

QUIET WAYS

WINTER 2024 EDITION

The Advices and Queries are intended for use in our meetings, for private devotion and reflection, as a challenge and inspiration to us as Friends in our personal lives and in our lives as a religious community, and as a concise expression of our faith and practice readily available to enquirers and to the wider world.
(From QF&P 1.05)

Editorial

Welcome to the Winter 2024 edition of *Quiet Ways*, the quarterly magazine/newsletter of Sussex East Area Quaker Meeting.

It is interesting to see how those unfamiliar with Quakerism might view the Quaker community and our way of worshipping. For us, it is, or has become, a natural part of our lives; sometimes challenging, sometimes offering solace and respite, but always deepening our understanding of the Divine and the tasks that we may be called to do – often without realising from where the impetus comes until afterwards.

The recent Churches Together Week was an opportunity for each denomination to share their way of worship with others in the local community and Quakers in Rye and Seaford were active in this respect. As ever, those Friends who attended these have expressed many views of the experience of worship-sharing in this context, mostly confirming that for us, as Quaker individuals, our way of worshipping is indeed the right way for those of us who are ‘convinced’.

Many of us may well have a background in the Church of England, Catholicism or other denomination, expression of faith or even none at all, but we each bring our life’s collective spiritual experiences to Quaker Meetings. I think most of us would agree that our initial experience of Quakers was one of ‘coming home’ and finding the special place that ‘speaks to our condition’. Having said that, members of other denominations might also feel the same about their Church. And why not!

In our edition this time you will find that Uckfield LM have moved and they share their lovely new historic venue with us. We have the ‘sermon’ that Harvey Gilman gave in St Mary’s Church in Rye during Churches Together week, as well as a powerful statement from the Quaker Truth and Integrity Group. News and Views from our Local Meetings are always relatable and ‘Who’s Who’ in SEAM gives an insight into those who serve our AM.

Go well, Friends. *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 March/April 2024) 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: Friday, 1st March 2024.

****DATES FOR YOUR DIARY****

SEAM Programme for 2023/24

Day	Day and Month	Subject	Venue	Time
Sunday	10 th MARCH	Area Meeting MfWfB + Study Session on the <i>Pros and Cons of Merging SEAQM Trustees with those of other AMs</i>	Eastbourne MH	1.30 – 4.30 (including tea)
Saturday	11 th MAY	Area Meeting Short MfWfB + Study Day on <i>Community Resilience</i> with an outside facilitator	Lewes MH	10.30 short MfWfB 11.00 – 4.00 Study Day (+ tea)
Sunday	9 th JUNE	Area Meeting MfWfB + Study Session on <i>Forgiveness and Connectedness</i>	Herstmonceux MH	1.30 – 4.30 (including tea)
Sunday	1 st SEPTEMBER	Area Meeting MfWfB + Study Session on <i>Importance of Diversity</i>	Hosted by Seaford LM	1.30 – 4.30 (including tea)
Saturday	16 th NOVEMBER	Area Meeting MfWfB	On Zoom	10.00 – 12.00pm
Day	Day and Month	Subject	Venue	Time

Regional Meetings: Sat. 23rd March 2024 10.30am (in person) and 11.00am (on Zoom) at Lewes MH. Subject: *Equality and Spirituality*

Sat. 22nd June at Brighton MH (topic TBD), Sat. 28th September and Sat. 23rd November – venues and topics to be decided.

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Uckfield Local Meeting has moved! By Keith Harcourt

Uckfield Local Meeting has moved! We now meet in the Oak Room at Bridge Cottage Heritage Centre, High St, Uckfield TN22 1AZ each Sunday. Times stay the same, MfW at 10.30 on Sundays. We are about 150 metres from the Bus Station and just across the road from the train station. Friends wishing to join us should enter via the front door and the Oak Room door is immediately on the left as you come in. The Oak Room has disabled access, and the toilet facilities are similarly accessible. We have use of the kitchen so tea and coffee are available at the end of the Meeting.



