

*the*Friend

22 October 2021 | £2.00

A common good?
**Sustaining faith
in a secular world**



Join us online
4pm next Thursday
28 October



An invitation to join Friends of Brummana

QuIET, the Trustees of Brummana High School, the Quaker school in Lebanon since 1873, are pleased to invite you to an online meeting to establish the **Friends of Brummana**.

Brummana High School now faces extreme challenges to provide a Quaker value-led education for its 1,250 boys and girls due to the crumbling civil state in the country. The latest UN statistic puts poverty in Lebanon at 75%. Many families require bursary support and our teachers often need similar support at this desperate time, as community members struggle to put food on the table.

Friends of Brummana will comprise committed Quakers who will understand the terrible situation and who can generate support from wider circles in the UK and beyond.

Please email Martin Macpherson at secretary@quietcharity.co.uk for the link to join the event on Thursday 28 October. Or you can phone 07493 370030.

Quaker International Educational Trust (QuIET) is a UK charity no. 1072250.

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the Friend Relationships Manager

On the forthcoming retirement of George Penaluna we are seeking a relationships manager to take his role forward. The relationships manager will be responsible for a self-contained sector of work which makes a significant contribution to our income. Covering both the weekly *Friend* and the *Friends Quarterly*, the job requires vigour and initiative alongside readiness to provide a service to advertisers which, in addition to being expert, is also personal and friendly. The job will also build on our fundraising and marketing activities.

The Friend carries personal announcements (births, marriages and deaths), classified, display and leaflet advertising. Much of it obtained by the relationships manager personally soliciting advertisers and agents. Daily work includes advising advertisers on wording and layout, creating the advertisement pages using Adobe InDesign, invoicing, collecting and accounting for advertisement income. The role also involves building relationships with grant funders and wider Quaker networks to increase our income and support our ongoing publications programme.

Experience of advertising, publishing software, printing, an eye for detail, financial acumen and knowledge of Quakers are all desirable. Reporting to the editor, the relationships manager will be part of a small friendly team. The role will preferably be based in our comfortable office in Friends House, London but may by arrangement be undertaken remotely, either partly or in whole. Full time (35 hrs pw). Salary in the range £29,000 - £35,000pa depending on experience and whether working in the office or from home.

For details of how to apply please email jobs@thefriend.org. For an informal discussion about the job call George Penaluna on 01535 630230. Applications must arrive by 1pm Friday 12 November.

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We welcome applications from all sections of the community. Though not necessarily a member of the Religious Society of Friends, the person appointed must be in sympathy with its beliefs and principles.

theFriend

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News	4
<i>Refugees, climate, and more</i>	Rebecca Hardy
Letters	6
Hear, hear	8
<i>Circles of listening</i>	Malcolm Allum and Lesley Thomson
Thought for the week	9
<i>A common good?</i>	Reg Naulty
Talking out of your assumptions	10
<i>Overcoming prejudice</i>	Tony D'Souza
Animal instinct, part two	12
<i>Sheep and wolves at COP26</i>	Nim Njuguna
Review	14
The Deepening Stream	Kate MacDonald
Review	15
A Child of the Windrush Generation	Anne M Jones
Poem	16
<i>Oh my darlin'</i>	Dana Littlepage Smith
Friends & Meetings	17

'And now, as for you, that are the children of God's people, a great concern is upon my spirit for your good: and often are my knees bowed to the God of your [ancestors] for you, that you may come to be partakers of the same divine life and power, that has been the glory of this day; that a generation you may be to God, an holy nation, and a peculiar people, zealous of good works, when all our heads are laid in the dust.'

William Penn, addressing a new generation of Friends

From *Quaker faith & practice* 19.59

News

news@thefriend.org

Friends welcome Syrian refugee puppet

Quakers were among those who welcomed a 3.5-metre puppet of a young Syrian refugee to the UK, as part of a travelling festival. 'Little Amal' has journeyed over 8,000 kilometres to represent all displaced children, many separated from their families.

Sheila Mosley, from Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network (QARN), described Little Amal as 'a powerful symbol of refugee children looking for a place of safety' and urged Friends to welcome her if she passes close by. The puppet arrived in Folkestone on 19 October, before travelling to Manchester for her final welcome on 3 November.

QARN members said that the living artwork was inspired by an unaccompanied Syrian refugee child that people from the Good Chance Theatre met in the Calais camp.

Libby Ruffle, from QARN and Woodbridge Meeting, who is going to greet the puppet in Canterbury, said: 'Little

Amal's journey is vital in highlighting the increasing risks for people coming to the UK to seek asylum. The new Borders Bill will effectively criminalise anyone who hasn't come via a Resettlement Scheme – which are few and far between. Amal will stir people's imagination and compassion and the need for this has never been greater.'

The project 'The Walk' has been created by Handspring Puppet Company.

Yorkshire Quakers respond to climate crisis

Craven & Keighley Area Meeting has been busy raising awareness of how to respond to the climate crisis. Friends started the month with an exhibition on 'Militarism and Climate Justice', supported by other organisations in the town.

The event was followed on 9 October with a Climate Justice conference held via Zoom. Chris Skidmore, clerk of Craven & Keighley Area Meeting, who organised the event, told *the Friend*: 'We had



Photo courtesy of Gillian Robertson, Skipton

two speakers – Bruce Macleod (chair of Friends of the Dales) on "Farming and Climate Justice" and Lesley Grahame (a Norwich Quaker, Green Party councillor, and member of the Quaker Peace & Social Witness Economics and Sustainability subcommittee) on "Climate Justice: the Global Picture". Their presentations were valuable and we had some interesting discussions.'

A number of Skipton Friends also joined with local crafters to take a stall at a well-attended 'Yarndale' event in Skipton in the first weekend of October. According to the local newsletter, they crafted twenty-five metres of messages to be sent to join other sections from around the country as part of 'Stitches for Survival'. The initiative is aiming to make 1.5 kilometres of climate change messages, which will be displayed near the COP26 summit in Glasgow later this month. The newsletter said: 'It also made us think about simple actions we can all take at a personal level to help, including recycling and wearing jumpers and turning the central heating down or off.'

Chris Skidmore said that this group of actions illustrates what one small

Area Meeting can do to respond to the challenges of climate justice and the upcoming COP26 conference.

Friends take part in climate justice banner drop

Wandsworth Meeting was one of the first groups to display its climate justice banner as part of an international multi-faith day of action. The 'Faiths 4 Climate Justice' initiative officially began on 17 October, with a banner unfurled in front of St John's Church in Waterloo as part of a coordinated programme of action across the UK.

