



Brighton Friends News

A Monthly Publication of Brighton Quaker Meeting

February 2025

www.brightonquakers.co.uk

Issue 361

Sadly, in less than three weeks, we have lost three dear Friends: Elaine Macdonald, 30 December; George Dean, 1 January; Jacky Kulkarni 15 January.

This is a photo of Elaine at a Climate Justice protest in London with fellow Friends Helen, Sim and Sheila. Below is an article she wrote when she was co-editor of this newsletter in 2013.



There will be information on George and Jacky in the March edition.

And So I am a Quaker

As newsletter editors, Harvey and I have been encouraging friends to write about their path to Quakers. A few months ago we wondered who to approach, I suggested maybe a woman and Harvey said 'How about you!' What could I say, I didn't dare tell him I was too shy. So here it is.

For a long time I have seen the life of the spirit, of God, of truth, however it may be conceived and named, rather like the sea and me as someone paddling along the shore. At times I've been high and dry on the sand, at other times I've sensed the water quite near and then there have been occasions when the sea washes in around my feet and I'm in the middle of it. This tide has come and gone in different forms and ways all my life and perhaps now in later life I have taken a great step into it, or more likely, found a path and a way to walk in it.

It was so easy as a child. I loved Sunday school at St Michael's and All Angels, Stoke Newington Common. Miss Smith teaching us by the gas fire in the vestry, emphasising her statements with one knobbly index finger sliding up and down the fingers of her other hand. She was corseted, upright and certain. At one time she took a different commandment as her theme each week. How she handled the seventh, I don't know. We were clueless but it must have worked, I've never done it!

I loved the festivals in the church. Chrysanthemums still smell to me of dark churches where they lay on the pews waiting to be arranged in vases for harvest, and violets are still as rare and precious as the little bunches we were given to take home to our mums on Mothering Sunday. Then there was Brownies, confirmation and growing up.

In a way I was institutionalised into the Church of England, but while I gradually became distant from the institution itself, I held the spirit of it. It was a hymn that finally did it for me. The line was 'The white robed harpers of the sky'. I couldn't say it, it wasn't for me that Victorian literalism. The older I get the more I'm aware that God is ineffable, beyond words and descriptions. In fact for me words blind and obliterate. I only need a few and perhaps that's why I love those early Friends, quoted in Quaker Faith and Practice, so brief and concise:

Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand. Isaac Pennington 1667, 10.01, or,

Love is the hardest lesson in Christianity; but, for that reason, it should be most our care to learn it. William Penn 1693, 22.01.

Perhaps Pennington and Penn were verbose in real life and people couldn't get a word in sideways, but beautifully edited in Faith and Practice they say all that I need to hear. Except for you that is. The ministry in meeting is always a surprise and comes into the silence helping me find meaning and relevance Meeting is my touchstone. It's like a tuning fork giving me the pitch for my life. It never disappoints me.

After a few false starts, I came to a meeting about ten years ago and stayed. From the start I found the shared silence wonderful. Sometimes I can't switch off and just settle within and at other times I can hardly blink my way back to hand shaking and notices. I find it compelling to be with a group of people humbly seeking to be and live truthfully and with love.

I've tried to get to grips with Quakers, an attenders course at Claridge House, a weekend of yoga and Martin Buber at Charney Manor with Diane Lampden and Roswitha Jarman, and Britain Yearly Meeting in York where I sat in the worship tent with grass under my feet and ducks calling from the lake. I'm learning.

So, I am a Quaker. I sometimes wonder what, if anything, I miss from the Church of England, and I suppose it's the blessings. I do feel blessed when someone says, *May god be merciful to you and bless you. May he cause his face to shine upon you.* So now I try to acknowledge to myself those moments when I feel truly blessed, when I feel the breath of God. That's the trouble with Quakers you have to do it all yourself.