Our old home, the Luxford Centre with its large hall, had become too expensive for our small meeting. Bridge Cottage Heritage Centre is a medieval Wealden Hall House built in 1436. It is larger than usual for a house of its type and contains high quality timber work which may suggest it was built for a person of local importance. The Cottage is looked after by the Uckfield

and District Preservation Society. More about the cottage architecture can be seen here: <https://www.bridgecottageuckfield.co.uk/about-bridge-cottage/>



Photo Captions: 1. A general view of the front of the Bridge Cottage Heritage Centre with the blue Meeting sign outside. 2. A closeup of the front door and the window of the Oak Room 3. A view of the Oak Room, not set up for Meeting.

Photos: © Keith Harcourt 2023 & 2024

Our move has proved very popular and we have settled into the rhythm of meeting in this lovely old building. The room is smaller than we had at the Luxford but adequate for our needs and the atmosphere is very conducive to a gathered meeting. Do come and visit us in our new home!

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Quaker Sermon for a United Service During Churches Together Week

Written and given by Harvey Gilman on 21st January 2024

I am afraid I am one of those newcomers to Rye, having been here for only 8 years. When we were looking for somewhere to live, we were asked whether we wanted to live in the citadel. I didn't even know Rye had a citadel. We were leaving the independent republic of Brighton to come to England, as we put it, and that surprised some of our Brighton friends who believed that Brighton was the centre of the universe, or at least the centre of Sussex. What surprised some of my Quaker friends also was the fact that we came to live in Military Road – Quakers have a pacifist tradition, so why move to a road associated with the military? However, over the years we have met some really friendly and hospitable people here who have made us feel at home.

Hospitality is the gift we offer each other. It is offering a home, a place to abide. It is a journey of discovery. The basic Quaker understanding, which is shared with other religious traditions, is that there is something of God in each human being. Our worship takes place in a sort of collected stillness. It is a sacrament of listening. We are called to listen to that of God, and to respond to that of God, in the other. This echoes the mysticism of Paul of Tarsus who writes of the Christ within. Quakerism sees Christianity as a form of midwifery – as did the great medieval mystic Eckhart – we give birth to Christ within each other, we offer each other that sacred hospitality which is beyond names, beyond, distinction, neither Jew nor Greek, neither male nor female. Karl Rahner a twentieth century Roman Catholic thinker talks of the anonymous Christ, the sacred in all humans, the sacred in all life. The Hebrew scriptures talk of honouring the stranger at the gate and in monasteries and convents the one who knocks at the door is Christ, coming to seek shelter.

But it isn't all plain sailing. We read in Matthew of the Caananite woman who comes to Jesus to heal her daughter. At first Jesus does not want to hear her and his disciples want to send her away. Jesus says to her is "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." He continues, I was only sent to the lost sheep of Israel. The woman replies, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs. She tells him in fact, we are not dogs, we are not the enemy, we also are children. We are human beings. A woman, a second-class member of a despised people, becomes his teacher. And he listens to her.

And there is the Samaritan, a member of another despised group. He, by his compassionate conduct, teaches the priests and the Levites. The process of healing, of learning is a universal one. We are taught by the stories of those we meet. We hear their suffering. That is the meaning of **passion**. We offer a hand, that is **compassion**, suffering with.

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I am Jewish in origin. In the Talmud there is mention of a story told at the Passover meal. When the Hebrews crossed the Red Sea, the angels were supposed to have said to God, that God should rejoice. How can I rejoice, God is supposed to have said, when **my children, the Egyptians are drowning?** I think about the Egyptian soldiers, slaves perhaps forced to fight for an oppressive Pharaoh. Drowning for being forced to obey orders. When I read that story, I also thought of all the horses that were drowning. Hospitality is not just solidarity with humans, but also with animals and the very earth itself. The earth offers us hospitality, we need to reciprocate.

I find that story immensely poignant especially at the moment. When the rector asked me if I would consider preaching today, I initially refused. I would only have two or so weeks to prepare and I am not ordinarily a preacher. But one morning a member of our Quaker community asked me if Rye Churches were going to mark Holocaust Memorial Day. I discovered we don't. But, friends, we might want to consider how we might do that in future.