Local Friend Linda Murgotroyd said that Wandsworth Quakers put their banner up more than a week early 'as Friends were too keen!' Made from recyclable materials, it is now on display outside the Meeting House.

The unfurling at St John's in Waterloo was attended by people of all faiths calling for 'real climate justice commitments at COP26'.

Central Edinburgh Friends also took part in the banner drop, organised by the GreenFaith network. Their banner will be up throughout COP26, including welcoming some

WORDS

'A powerful symbol of refugee children.'

Quaker Asylum Refugee Network on the puppet Little Amal's 8,000-kilometre journey to the UK from the Turkey/Syria border.

pilgrims walking from Dunbar to Glasgow for the 'Pilgrimage for COP26'. One of the Quaker organisers Jonathan Baxter said: 'Just as streams flow together to form a river, the Pilgrimage for COP26 will increase its flow as the journey develops. Individuals, communities and cultural organisations are collaborating to bring their concerns, imagination and resources to bear to shape the pilgrimage and articulate its vision.'

The pilgrimage was launched on 17 October at St Anne's Church in Dunbar, following thirty minutes of Quaker worship. The journey includes many cultural events such as a talk by Quaker author and activist Alastair McIntosh and ends on 31 October at Glasgow Meeting House. There is a timeline of events building up to COP26 on the Quakers in Britain website: www.quaker.org.uk/cop26countdown.

Friends House refurbishes library

Friends House Library in Euston is being refurbished to create a welcoming space with the potential for more outreach. The refurbishment includes removing some of the larger furniture pieces to make room for future events, and restoring the wooden floor.

The decision to restore the floor was inspired by a photograph of the library when Friends House first opened in the 1920s. Staff lifted the carpet tiles to discover that it was still more or less intact. The floor will be the centrepiece of the room's

refurbishment.

In order to create a more welcoming space, the enquiry desk will be replaced with 'something less imposing and accessible for all users', according to the library's website. The team also hopes to install glass-paneled doors so people can see what's on offer from outside the library.

The blog website quakerstrongrooms.org says: 'Achieving this programme of work in a listed building, while at the same time protecting our collections from the inevitable dust, debris and paint, is a huge task, not made any easier by our current reduced access to Friends House and Covid-safe working practices. We have removed many of the more vulnerable and valuable collections from the room for their protection including a nervous day with art handlers removing sculpture from the high alcoves in the room!'

The last major refurbishment of the library was in 1993.

Peace Museum shortlisted for award

The Peace Museum has been shortlisted for an award for a project that works with local LGBTQ+ artists and campaigners.

The Bradford museum's exhibition 'Peace OUT' has been selected for the Best Small Museum Project Award for The Museum Association's Museums Change Lives Awards 2021.

The 2019 project developed into an online and travelling exhibition for 2021 and has been recognised alongside projects from The Scottish

NUMBERS

1,500

The number of metres length of the 'Stitches for Survival' banner, containing climate messages for display near COP26.

Crannog Centre and The Stirling Smith.

Charlotte Hall, curator at the Peace Museum, said: 'The team are so thrilled to see Peace OUT being celebrated, and even more excited that the work of our collaborators in the local LGBTQ+ community is being recognised. We've been able to do so much to document under-celebrated histories throughout this project, and add content about such an important area of peacemaking to our collections.'

The Peace OUT project works with local LGBTQ+ communities in Bradford to co-create exhibitions and events. It explores peacemaking within the LGBTQ+ community and features the work of LGBTQ+ artists and campaigners.

The exhibition is on display at Bradford's Bread and Roses Cooperative Café until 29 October and can be viewed online at peaceoutexhibition.com.

The Museum Association's Museums Change Lives Awards 2021 celebrates the achievements of museums that are making a difference to the lives of their audiences and communities across the UK.

This year's awards will take place in Liverpool on Monday 8 November.

QVA to resume working retreats

Quaker Voluntary Action (QVA) has announced the return of its working retreats which, it says, are 'just around the corner'. After a prolonged halt caused by the pandemic, working retreats next year will include Horton Community Farm in Bradford; the next encounter-based retreats in Israel and Palestine will run in October 2022.

Writing in the newsletter, Jeff Beatty, clerk to the trustees, and Simon Watkins, working retreats co-ordinator, said: 'In the past two years of constraints and changing parameters, QVA have continued to ask the question: "What is our unique offering to the Quaker movement and society in general?"'

The organisation has been holding a series of online retreats throughout the pandemic. These have included 'Encounters with Peacemakers: Waging Peace', where speakers Hanna Barag of Machsom Watch and Jean Zaru of Ramallah Friends Meeting spoke of their experiences of occupation.

Next month a series on 'Refugee Journeys' will be led by facilitators Eirlys Evans and Christie Coho. It will include experiences of migration, entering the UK, and settling here.

theFriend

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Letters

The Friend welcomes your views, to letters@thefriend.org. Please keep letters short. We particularly welcome contributions from children, written or illustrated.

Please include your full postal address, even when sending emails, along with your Meeting name or other Quaker affiliation.

**In essentials unity,
in non-essentials liberty,
in all things charity.**

Good policies

I have been very grateful to find a recurring focus on climate policy in *the Friend*. However, I would like to correct some errors in the article on by Oliver Penrose (3 September) about Carbon Fee and Dividend (also known as Climate Income), the policy that adds a gradually rising fee on fossil fuels, and distributes the proceeds to citizens.

In particular, he opines that 'there is no guarantee that the scheme would reduce fossil fuel consumption' and suggests that it will have negligible effect on investments in clean energy.

He could not be more wrong, on both counts. Several highly reputable US studies state that the version now before Congress is 'the single most effective tool for reducing America's carbon pollution to net zero by 2050', while the UK Policy Exchange (July 2018) shows that, in the UK 'economy-wide carbon pricing could on its own reduce emissions eighty per cent by 2050'. Both refer to a policy that returns the income to citizens – not as a 'muddled' attempt at income redistribution, but because (as Nicholas Stern of the Grantham Institute has emphasised) it's necessary for public acceptance.

Meanwhile, however, Canada has already shown actual results.

The current widely-supported Canadian version was inspired in part by its initial adoption in the far-sighted province of British Columbia, where not only did emissions drop up to fifteen per cent without harm to the economy but, within the first two years, there was a forty-eight per cent rise in the clean technology sector.