Elaine Macdonald

Do you cherish your friendships, so that they grow in depth and understanding and mutual respect? In close relationships we may risk pain as well as finding joy. When experiencing great happiness or great hurt we may be more open to the working of the Spirit.

Quaker Faith & Practice, Advices & Queries No 21

Fair Trade Fun Day

**at the Friends Meeting House
Saturday 22 February from 12 – 4pm**



Please come along on 22 February as Lovethatstuff are organising a Fair Trade market with a difference. It's principal aim this time is to raise money for a school, with just under 100 kids, in a slum area of Mombasa, Kenya, called the Bombolulu School of Promise. It's a registered charity here in the UK, set up by a woman called Jacqui Furlepa. She worked in Kenya for quite some time and saw the need. She teaches music therapy here in the UK and does CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) work here too for her income. The registered charity is run by her family and friends, all volunteers, and when they visit they pay for their flights themselves. They employ Kenyan teachers, have a good programme, provide a hot meal every day and you can find them on Facebook at www.bombolulu.org.uk. Jacqui would like to raise £600 for (rather unglamorously) putting in an efficient drainage system because when the rains are heavy, the school floods and causes a lot of damage. Hopefully we'll raise that on the day.

There will be Fair Trade stalls in the Meeting Room with other activities: dressing up booth from GladRags; non-messy craft table for kids. Between 1 and 1.30 Atif Choudhury, founder of Zaytoun will talk on the Future of Fair Trade in Palestine.

In the Lecture Room we have a programme of activities, in blocks of half an hour each, starting at 12 with Bothy Singing, followed by: Georgian/Ukrainian Songs; Qi Gong; Creative Dance for Children; Charleston dance; Hubbub Song Circle with friends from Hullabaloo Quire; Djembe drumming (not too loud!) and Bollywood Dance. Hopefully people will join in and enjoy!

Between 2.00 and 3.00 a senior teacher of the Awakened Heart Sangha will do some introductory meditation in blocks of 10-15 mins each.

Please tell your family and friends and we hope to see you there.

Barbara Wilson

Pastoral Support - Staying in Touch with each other

Our Quaker community has a *Pastoral Friends* team who are available to keep in touch with members and attenders, and give comfort or support when it is needed. Our present age has many challenges – from living through coronavirus to worries about making ends meet, or anxiety over international tensions.

Please contact any of the Pastoral Team who are: Sheila Boyer, Lisa Compton, Annie Lieberman, Kate Mackrell, Hugh Parrott, Dawn Speck.

bqpastoralfriends@outlook.com

Annie Lieberman is convenor for January, February and March.

Brighton And Hove Citizens UPDATE

Our listening groups

Thank you those of you who have had one-to-one conversations and joined small listening groups that we have held at Brighton Friends Meeting House after Meeting. These have been very helpful in listening to the issues that people are concerned about in our wider community. They will help us focus on what Quakers might be involved with in regard to future campaigns.



Mental Health and student counselling:

On Wednesday 22 January we attended the bimonthly Citizens Leadership Meeting which was held near Hove Town Hall in All Saints church. First the team campaigning for continued provision of counselling for older pupils delivered a carefully scripted presentation to Bella Sankey Leader of the Labour Council. Varndean school younger students told of their experience of receiving counselling and they requested that the funding be extended to older students. Bella Sankey listened and responded with empathy but said she was not in a position at this stage of budgeting to commit funds. She said she would certainly ensure that the matter was discussed when they knew how much money they would have available. Hearing the students speak to the Leader of the Council, with prepared scripts along with senior teaching staff was a good example of how Citizens presents issues to those in authority.

Building a Fairer Brighton & Hove

B & H Citizens UK received over 1,600 responses to their questionnaire based on the City Plan. The report sets out the findings and the recommendations. Go to www.citizensuk.org/chapters/brighton-hove to read the collated results.

The housing issue is one of the current Citizen's campaigns and you can see in www.citizensuk.org how CITIZENS UK functions with specific information on Brighton and Hove Citizens.

