

QUIET WAYS

SUMMER 2023 EDITION

Along the paths of the imagination the artist and mystic make contact. The revelations of God are not all of one kind. Always the search in art, as in religion, is for the rhythms of relationships, for the unity, the urge, the mystery, the wonder of life that is presented in great art and true religion.
(QF&P 21.32).

Editorial

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

I have always felt the strong link between music and spirituality. Music is an undeniably spiritual language; a universal language where, even if the words are unfamiliar, the sense/feeling of the music comes through. Certain composers have the capacity to ‘speak’ to one’s condition, and become places where solace and uplift can be found.

I first came to Friends in 1989 through being invited to play in the orchestra for the Quaker performance of *Cry of the Earth* (by Tony Biggin and Alec Davison) at the Royal Festival Hall. I was profoundly affected by the deep silence and moving ministry of the Meeting for Worship held before the performance began – sitting on the floor backstage at the RFH with the choir and orchestra – and then, of course, during that amazing performance.

Friends in Tune presents



Leavening the Spirit

Herstmonceux Quakers invite you to
Leavening the Spirit
a presentation by Alec Davison and Tony Biggin
(inspiring Quaker music-making for over 100 years!)
2.00 - 4.00pm, Sunday July 30th
at Herstmonceux Friends' Meeting House
West End, Herstmonceux BN27 4NR
Refreshments provided

Since then, I have participated in many Quaker musical events as performer, conductor and organiser (most recently for Quaker Music Network): each one special, each one unique.

Alec Davison and Tony Biggin have a great rapport with their music and words, tuneful and accessible, covering a wide range of topics from the environment to George Fox. *Leavening the Spirit* is a not-to-be-missed opportunity on 30th July at Herstmonceux Meeting House to meet them both and be entertained.

Have a lovely Summer, Friends and Go Well.

Sally Aviss, Editor, Quiet Ways.

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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 October 2023) are always welcome – be it something light-hearted, deeply personal or of universal significance. Items should be sent to editorquietways@gmail.com. Closing date for submissions: Monday, 2nd October 2023. ****DATES FOR YOUR DIARY****

SEAM Programme for 2023

| Day | Day and Month | Subject | Venue | Time |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| Sunday [MfW 10.30 followed by a shared lunch. All welcome] | 30 th July | Friends in Tune Presentation: <i>Leavening the Spirit</i> | Herstmonceux MH | 2.00 – 4.00 |
| Sunday [MfW 10.30 – 11.30am All welcome followed by a shared lunch.] | 10th September | AREA MEETING MfWfB plus Study Session on <i>Truth, Integrity and Discernment.</i> | TILLING GREEN COMMUNITY CENTRE Hosted by RYE LM | 1.30 – 4.00 |
| TBD | ?August | Nominations Committee Meeting | On Zoom | TBD |
| TBD | TBD | Trustees Meeting | On Zoom | 7.00pm |
| TBD | September/October | 4 th SEAM Team Meeting | On Zoom | TBD |
| TBD | October/November | Elders and Pastoral Friends Meeting | On Zoom | 7.00pm |
| Saturday or Sunday TBD | 18th or 19th November TBD | AREA MEETING MfWfB + AM Event or Study Session TBD | On Zoom (if on Saturday) In person (if on Sunday) | 10.00 – 12.00 1.30 – 4.00 |

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Regional Meeting: 30th September *Exploring Quaker Spirituality* Speaker: Stuart Masters, Woodbrooke (Chichester in person from 10:30 & on Zoom from 11:00. Ends at 15:30)



Saturday 30 September 2023
In-person and online

Sussex and Surrey Regional Quaker Meeting

Exploring Quaker Spirituality

With Stuart Masters

What is Quaker spirituality all about and how does it speak to us today? What is distinctive about Quaker faith and its practices? In our day together, we will explore central elements of Quaker spirituality, including: silence, worship and vocal ministry; personal spiritual practice; discernment and decision-making; and the link between our inward spiritual experiences and our active lives in the world.



At Chichester Friends Meeting House ~10:30-15:30
Or join online via Zoom ~ 11:00-15:30

Everyone who attends or is a member of a Quaker meeting within Sussex and Surrey RM is welcome to take part.

Please register before Tuesday 22 August via:
sussexandsurreyrmquakerclerk@outlook.com or 01323 890210. Please advise whether in-person or on Zoom.