Business needs certainty above all else. This strategy not only gradually relieves clean tech of the current unfair competition from carbon-heavy product, but enshrines this correction in law rather than leaving it subject to the whims of successive administrations.

But the biggest mistake in this critique by Oliver Penrose is to pit Climate Income against a government programme of investment. The two are not in competition. On the contrary, since Climate Income costs government almost nothing, it *liberates* funds for the many other policies which only government can supply, including certain classes of green investment. Please, let us note the ways in which good policies complement and support each other – rather than imagine how they might seem to compete.

Judy Hindley

*Co-Founder, Citizens Climate Lobby UK
Marlborough Meeting*

Education

We are rather horrified that our twelve-year-old grandson has just joined the CCF (Combined Cadet Force) at his school. Scouts has sadly fallen by the wayside. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award will kick in later. I hate the way the military comes into schools talking about adventure and seeing the world. I wonder how other Friends have coped with this in their families.

*Christine Hayes
Wokingham Meeting*

Antisemitism

I am disturbed to read in the letters section of *the Friend* (8 October) a further letter from Sarah Lawson concerning antisemitism, which contains what I believe is an error of fact (the proportion of Arab residents of Palestine during the British Mandate (approximately sixty-eight per cent, according to reliable sources)) as well as the suggestion that we read a widely discredited book on this topic.

Sarah, who has written to *the Friend*, a number of times before on this issue, and has previously described herself as a member of the Quaker Friends of Israel, does herself and her cause no favours by her lack of objectivity on this sensitive subject.

Antisemitism is abhorrent, as demonstrated so ably by David Baddiel in his recent very thought-provoking book, which was recently reviewed in *the Friend* (30 July).

I hope Sarah has read it and has also shared her views with the staff and pupils of the Friends School in Ramallah, who may help her to develop a more nuanced approach to the fraught and often tragic relationship between Jewish and Palestinian residents of Israel and the Occupied Territories.

Nigel Engert
Wincanton Meeting

Pressure and propaganda

I feel it's gravely misleading to draw a parallel between the oppression of the Palestinians and the Rohingya.

The UK played a key role in the establishment of the State of Israel on over fifty per cent of Palestinian land, and has been complicit in the progressive further annexation, leaving Palestinians with just twelve per cent of their pre-1948 land. We have no equivalent responsibility for the Rohingya, nor do we have the same potential to apply pressure.

I don't think such a thing is likely to happen, but I was struck by one letter in the *Daily Mail* the other day. The writer argued for the restoration of capital punishment

and claimed that 'despite their faith', they believed that it was 'an appropriate penalty in this case'. In spite of UN resolutions declaring Israeli settlements illegal, instead of applying sanctions or other pressure, we happily continue to sell arms to Israel.

Our government seeks to block the activities of the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions movement to bring pressure to bear on the Israeli government.

It's worth noting that there is considerable disquiet among sections of the Jewish community at the actions of the Israeli government. Some soldiers, known as 'Refuseniks', have refused to serve in Palestinian territory, despite being treated as criminals.

In the US, Jewish Voices for Peace is campaigning vigorously on behalf of Palestinian rights. Recently one of their leading personnel spoke passionately in a webinar hosted by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign. Surely it's not hard to distinguish between criticising the behaviour of a state and hatred of all its people?

If I spoke out against the actions of Donald Trump's administration, was I thereby expressing a hatred of all Americans? Of course not.

We must not allow ourselves to be taken in by the biased International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism, which conflates it with criticism of Israeli policy, and even with support for Palestine.

As a result, students and academics at some universities have been censured simply for speaking up for the Palestinian cause.

I feel we must take great care not to be seduced by the propaganda which is being directed at us from many quarters on a range of current issues.

David Wright
Newark Meeting

On the same side

In his letter on 10 September, David Harries says: 'While accepting diversity in line with what love

requires, please may we not turn our backs on biology and the concept of biological sex'. Marisa Johnson (24 September) and Kit King (1 October) argue that biological sex is complex, and far from fixed.

However, in my view this does not mean that biological sex does not exist, but only that a minority of people cannot be defined as biologically male or female.

Only men produce sperm that enables them to father children. Only women produce eggs that are fertilised by the sperm, and carry babies in the womb and give birth to them. I have never had a child, but have the physical characteristics of a woman, and am no less a biological woman than those who have had children.

Women have been treated as inferior and subject to control by men throughout the generations, and this continues. Women's relative physical weakness and their childbearing has made them vulnerable to this.

A woman who has experienced male violence may need a safe, women-only space to find support to help her to recover and rebuild her life, and if we deny the existence of male and female, this may not be possible.

Men tend to dominate debate. There may sometimes be a need for women-only space to discuss sensitive issues without having to compete with men. This may be a gender rather than a sex issue, but in the absence of women-only spaces, it may be more difficult for women to develop their thinking and hence their freedom.

Many women experience violence. So do many 'people who experience their humanity as non-binary, a-gender, gender-fluid or different from that assigned at their birth' (to quote Marisa Johnson). We are on the same side. Can we find a way to resolve these issues in a loving way?

Elizabeth Coleman
Eccles Meeting

Hear hear: *Malcolm Allum and Lesley Thomson* have an invite

‘Most Friends have found the sessions spiritually nourishing.’

In the depths of lockdown, physically apart but with growing confidence in our use of online meeting platforms, two Manchester and Warrington elders came up with a home-based plan to encourage Friends to deepen their spiritual awareness through active listening. Originally called ‘Zooming in the Spirit’ the sessions proved popular with a core group of Friends, mostly from Manchester and the surrounding area but augmented by a few others who heard about the meetings and asked to join. Distance being no barrier when one meets online, we are now seeking to widen participation and invite any interested Friends to join us under a new name: ‘Circles of Listening.’ The name is inspired by the words of Rufus Jones: ‘I pin my hopes to quiet processes and small circles, in which vital and transforming events take place.’

The meetings take place every four weeks on a Wednesday evening, and last for about an hour. The format is simple. It is adapted from work on worship-sharing published by Friends General Conference in the US. Two Friends act as hosts for each meeting. As Friends join, they are welcomed and asked to introduce themselves. The subject for the evening’s reflection is introduced – this may be a word, a phrase or a short sentence. There is a period of silent worship. One of the hosting Friends will read a reminder of the guidelines for active listening and worship-sharing, and reiterate the rule of confidentiality over what is shared. Participants are then randomly divided into groups of four (as numbers allow) and spend about forty minutes together talking and listening in turn and without questions on what the evening’s subject has raised for them. Speaking from, and returning to, silence, the emphasis is on the quality of listening and the undivided, uncritical attention given to each contribution. After returning to the main group there is an opportunity for each person to say how they are feeling in one word or a short sentence before a brief period of silent worship ends the session.