The Brighton and Hove Citizens Annual Assembly (with MP Peter Kyle invited) will now be on **Friday 11 July from 16.00 to 17.30pm**. Please put this date into your diary.

Peter Wells & Helen Holtam

Remember your responsibilities as a citizen for the conduct of local, national, and international affairs. Do not shrink from the time and effort your involvement may demand.

Quaker Faith & Practice, Advices & Queries No 34

Finding our ground

**An expressive writing workshop
for deeper connection with ourselves and others**

**Sunday 9 March 1.15-3.00pm
at the Friends Meeting House.**

I am an experienced group facilitator, with a particular interest in the spiritual and wellbeing benefits of creative activities, such as writing poetry.

This will be a facilitated session with writing prompts and texts to help us explore the theme, and to stimulate thought and discussion. All you need is a willingness to engage, write and reflect - with the chance to share with others in the group. No writing experience is needed, and the group will be a maximum of 10 people.

The aim is to find deeper connection with ourselves and others, through the act of writing in the moment (rather than to give and receive feedback on the artistic merits of what is written.)

Open to all - of any faith, belief, religion, or none.

A donation of £5-10 per person is suggested, to be paid in advance. Details of how to pay will be given when you book. The intention is to cover costs and donate the remainder to the Sanctuary Cooking Group.

To book a place or if you have any questions, please contact me by email at deborahclow@gmail.com. The closing date for booking is **Saturday 1 March**. Alternatively, you can email brightonquakernewsletter@gmail.com and they will forward it.

Deborah Clow

Clerking workshop

**Saturday 15 February 10.30 - 1.30
Quiet Room, Brighton Meeting House**

This is an opportunity to learn and practise some of the skills required to clerk a meeting. We will focus on Business Meeting but it could be useful to conveners of other committees. Even if you do not have any ambition to be a clerk, it might be interesting to understand what goes into drawing up the agenda, writing minutes and right ordering of our business method.

The workshop will include discussion and gentle role play and, hopefully, demystify the process.

If you would like to come along and see what it's all about please email brightonquakerclerk@gmail.com to register your place.

Jane Rosenberg

Report from Area Meeting

At the Area Business Meeting held on 18th January a number of matters relating to our future were considered.

There was a report from our Area representative to Meeting for Sufferings. The question of whether Attenders can be Roleholders is in front of them and will be considered at Yearly Meeting later this year. They discern that this can happen, but Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) is the body that will make the final decision.

The future of how our finances are managed has been considered by Trustees. They see that the merging of finances is more complicated than anticipated and they are considering this at their forthcoming meetings. It is proposed that Brighton's accounts continue to be separate while the other Meetings' accounts will merge.

Contributions to Britain Yearly Meeting were considered. It was stated that the money paid to Area by Local Meetings pays for insurance and other essential statutory expenses. Therefore, the work done by BYM is funded by Local Meetings and individual Friends (or, if mandated, by Area Meeting). It was also stated that the breakdown of how Friends' contributions to Local Meetings can be passed on to Area and Yearly Meeting is a matter for local discernment.

The full Minutes can be read via the Quaker App. Those wishing to access the App for the first time should contact Michael Richardson.

Michelle Roberts

Quaker Listening day with Restoring Relations

Restoring Relations is an initiative run by a small group of Friends, and others, to provide free online information for all and run workshops to help individuals and Quaker meetings to better understand and handle conflict.

Following a Zoom information session, we have booked a one-day workshop with Restoring Relations on **Saturday 1 March 10.30-3pm at the Meeting House.**

The session will be largely in person and all are welcome to attend in person. If you hope to come, and in order to have an idea of numbers, please email Clerks team at brightonquakerclerk@gmail.com.

Please bring a sandwich lunch (unfortunately we will not have access to the cafe or lecture room due to other bookings).

