

# QUIET WAYS

## SPRING 2023 EDITION

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*Respect the wide diversity among us in our lives and relationships. Refrain from making prejudiced judgements about the life journeys of others. Do you foster the spirit of mutual understanding and forgiveness which our discipleship asks of us? Remember that each one of us is unique, precious, a child of God. (A&Q 22).*

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### Editorial

Welcome to the Spring 2023 edition of *Quiet Ways*, the quarterly magazine/newsletter of Sussex East Area Quaker Meeting.

Spring is traditionally a time for renewal and rejuvenation. Our gardens are full of new life (even weeds might have something to offer...!). The air has a freshness to it once again and the heady perfume of spring flowers bring joyful moments. Spring sunshine brings us the relief of warmth after what has seemed like a long and cold winter.

The diversity of nature is all around us, as is the diversity that we as human beings bring to the world. We have imagination and creativity; the ability to solve difficult problems and issues when we work together for the common good, recognising in each other, whatever our backgrounds or life journeys might be, fellow travellers on the road of life. As Quakers, we strive always to accept diversity of belief and opinion that can lead to change within Friends...

The question of Membership is one that has exercised the Society for quite some time. Meeting for Sufferings want to hear the views of Local Meetings though their Area Meeting and this question will be addressed as our Study Session at our next SEAQM to be held **in person** on **Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> MAY 2023 1.30 – 4.00pm at Eastbourne Meeting House** where we shall explore this topic by asking the following questions as well as looking at LM responses received so far:

- *Why do we have membership?*
- *What is it for?*
- *Is it still necessary?*
- *If yes, what form(s) could it take?*

Sadly, due to completely unforeseen reasons, three of the promised articles for this edition of *Quiet Ways* have not materialised. However, there are still wonderful poems by Harvey Gillman to reflect upon and beautiful photos by Keith Harcourt to enjoy, as well as information about forthcoming SEAQM meetings and the latest news from your own Local Meetings.

Go well Friends. In Friendship, *Sally Aviss* (Editor)

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Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this edition of *Quiet Ways*. Articles for the next *Quiet Ways* (coming out July 2023) are always welcome – be it something light-hearted, deeply personal or of universal significance. Items should be sent to [editorquietways@gmail.com](mailto:editorquietways@gmail.com). Closing date for submissions: Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

### \*\*DATES FOR YOUR DIARY\*\*

#### SEAM Programme for 2023

Day	Day and Month	Subject	Venue	Time
Sunday	18 <sup>th</sup> May	AREA MEETING MfWfB plus Study Session on Membership (and Tea & Cake!)	EASTBOURNE MH (please note that there is no Zoom facility for this meeting).	1.30 – 4.00pm
TBC	June TBC	3 <sup>rd</sup> SEAM Team Meeting	On Zoom	TBC
Thursday	8 <sup>th</sup> June	Trustees Meeting	On Zoom	11.00am
Thursday	6 <sup>th</sup> July	Elders and Pastoral Friends Meeting	On Zoom	7.00pm
Saturday	8 <sup>th</sup> July	AREA MEETING MfWfB	ON ZOOM	10.00 – 12.00
Sunday	10 <sup>th</sup> September	AREA MEETING MfWfB plus Study Session on Discernment	TILLING GREEN COMMUNITY CENTRE Hosted by RYE LM	1.30 – 4.00

**Regional Meetings: 26<sup>th</sup> June:** Refugees – The Bundle by Journeyman Theatre (Reigate & on Zoom). **30<sup>th</sup> September:** Spirituality in a Day Speaker: Stuart Masters, Woodbrooke (Chichester & on Zoom)

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### POST EPIPHANIES: A Compilation of Poems by Harvey Gillman

#### A Psalm for a Digital Age

I sent you a message. You stopped answering a time ago.  
On my knees I begged to know what name you had become.  
Your silent laughter filled the multiverse.  
I consulted the address book  
and called again all the names I found there.  
I shouted, whispered, coaxed, wheedled, texted even.  
Perhaps there were responses in an unknown file  
or the password I had was wrong or outdated.  
Maybe you were playing hard to get  
or just annoyed at the constant petitions  
and blocked all lines of communication.

(It may have been, of course,  
that my prayer was your name,  
or the wind that blew it away,  
or the water where it floated or sank,  
or the earth where I buried it.  
Just to send the message was enough?  
The seasons have come and gone,  
no shoot, no green, no trace of soil disturbed.  
The screen like the earth is frozen.)