Held in the Light, held in trust and safety, we have been able to share deeply about our spiritual lives. The random nature of the small-group allocation has facilitated new relationships at a level that would not have come easily in large face-to-face conferences. And of course we have also learned much about ourselves along the way. We are, individually, the ‘constant’ in every group and have grown through the experience. Most Friends have found the sessions spiritually nourishing. One reported that it could sometimes almost be described as a healing experience as much as a spiritual encounter (although we must stress that this is not therapy in any formal sense).

Should you wish to come and try this method of spiritual enrichment please email malcolmallum@yahoo.co.uk and I will send you details, codes and the meeting dates for the next few months. No long-term commitment is required. ●

Malcolm and Lesley are from South Manchester Meeting.



Photo by Compare Fibre on Unsplash

A common good? Reg Naulty's Thought for the Week

'Things that have sustained religious beliefs in the past are not easy to maintain.'

In the 1960s the Harvard sociologist Daniel Bell gave a succinct explanation of how society contributes to our picture of reality. The part played by society, he wrote, is fairly straightforward: reality is confirmation by significant others.

Translated out of the jargon, it means that if we are disposed to accept something as real, and the people who matter to us believe it, we believe as they do. If medical authorities assert that two injections of a vaccine are more effective than one, we believe it, if we respect medical authorities. If our circle of close friends assert that a particular cafe has the best coffee in town, we are inclined to believe it.

On the other hand, if we find that those whose company we value do not confirm our most cherished beliefs, there is a good chance that these will fade. That seems to be the fate of religious beliefs for many people in a secular society like ours. Things that have sustained religious beliefs in the past – regular church attendance, private prayer, and reading spiritual material like the Bible – are not easy to maintain.

Is there anything that is commended in our secular societies that can support religion? There is: the wide publicity given to good works. Examples are assisting

'Is there anything that is commended in our secular societies that can support religion?'

refugees, championing the environment, promoting sport for the disabled, or helping the homeless.

Why do activities like these support religion? They can have a spiritual dimension.

People who are significant to us are not always those we know personally. Tolstoy is a significant person for me because his writings earn my respect. He is an interesting religious figure in that, although he was excommunicated by the Orthodox Church for his criticism of Christianity, he excels in exhibiting the spiritual dimension that can arise from helping others.

This does not come through in his great novels like *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, but it does through his short stories such as 'What Men Live By' and 'Father Sergius'. The latter is the story of a nobleman who sought perfection in everything he did. He became a monk, but was provoked into a sexual scandal, which made him flee the monastery and become a wandering pilgrim. He found, when he helped illiterate people with reading and writing (and left directly afterwards, without waiting for their thanks), that 'little by little God began to reveal Himself within him'.

Friends are familiar with the inner spiritual condition giving rise to good works. The situation envisaged by Tolstoy is happening in reverse: the good works bring about the spiritual condition. We could try it ourselves, and see whether life copies art. ●

Reg is from Canberra Meeting, Australia.



Photo by Nathan Lemon on Unsplash

Talking out of your assumptions: *Tony D'Souza* on overcoming prejudice

'Nobody can change their beliefs without motivation.'

In this famous story from the middle east, a father and son saddle their donkey and set out from their village to the local city of Konya.

As the sun rose in the sky, the heat of the day built up. The father sat on the donkey's saddle while the boy walked behind. They passed through a village and people said: 'Look at that selfish old man, riding on the donkey and making that poor boy walk. What a disgrace?'

After few miles, the father got off the donkey and let the boy ride it. They passed some farm workers in a field who shook their heads and said: 'Look at that young boy, riding on the donkey and making that old man walk in this heat. Young people today have no consideration. What a disgrace.'

A few miles further on, the boy got off the donkey and walked behind it with his father. They passed some fruit pickers in an orchard who laughed and said: 'What a sight! A perfectly good donkey with a saddle on it, and those two walking behind it like a pair of fools – in this heat!'

This story is an illustration of the fact that you have no control over what other people think. People who do not know you will think whatever they want to think of you, whether you like it or not. This truth cannot be stated often enough in the age of social media. The assumptions people make about you may be good, bad or indifferent. You have to accept them because you have no control over their assumptions – precisely because they are their assumptions.

When people make judgements about you, they are invariably wrong. In part, they don't know any better, and in part their judgements are projected onto you.

Whatever they think about you is a judgement made with their mind, which is born of experience. Mind, or everyday consciousness, is conditioned by the past and other factors such as the prejudices of parents, family and culture. For this reason, whatever other people think of you very rarely has anything to do with you, it's usually much more about them.

Everyday consciousness is conditioned by the past. Whether it is the personal past, the family past or the cultural past, the past creates everyday consciousness, which is why it is known as conditioned mind. Take racism for example. Nobody is born a racist – racism is learned, usually from parents, peer group, and culture, and because of this it is often handed down from generation to generation. Racism will not go away until we do something about it, and one way to do that is to question our false assumptions. We need to cleanse our hearts of them. But how can we do that?

To begin with, nobody can change their beliefs without motivation. In the case of a racist, this motivation is often some kind of epiphany. This might be a personal encounter with a member of the hated group, which leads to questioning and eventual rejection of the racist assumptions they have been brought up with. An epiphany such as this is the exception, not the rule, however. The good news is that in our time the murder of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement has created a historic moment of motivation to change for many people. It has forced many people to question their assumptions. In this alone, the movement has been a resounding success.

Our real problem is that our judgements and assumptions are so satisfying. They are automatic and relieve us of the need to think. They are also very rewarding. Our judgements and false assumptions





Photo by Ansgar Schefford On Unsplash

allow us to feel right, and feeling right is the most empowering thing for the ego (another term for the conditioned mind). It puffs it up no end. Judgements allow us to feel superior, and feeling right and superior is a powerful narcotic for the ego. For the convinced racist, it's a high that is almost impossible to give up.

This is why the conditioned mind is such a great human tragedy. An entire life can be lived under the influence of false assumptions. Millions of lives have already been lived like that, and millions more are to follow. False assumptions (and the belief systems that often accompany them) have caused countless disputes, wars and untold suffering throughout history. When your entire life is coloured by the assumptions you make (or, worse, that you have

been told to make) about whatever you set your eyes upon, you are not seeing clearly. You do not see reality, but a screen upon which your prejudices are played out. You make your own reality, and then you go on to 'experience' it, even though your 'reality' is made by your own preconceptions.