Friends attending in-person are invited to bring some lunch for sharing or your own picnic.
Chichester Friends Meeting House, Priory Road, PO19 1NX

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Living adventurously

By Ruth Whitelaw

Live adventurously. When choices arise, do you take the way that offers the fullest opportunity for the use of your gifts in the service of God and the community? Let your life speak.

When I moved from mainstream primary teaching into special needs, I felt I was in the right place although I didn't really know what I was doing. Add to that, I was now the music teacher and when faced with a group of children with complex needs or highly autistic, I felt out of my depth.

I gained experience and developed skills, made loads of mistakes and also visited other music teachers in other special schools. Slowly, I developed a music curriculum that was sensory, learnt the need for structure and repetition as well as being patient and responsive. I taught whole classes and devised ways of increasing communication and interaction through music with individual children.

As an expensive additional teacher, I didn't know how long the school could sustain my job financially, but it turned out to be fifteen years. When the end came this year, I had a choice. I could become a class teacher at the school or strike out on my own, doing what I loved, making music with others. I decided to start my own business, which was scary after 33 years in the state school system.

Having my music teaching role at the school taken away from me undermined my confidence. I wasn't sure people would want the things I could do let alone pay for them. I didn't know if anyone would turn up at my music sessions or if any parents would consider letting me work with their children. However, I listed the things I thought I could offer and how much I felt I could charge and then set about hiring venues and advertising.

I now have four children with special needs whom I work with individually. We sing to the guitar, we improvise and play tunes on the piano, we find rhythms on the drum. We connect, communicate, and concentrate when this can be difficult for these youngsters.

I started an early years music morning which is inclusive, where children with learning difficulties and disabilities can make music with those who don't have these challenges. There are times when the numbers that come do not match the cost of the hall but I now have a core of regulars who sing my songs at home and have their favourite activities. It is child led where the children choose what we do next and create new verses and actions to the songs.

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I visit care and residential homes to sing old songs and bring back memories. I have made good friends at one particular care home for adults with special needs where the residents look out of the window for me to arrive with my guitar and music bag on a Friday.

My latest venture is a Singalong where anyone can come and sing without the pressure of it being a choir. We choose the songs we like and enjoy the process of learning new songs and singing old favourites. The people who come say they used to sing, but don't anymore. They now experience singing again, together and finding that joy again.

Now when I go to work, it isn't work. I look forward to it, it is fun and it makes me happy and content. I have realised that the skills and experience I have can bring people together, support those who find life difficult and enable me to feel a purpose and fulfilment in my life.

I want to thank all the Friends and friends who have supported me.



Photo © Sally Aviss 2023

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Reflections on Yearly Meeting from Lewes Friends

Compiled by Liz Brooks

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.”

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“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.”

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“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*] 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!”



‘The Light’, Friends House, London

Photo © Friends House

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Quaker Notes by Jim Bond

You'll find no porridge here,
Or men in funny hats.
No rote, no robes, no 'Thou Shall Nots',
Nor steeples filled with bats.
No sermons to instruct. No rules you must obey,
And though it might sound strange to some,
We're not told what to pray.

You'll find no porridge here,
Or bells, or holy smoke.
Just earnest, soulful gatherings,
Of earnest, soulful folk.
Our meeting house is plain,
It lacks both priest and choir,
But gives us silence, friendship, calm,
And all that we require.

You'll find no porridge here,
If that's what you expect.
We meet in peace: for peace we pray,
In stillness and respect.
Our ways may be diverse,
But one thing's very clear,
Although we don't serve bread and wine,
You'll find no porridge here.

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Seascape

Photo © Sally Aviss 2023

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Quakers and climate crisis By Graham Ellis

In a decade from now will you be able to look young people in the eye and say, “I did what I could” or will you remain quiet?

Over the Earth Day weekend in April, I joined with hundreds of Friends to do what we could for future generations at ‘The Big One’ event organised by Extinction Rebellion. We were demanding urgent government action on the climate emergency. The Westminster Meeting House offered hospitality throughout the four days and three hundred people took part in a Meeting for Worship, which spilled into the street outside.



Quakers came in coaches and minibuses from around forty-eight different Local Meetings or Quaker Recognised Bodies across the UK. The groups moved on to the Houses of Parliament where 200 different groups gathered, with some picketing government departments. At twenty, or more, colourful stalls and on three stages we were offered speeches, climate workshops, group discussions, citizens assemblies and performances.

