with Friends from around the world,”

“I was grateful that this YM was blended and glad that many Friends who live far away were able to join in.”

“The meeting for worship which I found to be amazingly informal ... but still deeply connecting. The fact that Friends felt confident to express opposing opinions; the ability of the clerks to call upon experienced Friends .... to speak from the floor.”

### What did you find challenging, if anything?

“[Finding] the energy to get there and attend all sessions but I only missed the final session on Monday afternoon.”

“I was appalled at the way [a Friend] was welcomed - given a form to fill in (no large print version available). The woman in charge had little help and English wasn't her first language, so she couldn't catch the names of Friends trying to register. I wrote to [the Recording Clerk] to express my disappointment ... and he wrote back within the hour to apologise.... He has said he will look into diversity training.”

“The subject matter of the ministry and some ministry that was irrelevant.”

“Yearly Meeting can be very busy and sometimes overwhelming. Again this year I was exhausted at the end of each day. Nevertheless, I left on Monday feeling spiritually uplifted.”



### What was the first Yearly Meeting you attended?

“I have been attending most years since 1982. I gain spiritual sustenance from participating in worship, conducting business in the context of Quaker worship, and from spoken and written presentations.”

“I first attended in Exeter in 1974 (not sure of the exact year). Exeter Meeting had been asked to help with various jobs and we took turns to attend some sessions. I almost always attend when it's held in London, at least for a day or two, and have been to several residential YMs

“I first went to BYM in the 1970s. I ... then went to several residential yearly meetings, the first with my four children, at Exeter University. I was a single parent and area meeting, then known as monthly meeting, funded all five of us. It was a great family experience.”

"I can't remember the year but it was sometime in the late '90s. I went for one day, to attend the Swarthmore Lecture, and was so inspired that I found myself drawn back the following year, and gradually extended my participation to include a full yearly meeting."

#### How have things changed over the years?

Yearly Meeting has "become much less formal. There used to be an announcement calling for silence when the clerking team was ready to enter the hall, and they would then process, in the right order, to the table; on the other hand there used to be a lot of noise in the meeting room, so calling for silence was necessary. The essence is unchanged - Friends consider their ministry, stand, wait to be called . . ."



"I understand why the main meeting room was refurbished and transformed into The Light [in 2014], but I miss

the old meeting house with its dark wooden benches, its austere simplicity. The Light is fine - I have no complaints - but I make a point of seeking out the remaining 'door-keepers seats' that were retained - I like to sneak in some quiet contemplation in one of these hidden corners, when I visit Friends House."

#### What keeps you returning to YM year on year (if you attend regularly)?

"To recognise and value the collective wisdom of Friends, not just my local meetings but part of a world-wide faith movement."

"To meet old Friends and make new Friends, and to reconnect with the heart of our spiritual practice. There is nothing else quite like meeting in worship with 700 - 800 other Friends, together in rich silence."

"To be involved in decision-making some of which is cutting edge."

"The 'wow' I felt the first time I experienced gathered worship with about 1,000 people the main meeting room, was amazing and is still.

[This year] having the screen showing many Friends joining from outside the large meeting room ... enhanced the sense of connectedness with the wider community of Friends."

#### Anything else you'd like to say?

"YM is a system of running our affairs that ought not to work - anyone can stand up and say anything, whether they have grasped the issue or not - but somehow it does. And decisions, sometimes delayed, are made in line with Quaker values. It is inspiring to be part of this process."

"Yearly Meeting is one of the highlights of my year. I find it re-orientates and revitalises my spiritual life. In a busy world where so much feels draining, Yearly Meeting provides nourishment and inspiration that lasts far beyond the limited time we spend together at Friends House."



"The decision to have this talented Friend [Esther Loukin, Swarthmore Lecturer - pictured here] talk about the problems of disabled access was a brave one. When the Lewes Meeting upgrading is complete, I

hope we will show off what can be achieved!"

#### **Interesting correspondence**

Your newsletter editor was recently copied into some interesting email correspondence:

Friend G: "At a recent gathering regarding development of the meeting house a suggestion was made to change the name of the children's room to the 'community room'. Other suggestions were to name the room after a notable Quaker. Could it be a local Quaker?"

Friend D: "The naming of rooms caused quite a stir in Friends House. I think it was the Penn Room which started it when someone noticed William Penn had been a slave owner. The eventual decision was that none of the rooms should be named after famous Friends, not necessarily because none of them were

perfect, but that it went against our testimony to equality. Another objection was that knowing the name of a room did not help anyone to find it. If you are looking for Room 204 you would know it is on the second floor, and if you saw Room 201, you would know 204 was not far away. We don't have so many rooms that numbers will be of any help.

“If we chose names, then Ambrose Galloway was the first of George Fox's converts in Lewes; he withstood persecution and wrote the Book of Sufferings. But he also dealt in Wealden cannons. When John Rickman found a gypsy woman in need of help on his land, he moved her over the boundary so she would be the responsibility of the poorhouse. John Godlee profited from the American War of Independence and at one time was virtually a pirate. And so on.

“So I would prefer a name by function. I would be happy to retain the name as ‘children's room’ for our use, but for the official name to be the ‘community room’.”

What do you think, Friends?



**Homelink** is a Sussex-based homelessness prevention charity, with which Lewes Meeting has strong links. The annual report for 2022 is now available.

The Administrative Officer writes, “We were hugely grateful for the funding partnerships obtained during 2022 and every penny means that we can continue our vital work of offering support and assistance to those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, through our interest-free loans and our small grants service.”