It then came to me that in a way holocaust is the direct opposite of hospitality. It is that that led me to agree to speak today. Holocaust is the result of demonisation of the other. Not that of God but that of the devil. The refusal to listen to the story of the other. It is the violent overthrow of the other. It is no room at the inn, no room in this place, no room in the church, the synagogue, the mosque, the temple, no room on the earth. It is not seeing the sacred in the Canaanite woman, the Samaritan, the Jew, the Muslim, the other Christians, the atheists. It is the inability to listen to the story, to the life of the other.

It has been said that the present conflict in the Middle East is the inability on all sides to listen to the differing, often contrasting, narratives of two traumatised peoples. It is as though the other side were dogs and not to be given food. The daughter of the Canaanite, of the Israeli, of the Palestinian, is not to be healed.

In October last year, there was a horrific slaughter of Israelis and others. Since then, there has been an even larger slaughter of Palestinians. The holocaust, the memory of the 6 million who were ruthlessly murdered, is engraved on the mind and hearts of world Jewry. The nakba, the name given by Palestinians to the great catastrophe of displacement and exile and now of the literal destruction of life, remains tattooed into their consciousness. These are bitter stories.

Holocaust and nakba continue as events all over in the world today. They are part of the story of many peoples. They are the denial of the incarnation – the sacred in the physical. Demonisation is the opposite of incarnation. The “why have you forsaken me” is the cry to God of every soul, displaced and abused, hanged and bombed. It is a question Jesus addressed to God. It is the question still being asked by those who suffer and by those who talk of God as the epitome of love. Where is the God who offers hospitality? I must add, that when the

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question as to where God was in Auschwitz was asked, one comment, was ‘Where were human beings?’

More than thirty years ago I wrote a poem which was later read out in a Holocaust Memorial Day service at Coventry Cathedral. I should like to share it with you today.

Colours of the rainbow

The guards gave out the colours.
(I always loved rainbows).
They took out a large knife, cut the rainbow in pieces.
Triangles of brightness fell from the sky,
fell from the sky like snow on the mud
fell like stars of blood on our heads
in Auschwitz, in Dachau, in Sachsenhausen,
in Treblinka, in Ravensbruck, in Buchenwald.
Stars of yellow for the Jews
patches of red for the politicals
green for the criminals
black for anti-socials
purple for Jehovah’s Witnesses
blue for emigrants
brown for gypsies
triangles of pink for homosexuals.

Flowers of brightest death.
Here, my love, is our bouquet of bitter herbs,
gather them, gather them.
We shall reclaim
from the stones and the ditches
from the ovens and the forests
a new patchwork of colour
and cover what remains of our lovers,
our friends, our accomplices,
our sisters, the small children of our dreams.

Next year perhaps, in the city of peace
we shall come to the altar
in garments of multicoloured flame
each with her song
each with his melody
and we shall sing
a new covenant
in fire of yellow red green black purple blue pink.
The letters shall burn deep
into the rock of every broken heart.

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The city of peace. The place of acceptance. The church united. The world united. The story of the Samaritan is Jesus' answer to the lawyer who asks: 'Who is my neighbour?' We are all both the Samaritan and the traveller attacked on the road to our particular Jerichos. We are all neighbours. That is the prayer that we need to offer in this week of prayer for Christian Unity.

Not so much the old citadel, a place of dominance; more a new covenant of peace and justice.



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Declaration – Quaker Truth and Integrity Group

Truth and Integrity: Finding Common Ground

Truth and integrity have been at the heart of the Quaker movement for over three hundred and fifty years. We were once called Friends of the Truth and have a tradition of speaking truth to power and exercising quiet diplomacy. Whilst our record is not flawless, historically we have stood firm in relation to the abolition of slavery, prison reform and conscientious objection.

As people of faith, we seek a world transformed, where compassion, equality, truth and integrity are guiding principles. In the meantime, our belief in equality and the intrinsic worth of each individual means that we value democracy as a form of government. Just as we wish our children and grandchildren to inherit the beautiful planet we have experienced, so we want them to enjoy the benefits of a mature democracy where truth prospers and the rule of law applies. Governing with truth and integrity is essential for generating trust; when that trust breaks down people become disillusioned, and leaders lose their mandate to govern.