One of the aims of the protest was to build a wider coalition with a wide diversity of groups such as Green Peace, War on Want, Friends of the Earth and Keep Britain Tidy, as well as smaller community groups. The demonstration followed an announcement from XR in January that it was stepping back from disruptive tactics and focusing on building a mass movement instead. Everything was extremely peaceful and unlike every other XR event I have attended there was hardly any police presence at all.

According to XR over 60,000 concerned citizens from all walks of life marched around the Houses of Parliament and to various government offices over the four days. However, there was great concern that due to the lack of disruption, the major media outlets gave the event very little publicity which defeats the purpose. Did you hear anything on the news? Did you even know about this action by our fellow Friends?

Contrastingly, the Just Stop Oil action at Kingsbury Oil Terminal last year got loads of media attention. It was there that several Friends were arrested including Sue Hampton, Phil Laurie, Rajan Naidu and Arne Springorum. Rajan was sentenced to 34 days in prison while the others received suspended sentences and were ordered to pay costs of over £400. Friends House has included this information in the Prison and Court Register and is holding the Friends involved in the Light.



Join the WhatsApp group Quaker Support for Climate Action at <https://chat.whatsapp.com/GkTxakk59KaKNT1nuBrwDI>

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Ideas about Quaker Community By Alex Francis

In his book *How Religion Evolved and Why it Endures*, Robin Dunbar, a social psychologist, floats the idea that a system of ideals held in common helps to unify a group of people around an accepted pattern of behaviours.

The Emmaus community founded by Father Abbe-Pierre in the winter of 1953 in Paris, recycling discarded stuff, and now to be found in most major towns throughout France is an example of this unifying principle. It has a local base in Hastings with over 20 people in residence.

The Mondragon Corporation which relied on the advice of a Jesuit to set up operations with four engineers and a widows savings in the 1950s in the Basque Country of northern Spain, now has approximately 80,000 Co-op members.

The Co-op of Trinity Wholefoods in Hastings, set up largely by local Quakers over 35 years ago running on a decision method owing much to Quakerism is testimony to practical Quakerism culture.

On Radio 4, *Start the Week* much was made of the “Bank of Dave” a community enterprise started in Burnley using systems of lending as they used to be when the Bank Manager knew each customer personally. Is it a coincidence that Burnley Football Club can boast membership from most of the local households as supporters enjoying it new found success in promotion?

Quaker Banks of Lloyds and Barclays were founded on Quaker Principles of Business and the Friend magazine recently had articles illustrating how networked commercial Quaker communities were often relying on personal knowledge of local businesses.

As Acting Clerk of Hastings Local Meeting and a qualified accountant I appreciate the community resource of a shared set of values supporting each other in practical matters with a common purse.

The Bruderhoff Community at Robertsbridge offers a local example of Biblical principles applied in this way.

With economic and social storm clouds gathering, I see it as my job as Clerk to promote the Unity of our local Quaker Community to act as a supporting resource for our Members and Attenders to weather whatever the future may bring...!

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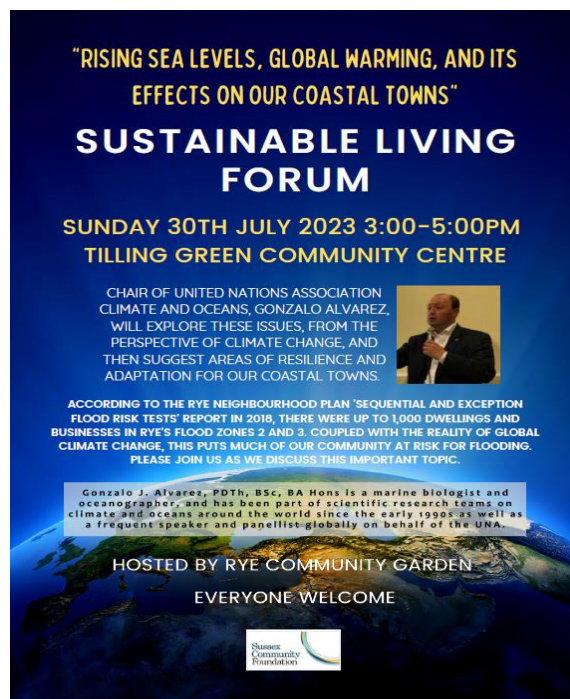
LOCAL MEETINGS: NEWS AND VIEWS

All is well and thriving at the smaller LMs with Bexhill, Rye, Uckfield and Herstmonceux reporting that their meetings continue regularly and happily, each one being a close-knit group who know each other well. New Attenders have been welcomed in most meetings and numbers remain steady, varying from 5 or 6 and up to 12. Two Attenders from Uckfield are applying for Membership and Bexhill are pleased to report that their friend Patrick, who has been in poor health, is receiving help and medical assistance and is a little better.