Homelink was able to provide 55 loans in 2022 (so 120 people were able to move into suitable affordable accommodation), and over £46,000 worth of small grants.

A new Chair, Ros Toomey, and two new members of staff, Shaun Gilbert as Client Manager and Wendy Hogg as Administrator, have joined the team.

The rental market, as well as the economic climate, mean there is still much to be done. Friends in Lewes have a history of supporting this worthy cause. If you would like to read the annual report in full, email Camilla on [pccpennant@btinternet.com](mailto:pccpennant@btinternet.com).

For an opportunity to support Homelink, see details of the upcoming Open Garden event on 24 June - on Page 2 of this newsletter.

*“Those who come to us often comment on the kindness and compassion with which they are treated.”*

- Ros Toomey, Chair of Trustees, Homelink

**Update from the Reading Group:** In May we met for a wide-ranging discussion of Rebecca Stott's In the Days of Rain, an autobiographical book of life in a Christian fundamentalist cult. We talked about our experiences of religious groups, what allows a group to become oppressive, hardships of growing up in such a group, going to school but separated from one's peers, etc. Our next meeting will be on **28<sup>th</sup> June** at 1 Anne's Path, Lewes, when we will discuss Percival Everett's The Trees. Our meetings are blended - Zoom and in person, while meeting house building works continue. Please feel free to join us, but do email beforehand so we can estimate numbers: [janegoyder@msn.com](mailto:janegoyder@msn.com).



Jane Goyder



In June, Friars Circle will promote the **Good Cause**. Rota for upcoming months:

Needlemakers - July  
Wallands - August  
Cliffe - September

If you have an idea for a good cause that the meeting could support, please speak to your circle convenor.



### Lewes Meeting Contacts

Clerks: John Ashcroft, Liz Brooks & David Martin at [quakerclerkslewes@gmail.com](mailto:quakerclerkslewes@gmail.com)

Pastoral Care & Eldership Team [PaCET]: Tim Pitt-Payne (Contact), David Hitchin, Chris Lawson, Caroline Pybus, Theresa Samms, Nancy Wall

Website: [www.lewesquakers.org.uk](http://www.lewesquakers.org.uk)  
Editor: Drew Fisher at [ajfscorpio@hotmail.com](mailto:ajfscorpio@hotmail.com)

Children's Meeting: Sara at [saralucytodd@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:saralucytodd@yahoo.co.uk)

Circles for pastoral care & support - Convenors:

Cliffe - Berta Busby  
Friars - Veryan Greenwood & Anna Milner-Gulland  
Needlemakers & Wealden - Geoff Halsey  
Wallands - Bronwyn Harwood

### Sussex East Area Meeting Clerk

Sally Aviss at [sally.aviss@btinternet.com](mailto:sally.aviss@btinternet.com)

**Quiet Ways:** Contributions to the Sussex East Area Meeting newsletter are welcome at any time. Please email [editorquietways@gmail.com](mailto:editorquietways@gmail.com) with your items.

### *Part of a monthly series of interesting facts about Quakers ...*



Not many people know that the American actor **James Dean** was raised as a Quaker by his

aunt and uncle. After his untimely death at the age of 24, his body was returned to Fairmont, Indiana, USA, where he was buried under a traditional Quaker gravestone, listing only his name and years of birth and death.

#### **Deadline for newsletter:**

please send events, news, photos and other items of interest for the July newsletter to Liz at [realgirltribe@gmail.com](mailto:realgirltribe@gmail.com) by 29<sup>th</sup> June. There will be no newsletter in August.

Thank you, Friends.

“When early Friends likened God’s gift to a ‘Seed’ they did not think of it as growing inevitably into a ... tree. They were fully aware of the influences that might arrest its growth. Fox never regarded the conquest of sin as a casual undertaking. But with astonishing ... insight he laid ... emphasis ... not on the sin but on the light that revealed it. By implication he was criticising those who were so obsessed with the fallen state of man that they stayed their eyes on ... wickedness rather than on the means of ... redemption. To contemplate evil is a poor way of becoming good ... Fox assures his friends that light will come on conditions. [This was] well laid down by Isaac Penington in the darkness of Reading gaol: ‘We were directed to search for the least of all seeds and to mind the lowest appearance thereof, which was its turning against sin and darkness; we came by degrees to find we had met with the pure living eternal Spirit.’ “

- from *Qf&p* 26.69; *Edgar B Castle, 1961*

## Sussex and Surrey Regional Quaker Meeting

### Refugees Now

*Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2023 - 10.30 - 15.15 at Reigate Meeting House  
and 11.00 - 15.15 on Zoom*

The Journeymen Theatre will give their final performance of

### “The Bundle”

[This may be your last chance to see the Journeymen Theatre before they wind up]

and

### Refugees: what are we as individuals and / or meetings doing now?

A variety of speakers will talk about their experiences. If you would like to talk for about 10 minutes on your current experience, please contact the Regional Meeting Clerk as soon as possible.

Everyone who attends or is a member of a Quaker meeting within Sussex & Surrey RM is welcome to register to come in person or to join on Zoom.

To register, please contact: [sussexandsurreyrmquakerclerk@outlook.com](mailto:sussexandsurreyrmquakerclerk@outlook.com)  
or phone 01323 890210 before Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> June.

**Reigate Meeting House, 47 Reigate Rd, Reigate RH2 0QT**

There is level access and a disabled toilet.