If you want to see clearly, you must learn to see things as they are, which means seeing them stripped of all assumptions, judgements, ideas and prejudices. The first thing to do is to make the decision not to make false assumptions about anybody. Remember, you have no control over other people's assumptions about you, but you do have complete control over your assumptions about them.

Here is an experiment for you. Get a flower, put it in a vase and sit in front of it. Just look at it, nothing else.

Just look. Now, begin to strip the flower of all your ideas about it. Ideas such as what kind of flower it is – a 'rose' or 'geranium', even the idea 'flower'. Just look at it. Let it be just as it is in front of you.

If you practice this just once you might get a glimpse of an object without the mental baggage your mind brings to it. I know it sounds weird, that a simple thing like just looking at an object without thought can begin to liberate you from the conditioned mind, but it's true. In the beginning, try practicing with things like a flower or a pebble (natural objects work much better than artificial ones). When you are ready, try it with a human being. Just look, without judgement, without assumptions. Start with someone you don't know, perhaps at a bus stop or in a supermarket, but be careful, don't creep people out by seeming to stare at them. Be sensitive.

After a while, you can try it with someone you know well, like a family member. Try looking at them without judgements, without past, without future. The more you try it the easier it gets. Even trying it once can be liberating. After a while, you might begin to see things differently. The innate beauty and the hidden unity of all things will be revealed to you in direct proportion to how much you can strip away the ideas, judgements and assumptions you have projected upon them. 'Only cleanse the doors of perception', as William Blake said, and you might:

*...see a World in a Grain of Sand,
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower.
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,
And Eternity in an hour. ●*

Tony is from Finchley Meeting.

Animal instinct, part two: *Nim Njuguna* offers further polemic on the wolves at COP26

‘Genuine attempts to save the earth require an open dialogue.’

If I were a delegate at the twenty-sixth UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26), there are six types of wolves I would be looking out for.

Capitalist wolves

In the absence of a level playing field, countries with the most power and wealth will send the most delegates to argue their viewpoint. Without shame, they will sit at the high table repeating that pious lie of solidarity: ‘We are all in this together.’ They actually have protective nationalistic tendencies – for example, they continue to hoard Covid vaccines, and the raw materials needed to make them. The pandemic has revealed disturbing limits in global solidarity. Economic inequality exacerbates environmental damage; the two issues are intrinsically linked. Profits are made in ‘developing countries’, but not by the people who live there.

Consumerist wolves

With a growth economy predicated on an individualistic, materialistic and spiritually-indifferent worldview, fighting for a fair and liveable future is paramount. This sectarian environmental battlefield is dominated by those who believe that every economic and social problem has a market solution. With false and misleading green marketing claims, ‘greenwashing’ inaccurately portrays products as environmentally friendly. Well-intentioned purchasers are misled. Such salespeople do not regard the accelerated loss of biodiversity, or climate change, as serious threat. They have no qualms about creating binge consumers in order to try to solve social problems that were created by the market in the first place.

‘A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily on

the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth’ – Martin Luther King Jr.

Nationalist wolves

Assimilationists in the corridors of power reject multiple identities and different worldviews. With a disdain for socially inclusive approaches, they are unwilling to engage in meaningful intercultural dialogue. They promote triumphalistic and exceptionalistic narratives of culture, race and country, while turning a blind eye to the intersection of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual preference, age, and other power differentials. Hostile policies towards refugees, for example, sharpen differences and lock people in partisan warfare. Furthermore, these wolves deny the link between recent crises, downplaying post-colonial, economic and social power relations.

Media wolves

Dominant voices on social media reject the claim that the fight for survival is also a fight for justice. Environmental movements are demonised. Being unaccountable and largely unregulated allows nepotism, cronyism, wealth and power to shape what is promoted as newsworthy. Alternative views are ostracised. Often, these platforms are places of political manipulation, promoting conservative worldviews. Rich in both social capital and inherited wealth, these wolves are derisory towards those whose politics they do not share. They are intent on reversing the progress already made, constantly undermining the notion of living together in diversity.

Democracy suffers in all this. Readers withdraw into social amnesia.

Militaristic wolves

Driven by a pervasive ideology of ‘power over the other’, these defenders of the military seem to operate above





the law. Their institutional violence seeks to subjugate other nations and people. A series of seemingly endless wars, waged in the name of peace and security, end up leading to greater instability. These wolves have spawned a multibillion-pound arms trade, both legal and illegal, exacerbating regional and global tensions with quick profits preferred to lives and human rights.

‘A series of seemingly endless wars, waged in the name of peace and security, lead to greater instability.’

town and country, and do not shirk the effort and time this may demand. Do not be content to accept things as they are, but keep an alert and questioning mind. Seek to discover the causes of social unrest, injustice and fear; try to discern the new growing-points in social and economic life. Work for an order of society which will allow men and women to develop their capacities and will foster their desire to serve’ – *Quaker faith & practice* 23.01.

Patriarchal wolves

The stubborn and universal persistence of patriarchy as a system results in much harmful stereotyping. From its suppression of the innate natural balance of our feminine and masculine creative powers, it creates privileges and social norms of oppression in legal, political, economic, social and sexual realms.

Underneath this is a neoliberal approach of responsible individualism, which undermines the state and slashes public services such as health, welfare, and education. This underfunding of public provision is matched with overspending on weaponry.

‘Remember your responsibility as citizens for the government of your

Patriarchal macho culture is not only deeply misogynistic, but is wedded to the masculinised institutions of capitalism and paternalistic thought forms. These offer distorted values in which prejudice towards race, ethnicity, religion and class gains legitimacy. Spiritual falsehood prevails alongside the political, and patriarchal values – as false as they are immoral – further endanger any society craving to be at ease with itself. Patriarchy is hostile to any attempts at self-empowerment among oppressed groups, yet offers loud platitudes in the public arena.

Glasgow will be a microcosm of our world, and we should look out for fellow travellers engaging with honesty and humility. The hubris of patriarchy, and its inherent violence, should be exposed. Its systems lead to the exploitation of natural resources, and to the marginalisation of those disproportionately affected by environmental injustice and climate change.