Herstmonceux Meeting is maintaining a good attendance and has new enquirers. The Ecumenical Sundays on the first of the month are gaining in numbers. There were 17 one evening! They are also looking forward to welcoming Friends from Area Meeting to join them on Sunday 30 July for a visit from Alec Davison and Tony Biggin's 'Friends in Tune Presentation' at 2.00 pm following a shared lunch.

Lewes Meeting has good attendance despite the disruption caused by the building works. Progress is being made in many directions, with various groups looking at various aspects. There have even been discussions on carpets and door handles! The wobbly wall is now solid and the flooring fixed by piles and blending into the wall support.

Hastings Meeting continues to function well in their temporary home after the flooding of the Meeting House It is hoped that the ongoing Spiritual Review will be completed soon and three Friends have been appointed to follow this through with the Meeting. A tentative date for moving into the FMH seems to be the end of July with the workforce doing the reinstatement but this is not definite. So, watch this space Friends!




"RISING SEA LEVELS, GLOBAL WARMING, AND ITS EFFECTS ON OUR COASTAL TOWNS"

SUSTAINABLE LIVING FORUM

SUNDAY 30TH JULY 2023 3:00-5:00PM
TILLING GREEN COMMUNITY CENTRE


CHAIR OF UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION CLIMATE AND OCEANS, GONZALO ALVAREZ, WILL EXPLORE THESE ISSUES, FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CLIMATE CHANGE, AND THEN SUGGEST AREAS OF RESILIENCE AND ADAPTATION FOR OUR COASTAL TOWNS.



ACCORDING TO THE RYE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 'SEQUENTIAL AND EXCEPTION FLOOD RISK TESTS' REPORT IN 2018, THERE WERE UP TO 1,000 DWELLINGS AND BUSINESSES IN RYE'S FLOOD ZONES 2 AND 3. COUPLED WITH THE REALITY OF GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE, THIS PUTS MUCH OF OUR COMMUNITY AT RISK FOR FLOODING. PLEASE JOIN US AS WE DISCUSS THIS IMPORTANT TOPIC.

Gonzalo J. Alvarez, PDTh, BSc, BA Hons is a marine biologist and oceanographer, and has been part of scientific research teams on climate and oceans around the world since the early 1990s as well as a frequent speaker and panellist globally on behalf of the UNA.

HOSTED BY RYE COMMUNITY GARDEN
EVERYONE WELCOME



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

| | |
|--|--|
| Clerk | Sally Aviss (Rye LM) |
| Clerk of Trustees | Patricia Cockrell (Lewes LM) |
| Membership Clerk | Peter Bolwell (Hastings LM) |
| Treasurer | John Ashcroft (Lewes LM) |
| Assistant Treasurer(s) | Alex Francis & Phil Cooper (Hastings LM), Tim Reynolds (Bexhill LM) |
| Clerk of Nominations | Mary Elliott (Bexhill LM) |
| Safeguarding Co-ordinator | Vacant |
| Convener of Elders & Pastoral Friends | Sally Aviss (Rye LM) |
| Meeting For Sufferings Rep. | Peter Aviss (Rye LM) |
| Alternate for MfS | Sue Walton (Herstmonceux LM) |
| Sustainability Group | Jean Farebrother (Herstmonceux LM), Graham Ellis & Sonia Relf (Rye LM) |
| Prison Chaplain | Medhina (Lewes LM) |
| QCCIR representative | Kim Ashcroft (Lewes LM) |
| QSPW correspondent | Antony Webster (Seaford LM) |
| Funerals and Cremations | Tessa Brown (Lewes LM) |
| Registrar of Marriages | Nichola Lawton (Rye LM) |
| Quaker Life Council representative | Mary Elliott (Bexhill LM) |
| Quarterly Newsletter Editor | Sally Aviss (Rye LM) |
| Local Development Worker | 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

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Dog Roses in Dorset

Photo © Sally Aviss 2023