Where are you hiding now, my dear?  
In the dark I write your name,  
graffiti of a former love on sites all around me.  
Am I now unfriended from your list of lovers,  
or my messages saved on some storage system  
I never decrypted?

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My message bounced back  
from heaven to earth  
– our devices incompatible?  
The tablet lies broken?  
My soul hacked into, held for ransom?

It could be, I know,  
that your silence itself  
was the response that I needed.

I shall not delete however  
from the archive of my heart  
the only address for you  
that I ever possessed.

*June 2021.*



**Curlew in flight: Newtown National Nature Reserve, Isle of Wight**

**Photo © Keith Harcourt 2023**

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Le Trayas

### Poem in three colours

Where time was green  
when space was red  
and mind was blue as the sea.  
Clambering down, clattering  
on the scree to the water's edge.  
The sea welcomed. The sky

offered itself. The pines  
were witness. Our minds held  
the winds. Spells from the sky.

We dared not shout as children shout  
even out at sea. A bird spun  
and spun. Red against an extreme of blue

of a southern spring day. Boyhood still  
cast its spell. Ripening into manhood,  
We, sort of, slow intermittent.

Down, down the red rocks, hearts  
green, we explorers from a blue tale  
chopping the air with golden arms.

The rocks, the pines, the sea  
still inhabit the half-open kingdom  
of this mind red, blood flowing  
slower now. Days not so kind.

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Days when we were sturdy as pine  
on the edge of the cliff.

We tumbled, tumbled to the sea,  
always tumbling, still tumbling  
In the fading golden light.

*September 21*



**Storm Clouds over the Solent, Isle of Wight**

**Photo © Keith Harcourt 2023**

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**Only say the word and I shall be healed.**

And so he frequented the libraries  
and consulted the dictionaries,  
went online and off, many applications,  
hither and thither and back again.

What is the word, he wondered?

What is your healing word?

Where is the sacred text?

Where are the sacred, solemn lips

that shall deliver the healing sound?

How shall I know, he wondered,  
lost as he was for so many seasons  
among languages, ancient and modern.

I have heard, he thought,  
so many words, many compelling reasons.  
So many gods have spoken in thunder  
from the desert and the mountain top.

A word proclaimed from beyond,  
whispered from the most distant of galaxies?  
(A sound rises like sap in the tree of the mind,  
like lava pouring from the cracks in the heart.)

Utter me again the echoes of your silence.

Hold me close in the arms of your wind.

Let me rest in the awe of your absence.

Shall I then, shall I thus, be healed once more?

*November 2021*

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### To my sisters and brothers

*As a child I was taught that the Russians and the Ukrainians had a long history of persecuting the Jews. My ancestors were refugees from Lithuania, My heart bleeds for the people of Ukraine and their supporters in Russia. And for the peoples of Palestine and Israel. For the persecuted and their persecutors.*

As a child I was taught whom to love,  
and, if not love, whom I must learn hate,  
at least to fear. They were kind, the older ones.  
They wanted me to live at least in partial peace,  
to survive a while on a bewildering earth.  
They gave me bricks that throughout my life  
I would learn to build large and wide and sturdy walls  
and so have shelter from a lowering world.

But there were other worlds within my mind  
so vast no walls could encompass. I had arms,  
could reach beyond my childhood's prison realm,  
embrace a stranger and a stranger's world,  
could flee across the frontiers of a given name,  
call the unknown my kin and yes be hurt,  
be loved, but gaze upon no face with fear,

see no creature upon this earth my foe,  
pull down the walls each place I go.

*February 2022*

### Ragged doll

They came from a far away country. I don't know how.  
They did not speak our language. A few words perhaps.



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Kwakera or something. I remember that now.  
Foreigners are rare these days. Strange faces but  
we were hungry, had little to wear. They brought us food,  
they brought us clothes for long winter days.  
The words they used were smiles and arms outstretched.  
From them we learned to laugh again, to laugh and play.

She came one morning. She knocked. We were scared.  
She was ancient and very tall. I was only four years old.  
Small and thin. Food was a memory. With her she brought  
a bag as large as a mountain. We watched. We waited.  
She gave us bread, large, brown, hard, smelling of the fields  
where once we played. From underneath the bread  
she pulled out an old rag doll. She was like a magician.  
She stretched out her hand, gave me the doll, gently.  
It greeted me with its big blue eyes.  
A doll of rags. A doll of rags to be my friend.

I kept the doll for many years until like me it fell apart  
among the rage and strife of a later war.

These strange people came from far far away.  
They gave us food, clothes. I did not know their god.  
I only knew their love. My doll with big blue eyes.