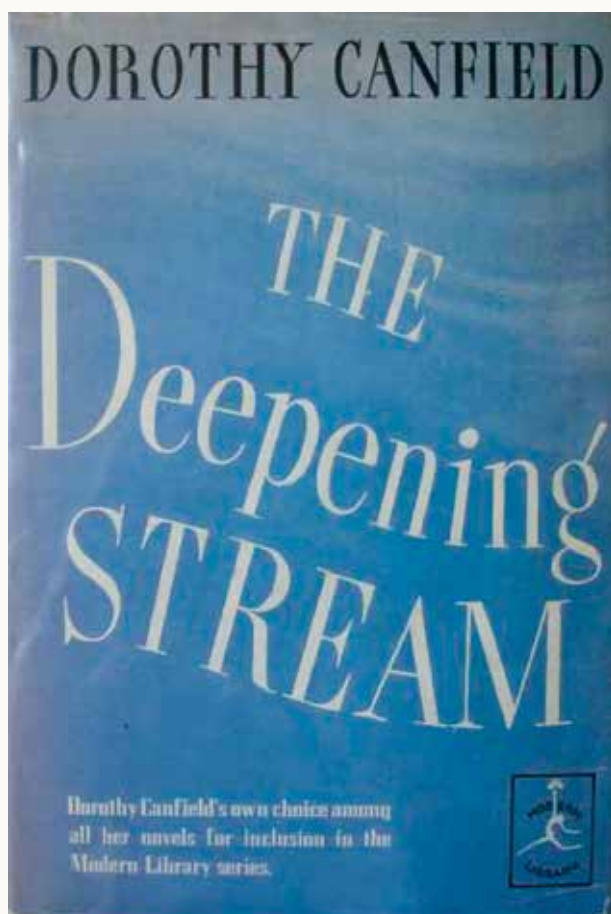
Genuine attempts to save the earth require an open dialogue. This must include the voices of all people working towards dismantling patriarchy and other systems of oppression. Existing patriarchal approaches address poverty, consumption and climate change in a way that tends to blur historical inequalities. This hampers opportunities for civic and political participation by the marginalised for the greater good.

‘When we turn inside or beyond ourselves to grasp some understanding of the divine, we discover through encounter that what we need to find we will find: a Something creative and renewing, overwhelmingly strong and passive, completely wise and innocent, living and dying, feminine and masculine. Our father, our mother, our light, which is in heaven and earth, holy is your name. Come’ – Patrice Haan, North Pacific Yearly Meeting. ●

Nim is from Harrow Meeting.

The Deepening Stream, by Dorothy Canfield Fisher

Review by Kate Macdonald



Dorothy Canfield Fisher's 1930 novel will soon be available in a new edition from Persephone Books, and has a particular interest for Friends. Fisher was not, so far as I can make out, a Quaker herself, but her vigorous involvement in pacifism, war relief in the first world war, child education (she introduced the Montessori method to the US) and feminism are adjacent to Quaker concerns.

The Deepening Stream combines these interests in a thick four-part novel, based around two phases in the protagonist's life. Matey Gilbert grows up in a sniping academic family, living in various parts of the USA, as her father moves from one French professorship to another, hauling his family with him. Matey's elder sister Priscilla learns to endure the intolerable passive-aggressive atmosphere created by their duelling parents by flinging herself into constant busyness. Matey takes refuge first in music, which she falls headlong into during a year spent living in Paris with a French family, and then by adopting a lonely dog whose owner has died. Never have a young girl and a dog needed each other more.

In the second half of the book, Matey comes to Rustdorf, a small Quaker town near New York, populated largely by her mother's family. Matey learns that she has inherited some money unexpectedly from her great-aunt Connie's estate, but more importantly she falls in

'Fisher was a serious and committed novelist.'

love with her distant cousin Adrian. Adrian and his father bring Matey into a Quaker family, and the remainder of the novel shows how Quaker living and values help to repair the psychological damage inflicted by the

Gilbert parents on their daughters. Most of Rustdorf's Quaker inhabitants are distantly related to Matey through her mother. Quaker daily practices suffuse Matey's new life, and she embraces Quaker beliefs and how Quakers live in the world. She and Adrian take their young family to France during the first world war – he to serve in an ambulance unit, and she to work in war relief and do what she can to support her French foster family.

Fisher was a serious and committed novelist, and worked assiduously in many fields to improve the lives of working people in the US. Eleanor Roosevelt named her as one of the ten most influential women in America. Fisher is also an accomplished storyteller, and *The Deepening Stream* is absorbing and compelling. It is a long read, but Fisher's child-centred vision of family life is refreshing. The Quaker component of the novel is central to its themes, and will fascinate those interested in Quaker history from the north-east US. It will also, I hope, add to the bookshelves of readers engaged in collecting Quakers in fiction. ●

Kate is from Bath Meeting.

My Life Story: A Child Of The Windrush Generation, by Xystus Sestus Marcell

Review by Anne M Jones



This small book tells the story, in his own words, of a man who came to the east end of London from St Lucia, in 1972. Xystus Sestus Marcell's name refers to the book of Exodus, a reminder of enslaved people coming into emancipation. He was fourteen when he arrived, full of hopes about 'the mother country'.

These hopes were to be bitterly confronted with blatant racism. Xystus also encountered problems within his family. He had been raised by his grandmother after his parents left for the UK on the Windrush. Consequently the attachment to his own mother was lost by the time they were reunited.

Life in rural St Lucia was simple, collecting fruit and vegetables from the fields, catching wildfowl, and attending church – Roman Catholic – on a Sunday. Discipline at home was strict, with regular beatings from granny, which Xystus never resented because he thought he had brought them upon himself. Importantly, these were administered out of love – but beatings were the norm everywhere, he says, 'a legacy of the days of slavery'. Xystus writes of his grandmother 'she beat me from love, not spite, and I remain devoted to her to this day... the beatings my mother gave me were different, there was no love there, and I could not understand... later I came to see how unhappy and frustrated she was in her own life'. For all this, however, Xystus writes of 'not bearing grudges', 'because ultimately God is good'.

School days were marred by the demands of adjusting to the new environment and problems with reading. Xystus was unaware of his dyslexia – teachers thought he was plain lazy. There were beatings in school as well (it is painful to remember that corporal punishment was acceptable so recently). At the same time, benevolence and help came from surprising places: in the street and within the school, from the head who thrashed him one day and gave him a leading role in the school play the next, and from a teacher who offered herself as a foster carer when home life became intolerable. The years that followed were ones of survival: business ventures that succeeded one minute, and failed the next. Xystus ended up homeless and very ill. Help came through a charity for the homeless, to which he remains deeply grateful.