There will be a very few places available on Zoom for those unable to attend in person. If you need to come on Zoom in order to participate, please contact the Clerks team - brightonquakerclerk@gmail.com for the link.

Clerks team

FOOD BANK -- Please Remember -- FOOD BANK --- FOOD BANK

Please make donations to the foodbanks in your supermarkets.
Alternatively, you can bring donations to Meeting House on Sundays.



Tuesday at Friends

At the Friends' Meeting House,
Ship Street, Brighton BN1 1AF

Telephone: 01273 770258,

email: brightonfriendsmeeting@gmail.com

*Time: 2:30pm – 3:30pm. Admission £2.50. No need to book.
Tea and biscuits on sale afterwards. There is an induction loop for the hard of hearing.*

PROGRAMME – Winter/Spring Season 2025

February 11th Trevor Povey - ‘More of Old Hove – Cliftonville, West Brighton & The King Alfred’
Trevor continues his look at Hove’s long history.

February 18th Tilo Fleche – ‘Bruges’ *Once you enter the old city of Bruges, you’ll find streets and canals lined with historic houses, churches and museums.*

February 25th Dr Sue Berry – ‘The rise of the Pelham Family of Stanmer Place and Park and their political and social roles c1710- 1900’.

March 4th Martin Jones – ‘Brighton’s Clock Towers’ *Hear the stories behind these important and wonderful buildings.*

March 11th Brian Ogilvie – ‘Vanished Voices’ *The story of Brighton’s Fishing Community.*

March 18th Dr Sue Berry – ‘Victorian and Edwardian Brighton and Hove 1870-1914 - entrepreneurial resort and major regional centre’.

March 25th Helen Poole – ‘Anne of Cleves’ *Was Anne the luckiest of Henry VIII’s wives?*

www.tuesdayatfriends.org.uk

Organisers: Brighton Quakers

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"We can choose to thrive. The people who are coming to our Meetings are asking us to accept our calling; to share the gifts of the Quaker way with them. If we are willing to respond as communities that are welcoming, generous, flexible and spiritually alive, they will be a blessing to us, and us to them."

From Craig Burnett's blog 'Choosing to thrive: a thriving community is not comfortable'.

Submitted by Susan White

New service for local people with hearing loss

The Royal National Institute for Deaf People has a free, drop-in service - no appointment needed at:

Friends Meeting House,
Ship Street, Brighton BN1 1AF
Every 1st Monday of the month 2pm - 4pm
(Excluding bank holidays)

We can help with:

- Hearing aid cleaning and tubing replacement
- Free replacement hearing aid batteries
- Free hearing checks
- Pairing hearing aids to mobile phone apps
- Information on assistive devices and technology
- Accessing local support and services in your area
- Information on managing hearing loss and tinnitus
- Communication tips and advice

Contact: Lyndsay McCrickard lyndsay.mccrickard@rnid.org.uk 07484 411 836

Interfaith Contact Group

Wednesday 12 February - 7-8pm - Friendship Hour

meditation hour at The Friends' Meeting House, Ship Street Brighton



Wednesday 12 March - 7-8pm - Friendship Hour

a meeting on spiritual practice from the Sikh perspective at Hove Methodist Church, Portland Road, Hove.

Thursday 13 March 2025 at 7pm

South East England Faith Forum (SEEFF) would like to invite you to the second of its Elizabeth Jenkerson Memorial Interfaith Lectures. Our March lecture is titled: "Who are the Quakers and what did they do to end the Slave Trade?". Our speaker is Richard Seebohm who served as the representative in Brussels at the Quaker Council for European Affairs.

We would love to see you among us and request you email us if you hope to come - emel@art-beyond-belief.com

The lecture will be on zoom, this is the link - <http://bit.ly/3JIHTMw>

Sheila Boyer and Helen Ledger, IFCG representatives

The Foodbank

Please support FareShare.

Bring food donations to Meeting House on Sunday mornings as Fareshare will be coming to collect them.