*May 2022*

### **Who are you really? Really?**

Who are you really? Really?  
This skin, these bones, this tongue and mouth,

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this hand that formulates, that conjugates,  
the mind that amalgamates, the steps  
that I have left behind, am leaving on the earth.  
Really?

What my mother, what my father made, fashioned in their mode,  
according to their mood. They raised and formed.  
But not this only. I am what the soil  
I trod grew in me, the clouds blew on me,  
what my friends saw in me and did not see.  
The trees I embraced, the sun and moon.  
The bodies I have embraced. Those I dared not.

Who are you really?  
Where do you come from then? Where?

From deserts and mountains and valleys  
and the embrace of generations, the rivalry  
of fierce tribes. From the south and the east.  
Places whose names I cannot remember, never knew,  
never learned. Places I passed through, if only  
in a passing dream before the dawn appeared.

Why will you not answer? Who are your people?

Anemones growing thick in woods  
on a day early in spring. Flowers of the wind.  
My people, my teachers. Wordless. Blowing.  
Oaks, and palms, the rich soil and the sand.  
My people of many tongues. Of many prayers.  
Of many supplications. I am the places

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I have inhabited, the places I live in still.  
The places I have not yet visited.  
The dreams that haunt me.

And so, have I ticked your box?  
Have you pinned me down,  
nailed me to your knowledge,  
fastened my face in the encyclopaedia  
of your need to know?  
Why do you need to know?  
What do you need to know?

Who are you really to ask me  
who I am. What needs to be ticked?  
My box has the sky as its roof and the winds  
are its sides, and water and earth are its floor.  
What still grows beneath your questions?  
What longing to possess and dispossess?

*December 2022*

### **Tears**

They say, those who speak of these things,  
and write about them, having observed  
the lives of those they loved, or simply  
studied the appropriate statistics,  
that there is a tendency, pathological perhaps,  
for the old, suddenly, without notice,  
to cry , whether for joy or pain they do not know –  
one of the consequences of growing old, perhaps.

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He walked along the sea, the vast tears of the ocean,  
pulled by sun and moon and sand  
and so many years of waiting.

He and the sea, their faces in mourning,  
mountains to the north, shoulders white  
with frozen tears, fingers of rivers  
drenched with the flow of lamentation,  
because he was old and had seen so much,

had waited so long. So many dreams  
were jetsam on the sand. Nightmares  
crashed upon him like waves. He watched them  
come and go, tears trembling at the pain of things.

You do not pass the age of twenty,  
someone wrote, without a broken heart.

The heart broken, patched up, ready for rebreaking.

A volcano long ready to shed its load of tears

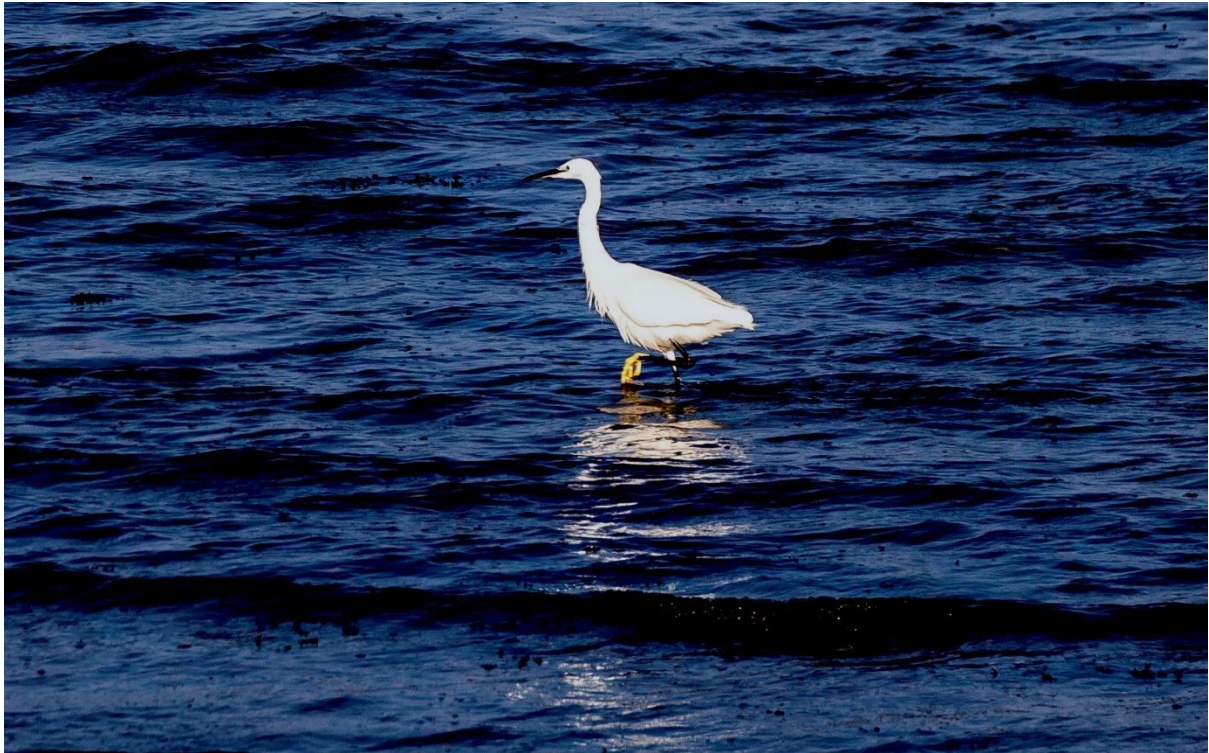
erupts into sunlight. Uncontrolled  
like the laughter of children. So they say,  
those who claim to know these things  
and have written about them in their reports  
and know all about the sea, the sand,  
the mountains, volcanoes, and sit all day  
In their white coats, ecstatic over their formulae,  
and their mastery of the way of things.