Running through the account is a thread of loving kindness towards his fellow humans, and an inner wisdom nurtured through Roman Catholic faith and Rastafarianism. Xystus never raised his hand to his own children, understanding instinctively that supporting and listening to them is the most important part of parenting.

This book is deeply moving, showing courage and strength of mind against all the odds. Xystus concludes that: 'Things balance out in life. I have had badness but through it I have gained self-value and have passed that on to my children.' ●

Anne is from Friends House Meeting. The book can be obtained from her for £7, with profits to the homeless charity Crisis. Email anne.150@phonecoop.coop.

Poem: *Oh my darlin'*

Dana Littlepage Smith

Witness this
my turgid blossom
pearl warbler
O my darlin' witness
how we ache in ivory –
billed heart break
can you my woodpecker
make remembrance
of *how I loved you*
my southern acornshell
in that upland of existence
dreadful sorrow
wakes my little Mariana fruit bat
oh my darlin' oh my darlin'
oh my darlin'
Mississippi flat pigtoe,
you are lost and gone for –
Eight birds and one flower
what can we say?
witness witness witness
my woodpecker gone
from Missouri to the Carolinas:
the last note of the ivory-billed
o my darlin' untranslatable
may translate Scioto madtom
eviscerate *dreadful sorrow*
this ache I placed in Tennessee
where the warbler lies
the woodpecker blanked
from this ivory-billed wilderness
where until we – unless we
you are lost and gone forever
nothing
and no one shall wake

Dana is from Exeter Meeting. She says: "This poem is inspired by the Woodbrooke course "Voices of the Earth", generously led by Zélie and Philip Gross. The USA has recently published a list of another twenty-three newly-extinct species, some of which are named above [including, pictured right, the ivory-billed woodpecker (courtesy National Geographic)]. Lines in italics are sung to the tune of "Clementine".



Births

Astrid Isabel Candia DICKERSON was born on 3 October at Bedford Hospital to Candia Louise Dickerson Crosfield and Stuart Crosfield Dickerson.

For details of placing a Friends & Meetings notice on this page please email ads@thefriend.org or call George Penaluna on 01535 630230.

Deaths

Cherry DOWRICK 12 October. Widow of Frank, mother of Christopher, Nicholas and the late Stephen. Member of Southport Meeting, formerly member of Durham Meeting. Aged 94. Funeral at Southport Meeting 10.30am Monday 25 October. Enquiries to Christopher: cfid@liv.ac.uk

Rosemary Muriel GRANT

15 September. Member of Bournville Meeting and formerly Milton Keynes Meeting. Aged 91. Funeral and live streaming Wednesday 28 October. Enquiries Nicholas Tulley: 07762 727843, email nick@tulley.me.

Colin Michael JEFFERSON

9 October. Husband of Judith, father of Daniel and Kathy, grandfather to Hannah, Sophie and Alice, brother of Peter, David and Richard. Attender of Shrewsbury Meeting, formerly of Horfield Meeting, Bristol. Ackworth School old scholar. Aged 83. Funeral on Wednesday 27 October in Shrewsbury, details from Kathy: katherinerjefferson@hotmail.com or 07811 281241.

Geoff WHITTINGTON

13 September, suddenly. Husband of Sarah (née Rack), father of Elsie, Rowan and Aidan. Aged 69. Green burial at home held 25 Sept. Enquiries: sarahwhittington5@gmail.com

Calls for contributions

Isobel CLARK and Len CLARK

Testimonies are being prepared for Len and Isobel of Surrey & Hampshire Border AM. Isobel was active in the Quaker Women's Group and Len in the NT. Contributions welcome. Please contact Keith Scott: 01483 824980, keithsc_2000@yahoo.com.

Edward H (Ted) MILLIGAN

Mid-Thames AM is preparing a Testimony to the Grace of God in Ted's life. We wish to hear from anyone with contributions covering any aspect of his life. Contact Gil Skidmore, 46 Princes Drive, Skipton BD23 1HL (gilskidmore@waitrose.com).

Meeting up

AN ATTENDER, early thirties, recently came out and would like to meet a man. Many interests, including music, gardening and cooking. Affinity with older men. Please reply to Box 1003 c/o The Friend Advertisement Dept.

Quakers in Britain



Youth Participation Officer

Salary: £34,748 per annum (London); £29,538 per annum (Regional) – will require regular travel to our London office.

Hours: Full time – 35 per week.

Contract: Fixed term – until 30 June 2022.

Location: Friends House, London or Quakers in Britain Yorkshire Centre, Leeds or home-based.

We are looking for a Youth Participation Officer to help deliver activities that give young people the opportunity to develop a sense of belonging and wellbeing.

You will have the knowledge and skills to support the integration of young people into the life of a faith organisation. You will be able to develop effective relationships and involve young people in the planning and facilitation of their events.

You will need to be flexible and be able to prioritise a diverse workload. You will have excellent communication, IT and data skills, along with a keen attention to detail.

This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check, including the children's barred list.

For details of how to apply, go to www.quaker.org.uk/jobs.

Closing date: Monday 1 November 2021 (9am).

Interviews: Friday 12 November 2021.

Quakers in Britain is committed to safeguarding children and adults at risk. We expect all of our staff and volunteers to share and uphold this commitment.

Quakers have a faith commitment to equality and encourage and welcome applications for posts from all sections of society. You do not have to be a Quaker to apply for this post, but we expect you to uphold the values of our organisation.

Quakers in Britain is committed to equality in all of its employment practices.

Classified ads

Standard lineage 64p a word, semi-display 97p a word (rates incl. vat). Meeting and charity rates 53p and 81p a word respectively (zero-rated for vat). Min. 12 words. Discounts: 10% on 5 insertions, 15% on 10 or more. Cheques to 'The Friend' or pay by bank transfer (details on order).

George Penaluna, Advertisement Manager, The Friend, 54a Main St, Cononley, Keighley BD20 8LL 01535 630230. ads@thefriend.org

jobs

THE TRUSTEES OF LANCASHIRE CENTRAL AND NORTH AREA QUAKER MEETING

Are seeking a self-employed individual or organisation to provide them with advice and administrative support in human resources and charity administration.

For further information, including a job description and person specification, please contact:

lancashirecandnaqmtreasurer@gmail.com

Applications close: 4 November 2021.