Terry Byrne, Warden



Appeals

Now that we have blended Meetings some Friends cannot put donations in our Appeal Box at Meeting House. Our chosen charities could lose out on much needed donations.

Unfortunately, we do not yet have a website to make donations to so, please send a donation via the Meeting Treasurer. Just send a cheque to Meeting House or do a bank transfer:

Account name: Brighton Quaker Meeting

Sort Code: 08-92-99 Account number: 65009567

Please do let the Treasurer know which appeal the payment is for.

Appeal for Ramallah Quaker Meeting House

Most members and attenders already know that our Meeting adopted as a particular Concern some decades ago the Children of the Jordan Valley in Occupied Palestine after the visit of Brighton Friends to the area. Since then our centre of interest has been the harassment by Israeli forces, the wilful destruction of homes, the diversion of the water supply and the continuing construction of exclusively Jewish settlements on the land, replacing Arab village names with invented Hebrew ones.



Although some Friends, notably Patricia in Lewes and International volunteers, continue to visit Palestine, Brighton Meeting and has found it increasingly difficult to keep up our initial contacts in the Jordan Valley. We are now looking to widen our attention to the Quaker Meeting House in the centre of the West Bank town of Ramallah and to send financial help to their community projects. This beautiful, simple building and peaceful garden were set up more than a century ago under Turkish rule by American Quakers, together with the world-famous nearby school. I have visited it several times over the years and have been impressed by the lively family centre adjoining the Meeting House where adult literacy and refugee children's classes, local handicraft, cultural and embroidery groups are held.

Some of us remember the Clerk, local Palestinian, Jean Zanu, who spoke movingly at a Britain Yearly Meeting for Sufferings about the peaceful resistance to the Occupation. We, of the original Jordan Valley support group, hope that it will be easier for interested Friends to reach Ramallah, which is only a short taxi-ride from Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley towns of Jericho and Tubas. As the world's attention spreads from Gaza to all the Occupied Territories, and the conflict's history and background becomes better understood, our new contacts will give us opportunities to keep directly informed and pin-point the financial help which is so urgently needed. We therefore ask Friends to give as generously as they can towards our first contribution to the work of Ramallah Quaker Meeting.

*Angela Bargawi
on behalf of the Group*

Community in Action

Fourth Sundays shared lunch

23 February, 23 March, 27 April, 25 May 12.30pm, Quiet grace

Vegetarian soup will be provided in mugs. Please bring food to share.

Seated around square tables. Please ensure everyone is welcome and feels included. Maybe sit with people you don't know. Let's encourage little people to sit up for the duration too!

Visitors welcome of course, without any contribution.

Helen Holtam

Coffee Mornings via Zoom on Fridays at **11.00 am**. If you would like to join please email the clerk at brightonquakerclerk@gmail.com

Being Friends Together

Being Friends Together is a good opportunity to get to know Friends better, learn more about Quakerism and share spiritual journeys. Three groups continue to get together regularly via Zoom. If you would like to join please contact the Elders via bqelders@gmail.com

Clerk's mailing list: If you would like to receive email information and Quaker news from the clerks, you need to have completed a GDPR Form (re data privacy). These forms are available from the Pastoral Team by contacting: bqpastoralfriends@outlook.com

Brighton Meeting diary

Meetings for Worship

Regular Meeting for Worship

Sundays 10.30–11.30am Blended Meeting

If you wish to join via Zoom please contact bqelders@gmail.com

5.00–5.45pm in-person only Meeting

The evening Meeting on the second Sunday of the month will be a Silent Peace Vigil. For more information please contact Vivienne Ross or bqelders@gmail.com

Wednesdays 12.30–1.00pm in person only in the Quiet Room

Children's Meetings

Brighton Children's Meeting welcomes all children and their parents to Children's Meeting and Creche. Children will have the opportunity to learn more about Quakers today and the roots of Quakerism, and to explore for themselves what this means for them in their own lives.