At the core of Quakerism, we experience a sense of oneness, wonder and mystery. That universal sense provides the basis for the cooperation so urgently needed in our troubled world. We seek kinder ground: the ground of tolerance, respect, mutual cooperation and shared ethical and spiritual values, where oppression can be addressed and reconciliation sought between those of opposing views. We know that this vision is shared by many other individuals and groups, of all faiths and none.

The world has entered a deeply troubling phase. Standards of truth and integrity in politics, public and commercial life and social media are being undermined to the extent that democracy itself is under threat. Many of those in power would seem to act with impunity, disregarding facts and scientific findings. Respect for the judiciary is being undermined and trust in our institutions is threatened. All this is set against a backdrop of the climate emergency and increasing inequality and polarisation.

It was in response to this need that the Quaker Truth & Integrity Group was set up as a national Quaker body in Britain in March 2022. QTIG has committed itself to:

- upholding standards of honesty and integrity in our lives and organisations
- acknowledging that the majority of those in public life/politics are people of goodwill and finding ways of working respectfully with them on ‘kinder ground’
- helping to ensure the Nolan principles (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership)[1] continue to govern public life

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- working towards a system of truly inclusive, participative democracy, where people feel their wishes and needs are truly respected and taken into account
- encouraging constitutional reform and strengthening systems of accountability
- promoting higher standards of truth within the media, including social media.

With these objectives in mind, we intend to institute a national Quaker Truth & Integrity Award to recognise exceptional contributions towards the enhancement of standards of truth and integrity in public life.

In a society in which lies, injustice, inequality, deception and entitlement are prevalent it is only the truth – in all its uncomfortable forms – that will heal us.

Where truth and integrity flourish, so too can personal relationships. Where truth and integrity stand firm, so too can our democracy and our precious traditions. Unless truth and integrity are universally acknowledged and practised, at a fundamental level, international relations cannot fully and completely address the crises that threaten our very existence.

We invite others to join us in this endeavour. We are looking to find partners, people all across the political spectrum who are of good faith and goodwill, so that we can engage together in this urgent and vital work of transformation. Can we work together?

We are not for names, nor men, nor titles of Government, nor are we for this party nor against the other ... but we are for justice and mercy and truth and peace and true freedom, that these may be exalted in our nation, and that goodness, righteousness, meekness, temperance, peace and unity with God, and with one another, that these things may abound. Edward Burrough, 1659 The above is also on QTIG's website [Home | Quaker Truth & Integrity Group](#)



Snowdrops

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LOCAL MEETINGS: NEWS AND VIEWS

Reports given by the LM representatives at the Elders & Pastoral Friends meeting on 30th January 2024.

Hastings LM The Meeting House is almost back to normal after suffering the second lot of flooding. This is great news for the meeting and they should be able to re-start hiring out the premises very soon. A new carpet has been fitted but there remains a small amount of work to be done on the skirting board in the lobby area. The meeting is also investigating the possibility of having a flood-proof front door installed.

Alex Francis has met with the local MP to discuss what can be done in the future to prevent a repetition of the flooding in Hastings.

Hastings LM is very much a unified meeting these days – very different from the time of Covid restrictions, which is now ‘water under the bridge’. There are now 3 Elders, and Friends in the meeting have been much exercised by the escalating conflicts around the world. They feel that they would like to be more pro-active in promoting peace.

Eastbourne LM The meeting has been greatly encouraged by the number of visitors and new attenders, many of whom have become regulars, bringing a lot to the meeting.

More scaffolding is coming down after a very long time but even so, it may be a while before it is all taken away as there remains work to do. The roofers are waiting for better weather.

The Meeting House is now open every Thursday from 10.30 – 3.00pm (in addition to MfW on Sundays) to anyone who would like to drop by to sit and chat. A vegan lunch is provided and we have also watched a couple of Swarthmore Lectures during this time.

Time has been spent looking at budgets and proposed income and expenditure which has taken time and energy. Sub-committees have been established to take responsibility for their sections. Payment to BYM has also been looked at and how this can be included as several Friends have a finite income and need a sensitive and caring approach should they be asked for a possible contribution.

Herstmonceux LM Eight Members and Attenders come to Meeting each week, which is held mainly in silence and with Afterthoughts. Business Meetings are held before each AM in Session and the agenda circulated to everyone. We have welcomed a new Member already in 2024 (Liz Cottingham) and Jacky Jarvis (who has also applied for membership) has worked hard in the Meeting House garden, clearing brambles and weeds and in doing so, creating lots more light and space.