*March 2023*

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Lesser Egret

Photo © Keith Harcourt 2023

### LOCAL MEETINGS: NEWS AND VIEWS

Elizabeth Allary-Standing (Seaford LM) reports that Seaford have held a worship-sharing on Membership – attended by about 17 Friends in all – with pre-prep being done on the reasons why the debate is happening.

Friends will be placing an article in *Seaford Scene*, a local free magazine, during Quaker Week as part of their ongoing outreach programme.

Attendees have been invited to Lizzie's house for lunch for a general chat about Quakers matters and other topics.

Mary de Pleave (Bexhill LM): highlighted the problem with smaller meetings that when one or two people are absent, it makes a big difference to the sense and feeling of the meeting. If the absentees are regular, it can lead to a sense of disconnection to the group in general. Outreach is needed to encourage more (and younger!) people to come to the meeting. The observation was also made that older people do find Quakers more attractive.

Alex Francis (Hastings LM): reports that the drying certificate after the flood is not yet forthcoming as the drying heaters are still required. The beginning of June is now being suggested as the time when Hastings Friends can move back into the Meeting House. MfW is

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currently taking place in Jackson Hall, Portland Place, gaining new attenders and a membership application!

Jean Stock (Eastbourne LM): reports that the meeting is going from strength to strength. The new clerk is doing well, ably assisted by the correspondence clerk and new treasurer.

A 'Meeting for Learning' is being held each month and this month's topic was 'Ministry – Vocal or Silent'. From this came a very good written piece about connections to Meeting.

A shared lunch (the first for some time) was held recently and will be repeated on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month. Recently, a MfWfB and Premises Committee meetings have been held.

There is to be an outing in June to Ashburnham Park and we are hopeful that the scaffolding needed for the roof repairs will soon be able to come down.

Jean Farebrother (Herstmonceux LM): reports that the meeting continues as before, holding MfW on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays in the Meeting House and on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> in Hailsham. When it occurs, the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in the month is used as a discussion meeting.

Hirings are going well with 'Vitality Villagers' being one of these. There have been new enquirers and 8 Friends regularly come to MfW rising to about 13 on occasion.

A regular warm hub was set up, but only one person came!

Chris Lawson (Lewes LM): reports that the meeting is dominated by the builders (and the dust!) but numbers of Friends coming to MfW at the Meeting House remains steady at about 30 each Sunday with several more on Zoom. Lewes is well used to the routine of having a blended meeting.

The mid-week meeting still takes place, as does the Explorers group which includes enquirers and attenders.

The renovations are going well, particularly in the upstairs flat where the insulation is proving effective. The damp end of the building has been damp proofed and is now dry.

However, the whole project has been delayed by problems with the electricity supply and the back wall having to be underpinned which was unexpected and which has proved to be very expensive...

The meeting hopes to be back to normal early in the new year...

Martin Wimbush (Rye LM): reports that the meeting continues as normal at the Tilling Green Centre. Recent MfWfB was held when our treasurer put forward the financial statement. The

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meeting is sponsoring one of our Members to attend BYM in London using funds from the Ella Roff Fund, one of the purposes for which it was bequeathed to Rye LM.

Feedback on the question of membership is being sent to the AM Clerk and a discussion session is to be held on the subject.