All leaders are DBS checked. One parent per family is asked to stay with babies and toddlers up to age 2 in the Creche. Creche is for our younger children and Children's Meeting for children over 5.

There will be a Children's Meeting every Sunday.

For more information please email brightonquakernewsletter@gmail.com

Workshops and community events

Welcome Meeting

Welcome Meeting is held on the second, third, fourth and fifth Sundays of the month, at **12 noon**, and is open to everyone – visitors, attenders and members. It is a chance to share how Meeting was for us and to discuss our Quaker faith. Newcomers are particularly welcome - come and chat with some friendly people about your impressions of Meeting or ask questions about Quakerism in an open and informal way.

Meetings for Quaker business

Local Meeting for Worship for Business in 2025

Sunday 2 March at 12 noon in the Meeting Room

Items for MWB must be sent to the Clerk at least one week before the meeting, i.e. **Sunday 23 February**. The only exceptions are emergencies that arise during the week before MWB. Please email brightonquakerclerk@gmail.com, or write to the Clerks c/o The Meeting House.

If you are a newcomer or attender and would like to join MWB for the first time, please contact the Clerk, who will be able to explain the procedures. If you are not comfortable with Zoom please contact the Elders at bjelders@gmail.com.

Area Meetings for Worship for Business in 2025

It was agreed at November's Area Meeting to continue varying to formats of Area Meeting to be more inclusive. Hopefully the changes will make these Meetings more accessible to younger Friends.

- **Saturday 15 March** at Chichester Meeting House at 10.30. A Blended Meeting.
- After a picnic lunch an afternoon session will consider a concern led by Ditchling Friends in response to Area Meeting's request (minute 24.48) for them to organise an educational discussion on our Friend Ruth Jones' concern on *"Investing in the Future: Quaker Values and Food Security."*

Future dates and locations for Area Meeting to be confirmed in due course.

Sussex and Surrey Regional Quaker Meeting 2025

The following dates for your diary:

Date	Location	Title or Topic more
Saturday 22 March	Lewes Meeting House and on zoom	Life Inside and After: How can we improve our prisons and welcome ex-offenders? Gillian Ashmore & Liz Bridge

Saturday 10 May	Twineham	Exchange of Dues
Saturday 28 June	Littlehampton Meeting House (TBC) and on zoom	The topic is Pacifism/Peace, exact title and details to follow
Saturday 27 September	Brighton Meeting House and on zoom	What is Prayer? Do we do it? Jennifer Kavanagh will lead the day.
Saturday 22 November	TBA	We choose the topic after BYM, in case something arises which we want to follow up

You are very welcome at any RM event if you attend or are a member of a Quaker meeting within SSRQM. (SSRQM is made up of Surrey and Hampshire Border AM, Sussex East AM, Sussex West AM and West Weald AM.)

We will send more information about each event and how to register during 2024. sussexandsurreyrmquakerclerk@outlook.com

Deirdre Morris, Clerk to SSRQM

Notices

Notices to be read out after Meeting for Worship should be sent to brightonquakernotices@gmail.com. The deadline for notices is Friday evening.

Newsletter Contributions

This newsletter should reflect the diversity of thinking and experience of members and attenders. If this is to be your newsletter, we need your input: thoughts on the meeting, a passage that has inspired you, a book review, a drawing, something to share with others that might help us grow in community and spirit. Please send your contributions to the Editor, Jackie Robinson at brightonquakernewsletter@gmail.com

The deadline for the **March** newsletter is **Friday 28 February** – always two days before Business Meeting. The editor has the right to edit contributions or hold them over until the next issue, particularly where this is necessary in order to avoid blank pages.

It is the responsibility of contributors to decide how much of their personal details should be shared.

To receive the newsletter by email, and to comply with the GDPR law, please write to brightonquakernewsletter@gmail.com.

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