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We held a Christmas Meeting in December with music, poetry and prose. Tony Biggin collated the music choices while Jim Bond provided the live instrumental performances.

After two years of outreach, we decided to cancel the hiring of the premises in Hailsham and are now holding all our weekly meetings at the MH in Herstmonceux, thus saving money which, in turn, means we can increase our contribution to Area Meeting funds.

Lewes LM On Sunday, 28th January, after 14 months of building work and disruption and 10 years of angst and planning, we were able to worship properly in the fully renovated Meeting House for the first time. There is now a large lobby and a beautifully refurbished flat (which has now been let commercially). An air-source heat pump has been installed, which is working well, and a gas pump boost. A working party has been setting out the various rooms and these should be available for hire and outreach very soon.

Despite all the disruption, attendance has been about 40 on many Sundays with some regular visitors who have become more involved. The contribution to BYM has been discussed and it was felt that Lewes LM was unable to give as much this year because of the outgoings necessitated by the alterations to the MH.

Rye LM We have a core regular attendance of around 8-9 Friends, though numbers have been as high as 14 and as low as 4 on occasion. However, we are a close-knit group, even without any social activities, always ensuring that those unable to come to Meeting for any reason are looked after. It is usually a silent meeting but always with lively Afterthoughts, ranging from lighter topics to those of a more profound nature.

Two of our Attenders, Dena and Graham Ellis, have been busy with their regular outreach sustainability forums and talks at the Tilling Green Community Centre (where we hold our MfW), helping Rye Quakers to become more well-known in the area. Also, Harvey Gillman, our Churches Together representative, recently gave a sermon on the subject of *Hospitality and the Holocaust* as part of the Churches Together Week, which was very well received and attended by around 60 people in the local parish church. He also led one of the Zoom meetings during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Seaford LM Seaford also took part in the Churches Together week – which had a series of meetings led by each of the churches in the area. During our half hour session, our representative explained what Quakers were about and had a lively question and answer session.

An average of 10 – 12 Friends come to Meeting each week, though not always in the same combination. However, we are surviving and doing well!

We look forward to hearing from our Friends at Bexhill and Polegate LMs next time. Ed.

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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	Patricia Sear (Eastbourne LM)
Convener of Elders & Pastoral Friends	Sally Aviss (Rye LM)
Meeting For Sufferings Rep.	Peter Aviss (Rye LM)
Alternate for MfS	Sue Walton (until July 2024)
Sustainability Group	Jean Farebrother (Herstmonceux LM), Graham Ellis & Sonia Relf (Rye LM)
Prison Chaplains	Julie Sleightholme and 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	To be appointed
Deputy Registrar	Tessa Brown (Lewes LM)
Quaker Life Council representative	Jacky Jarvis (Herstmonceux LM)
Alternate QLC Rep	Peter Aviss (Rye LM)
Quarterly Newsletter Editor	Sally Aviss (Rye LM)
Local Development Worker	Ruth Audus (for Kent, Sussex and Surrey)

Trustees Patricia Cockrell (Clerk – Lewes LM), Alex Francis (Hastings LM), Patricia Sear (Eastbourne LM), Sonia Relf (Rye LM), Wendy Clark and Tony Biggin (Herstmonceux LM). **Nominations** Mary Elliott (Clerk – Bexhill LM), Alex Francis (Hastings LM), Peter Aviss (Rye LM), Veryan Greenwood and Geoff Halsey (Lewes LM), Aileen Grist (Eastbourne LM), Jean Farebrother (Herstmonceux LM). **Local Meeting Clerks:** **Bexhill:** Mary Elliott **Eastbourne:** Alan West **Hastings:** Alex Francis **Herstmonceux:** Jean Farebrother & Wendy Taylor (co-clerks) **Lewes:** John Ashcroft, Liz Brooks, David Martin (co-clerks) **Polegate:** Roy Payne **Rye:** Sally Aviss **Seaford:** Ruth Whitelaw **Uckfield:** Theresa Buss, Deirdre Palmer (co-clerks).