Keith Harcourt (Uckfield LM): reports that the meeting continues as normal with a well attended outreach meeting at Holy Cross including 3 from the care home and 4 from Uckfield LM. There is an average of 6 Friends attending MfW (sometimes 8 or 9 or 3 or 4!). The discussion group led to 2 (younger!) attenders applying for membership. There are also 2 attenders from the Anglican tradition, one of whom is very much interested in the history of Quakers and has attended an online Woodbrooke course on the subject and wrote an article for the Winter edition of *Quiet Ways*.

Elisabeth Wilson of Polegate LM writes: **Quaker Nationwide Day of Healing – 2023**

The holding of this day by Quakers was the inspiration of the Friends Fellowship of Healing, and is now supported by them. Each year it is held on the first Saturday in March. Polegate Local Quaker Meeting first participated in this in 2019, but the onset of Covid prevented our doing so again until this year on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> March.

Some Quaker Meetings throughout the country take part, and full participation can involve a time commitment from 11 a.m. till 3 p.m. on the day, and the opening of their Meeting House so that Friends and others can share for periods of time in a Quaker Meeting for Worship specifically concentrated on the healing needs of our world.

Polegate Local Quaker Meeting is held in our Quiet Room at Bernhard Baron Care Home each Sunday, so we can use this room for other gatherings if we make a booking.

This year we planned a Meeting for Worship for Healing for an hour on the morning of Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> March. Our Meeting at present has 7 Quaker Members and one Attender. We also invited others in our community here to join us for all or part of the hour, knowing that there would be some who would wish to take part. Our Managers are very supportive, and make it possible for any staff on duty on the day who wish to come for a brief period to do so. During the hour over 20 people came for shorter or longer periods.

For those unfamiliar with our Quaker way of “silent” worship we provide in writing a statement saying if they wish to verbalise a concern for prayer, they can do this within the silence. It ends with the words “God is the Healer, and we are merely channels of that love and power, so having spoken our concern, we then ‘let go and let God’ – quietly and confidently leaving it in His hands.”

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We were remiss this year in not letting Area Meeting know in advance about this event, as it might have been that some from nearby Local Meetings would like to join us. We will endeavour to do better in 2024!



Grey Heron RSPB Nature Reserve, Isle of Wight

Photo © Keith Harcourt 2023

### **‘Who’s Who’ serving Sussex East Area Quaker Meeting**

<b>Clerk</b>	Sally Aviss (Rye LM)
<b>Clerk of Trustees</b>	Patricia Cockrell (Lewes LM)
<b>Membership Clerk</b>	Peter Bolwell (Hastings LM)
<b>Treasurer</b>	John Ashcroft (Lewes LM)
<b>Assistant Treasurer(s)</b>	Alex Francis & Phil Cooper (Hastings LM), Tim Reynolds (Bexhill LM)
<b>Clerk of Nominations</b>	Mary Elliott (Bexhill LM)
<b>Safeguarding Co-ordinator</b>	Vacant
<b>Convener of Elders &amp; Pastoral Friends</b>	Sally Aviss (Rye LM)
<b>Meeting For Sufferings Rep.</b>	Peter Aviss (Rye LM)
<b>Alternate for MfS</b>	Sue Walton (Herstmonceux LM)
<b>Sustainability Group</b>	Jean Farebrother (Herstmonceux LM), Graham Ellis & Sonia Relf (Rye LM)



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<b>Prison Chaplain</b>	Medhina (Lewes LM)
<b>QCCIR representative</b>	Kim Ashcroft (Lewes LM)
<b>QSPW correspondent</b>	Antony Webster (Seaford LM)
<b>Funerals and Cremations</b>	Tessa Brown (Lewes LM)
<b>Registrar of Marriages</b>	Nichola Lawton (Rye LM)
<b>Quaker Life representative</b>	Mary Elliott (Bexhill LM)
<b>Quarterly Newsletter Editor</b>	Sally Aviss (Rye LM)
<b>Local Development Worker</b>	Ruth Audus (for Kent, Sussex and Surrey)

### Local Meeting Clerks or Co-Clerks:

**Bexhill:** Mary Elliott **Eastbourne:** Alan West **Hastings:** Alex Francis **Herstmonceux:** Jean Farebrother & Wendy Taylor **Lewes:** David Martin & Clerking Team **Polegate:** Roy Payne **Rye:** Martin Wimbush **Seaford:** Ruth Whitelaw **Uckfield:** Theresa Buss, Deirdre Palmer



Sun through clouds

Photo © Sally Aviss 2023