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WOODBROOKE CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM Self-catering flat, two ensuite bedrooms, livingroom with sofa bed, kitchen. Enjoy Woodbrooke's gardens and nearby Bournville village. 0121 472 5171 enquiries@woodbrooke.org.uk www.thewoodbrookecentre.co.uk

for sale & to let

BRIGHTON. One bedroom flat for over 55s. Vibrant area, 2 minutes from sea, good bus routes, 20 minutes walk from the city centre. £165,000. Agents: Paul Bott, www.paulbottandcompany.co.uk, 01273 605530.

rooms needed

LONDON. Female UCL researcher urgently seeks reasonably priced room to rent in a friendly, safe and peaceful place. Ideally convenient for commuting to Bloomsbury. Tidy, quiet, respectful non-smoker. Please contact: B.Friedrich@ucl.ac.uk

Quakers in Britain



Youth Development Worker (Bristol)

Salary: £25,318 per annum (£29,538 per annum pro rata)

Contract: Permanent. **Hours:** Part time - 30 hours per week

Location: Working across the South West

Youth Development Worker (Yorkshire)

Salary: £29,538 per annum.

Contract: Temporary for 9 months; possible extension dependent on funding. **Hours:** Full time – 35 hours per week

Location: Based in our Leeds office and working across Yorkshire

Quakers in Britain is looking for two experienced youth development workers to initiate, facilitate and deliver a range of opportunities to increase the engagement and participation of young Quakers (and other young people) aged 11–18. You will be able to work with young people, build community effectively, promote youth participation, and empower adults in Quaker meetings to respond more readily to young people.

You will be organised with the ability to plan, deliver, monitor, and evaluate work with young people. You will be able to build positive relationships and communicate effectively with young people, colleagues and stakeholders.

For details of how to apply for either post go to www.quaker.org.uk/jobs.

For more information on our Youth, Children and Families Team go to www.quaker.org.uk/cyp.

Closing date for both positions: Wednesday 27 October 2021

Interviews: Held in Bristol or online Monday 1 November 2021
Held in Leeds or online Wednesday 3 November 2021

Britain Yearly Meeting is committed to safeguarding children and adults at risk and expect all our staff and volunteers to share and uphold this commitment.

Quakers have a faith commitment to equality and encourage and welcome applications for posts from all sections of society. You do not have to be a Quaker to apply for this post, but we expect you to uphold the values of our organisation.

Britain Yearly Meeting is committed to equality in all of its employment practices.

Quakers in Britain



Local Development Workers Two regional posts

Salary: £23,630pa (£29,538 pro rata). **Contract:** Part time, permanent. **Hours:** 28 hrs per week including some weekends and evenings. Frequent travel (as restrictions lift). **Location:** Based at home or in a suitable office in the region. One post each in:

- Kent, Sussex and Surrey
- Cumberland and North-East England

We are seeking enthusiastic, pragmatic people who are excited by what spirit-led growth might mean in a faith context. Our expanding local development team is a key part of our plans to reinvigorate Quakerism and to help Quaker communities thrive.

As a local development worker, you will support Quaker communities to be inclusive, welcoming and all-age. The support areas include spiritual nurture, Quaker community, governance, and witness and collaboration. You will provide accompaniment, resources, networking, and learning events and activities. You will work alongside others in Quakers in Britain and Woodbrooke to provide opportunities that grow from the identified needs of local Quakers.

We invite applications from people who are:

- excellent listeners with experience of working with groups to develop and deliver a shared vision
- familiar with Quaker worship, community, witness and organisation
- organised and resourceful, able to research information, analyse and sift it, and apply it appropriately to a range of situations and personalities
- creative and adaptable, able to encourage innovation and support experimentation
- digitally curious, willing to experiment with digital platforms and programmes to develop community and progress work.

Alongside the opportunity to transform the experience of Quakers across Britain, we offer a generous benefits package. To arrange an informal discussion of the role, please email Sophie Smith on sophies@quaker.org.uk.

Closing date: Wednesday 3 November (9 am).

Interviews: Held online during week beginning 15 November.

For details of how to apply, go to www.quaker.org.uk/jobs

Quakers have a faith commitment to equality, and encourage and welcome applications for posts from all sections of society. You do not have to be a Quaker to apply for this post, but we expect you to uphold the values of our organisation.

Quakers in Britain is committed to safeguarding children and adults at risk and expects all of its staff and volunteers to share and uphold this commitment.

Hardship grants available

The Marjorie McBain Trust can, in a spirit of love, award grants to members and attenders of Britain Yearly Meeting who are in need, hardship or distress.

If you need financial help email convenormcaintrust@gmail.com for an application form.

No email? Call Trish (07765 998198) or Glenn (07939 094210) to arrange a postal application.

books wanted

TOWARDS A QUAKER VIEW OF SEX, two copies wanted. Reasonable costs covered. Please contact: johnw11flory@gmail.com, 01832 273811.

events

QUAKER SOUTH ASIA INTEREST GROUP AGM in person and by Zoom Saturday 23 October 10am-3pm at 12 Montagu Place, Leeds LS8 2RG. RSVP 0113 440 0736. Invitations for Zoom: info@qsaig.co.uk.

Saturday 23 October
The Way of the Franciscans:
Mystic Paths for Contemporary Seekers

With Daniel P. Horan
10.30am – 4pm

Saturday 6 November
Mysterious Wisdom:
The Spiritual Quest of WB Yeats

With Grevel Lindop
10.30am – 4pm

Both events in person and online.

The Meditatio Centre
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the Friend

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Subscriptions and Admin Officer

To help run our subscriptions system and provide a friendly service to our readers. Duties include processing subscriptions for *the Friend* and *Friends Quarterly*, and the administration of incoming and outgoing office communications.

As our main reader contact, you will be the ear and voice of *the Friend*, running the database, processing payments, and performing other admin tasks that keep the office running smoothly.

You will need to be patient and enthusiastic about administration, as well as having good numeracy. You will offer a helpful service to all enquirers. The role involves talking to a lot of Quakers in the UK and sometimes overseas, and helping to keep them happy – whether that means ensuring the editor gets in touch, or that they get a missing copy posted out.

You will need to be well organised, with a high level of confidence with the internet and office software. Experience of databases will be useful.

The candidate will work 28 hours per week (0.8 full-time equivalent) for a salary of £19,000 plus generous pension contribution and holiday entitlement. Some homeworking will be possible, but the candidate will be expected to work from our office in London at least two days per week.

For details of how to apply please email jobs@thefriend.org

Applications must arrive by
1pm Friday 19 November.