



Brighton Friends News

A Monthly Publication of Brighton Quaker Meeting

May 2026

www.brightonquakers.co.uk

Issue 376

Dearest Friends,

This month, a common theme of expression is coming through in the contributions.

We have Isa Levy writing about a painting she created inspired by the symbol of the cross (P.2) and Susan White sharing the genesis of how her *Song for Peace* came about (P.3)

We have a new column, *Profile of Friends*, (P.4) which will be appearing each month, kicking off with Jason Evans sharing a little of his Quaker journey with us.

We are also delighted to share with you the very poignant and powerful epistle from the Britain Yearly Meeting which you'll find on (P.5)

Our charity of the month is The Clare Project introduced by Abigail Maxwell (P.5) and dates for your diary can be found towards the end of the newsletter. There are also appeals from the Refugees on (Pp. 6 & 7).

Showing that there is always more to learn, understand and be curious about Gerard Rosenberg shares details of an upcoming exploration of Stuart Masters 2026 Swarthmore Lectures, (P.8).

As always, this newsletter is made rich by the contributions that create it, so if you have but a stirring within to send us something, please do. We'd very much like to see it!



Female Resurrection – A Story of How A Painting Came To Be



Some years ago, I was given a large blank canvas – 7' by 5'6". At that time, my mother, along with three other women who were important to me had passed away. And I found myself, facing that blank canvas, reflecting on the question: ***How can I celebrate life at the time of so much suffering?***

I decided to put the female form on the cross in a sort of crucifixion scene. I had not planned that the central figure would be headless. But that was my message from the Divine. She had transcended her suffering. Even so, I felt blasphemous, taking this Christian image of Christ on the Cross and making it my own, along with being a Jew. However, it felt a little better to know that the Jewish Museum of Art (Ben Uri) had held an exhibition around the theme of the cross. As well as learning that many artists had used the symbol at seminal times in their work, including Chagall.

It took me many years to come to terms with processing this painting. At first, it served as a cupboard door and protective shield to my other paintings. And then on researching the symbolism of the cross I could identify with the signs of unity within the Celtic Cross. The four sides being: (i) Self, (ii) Divine Feminine / Masculine, (iii) Nature and (iv) Wisdom.

I could see that a sense of wholeness, resided within my suffering. Creativity sang from my heart as 'The Female Resurrection' was born in so many different ways. I interpret the rise of the Divine Feminine in our contemporary times, as a spiritual integration of the sacred masculine and sacred feminine to create unity rather than division. And that wisdom can reside in a global shift away from the patriarchal and fear-based systems of control, towards a paradigm of love, intuition and collaboration. Where authentic intelligence can meet with artificial intelligence. And where the mystery can meet the mastery.



Isa Levy

The Birth of a (Peace) Song

I've been asked to give you the background to the song that, the other Sunday, we invited people to begin to learn. Over the winter, I began to follow the social media posts coming out of Minnesota showing huge crowds of people singing as a form of protest and singing for peace. It moved me deeply. They were inviting others to see the world differently, to act differently. It was completely non-violent. I began to feel the call to write a song; a prayer/song that perhaps we could sing right at the end of our meetings for worship. Eventually, I realised that I had to act on that call which led me to writing a few lines and then reaching out to Sally, to ask if she would be willing to create the music. She was, as another Friend had already suggested that she composed something similar. So, writing the lyrics began in earnest and it had been clear in the original 'nudge' to do this that it was important that it didn't refer to any specific event or injustice.

Some weeks later when Sally and her husband, Peter, played and sang the song to me, I had goosebumps. It sounded just as I had 'heard' it. Below, are the words Sally and I agreed on sung to a haunting melody (thank you so much, Sally!):

*We see you, we hear you
You do not stand alone
Wherever you are
You do not stand alone
We see you, we hear you
We're standing in the Light
Wherever we are
We're standing in the Light
In the Light of Love
Singing for peace*

In a further fascinating twist, on the morning that we all practised singing it, I had had a text from a friend of mine who knows people in Minneapolis, who have been heavily involved with the protests. I was told that it would mean so much to them to know that their movement had inspired others around the world.

PS: The plan is to sing the song after an upcoming Sunday meeting. We will meet a couple of times beforehand to practice and so if you'd like to take part, once the dates have been confirmed, we will announce this in the notices.



Susan White

Profile of Friends: Jason Evans

Can you tell us a little bit about what you do?

I'm a certified hypnotherapist, Focusing Practitioner, Mental Health First Aider and meditation teacher. I was the Quaker Chaplain at the University of Sussex for ten years and I've held many other roles in Meeting. I'm also a lucid dreamer.

What is it that first drew you to meetings and would you share one aspect about being a Quaker that most resonates with you?

I first started coming around 2000, sporadically at first following a pretty serious nervous breakdown, then more regularly. I was accepted into membership in 2002. Even though I was not brought up a Quaker, I had known for a long time that Quakers believed there was something of God in everyone. At the time I liked that but didn't think much more of it until I realised I needed a religious faith to help me survive my breakdown.

Have there been any parts of being a Quaker that you've struggled with?

It has for the most part been a series of pleasant surprises for me. I was surprised and delighted that Quakers took the lead on establishing the right for Gay couples to marry. More recently I have struggled to keep Regional Meeting functional, as we have had difficulty filling roles.

How much of a part of your life involves activities connected to being a Quaker?

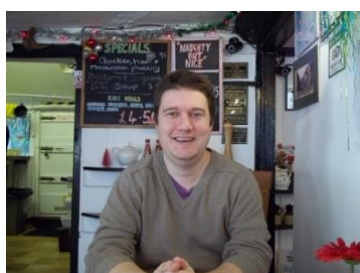
My current career path owes a lot to my experiences as a Quaker, but I had a previous life as a software engineer after I finished a four-year combined master's degree in physics. The jobs this qualified me for were not very ethical which led to my breakdown.

If you could sum up what being a Quaker is in a general about to someone wanting to learn - what would you say?

For me being a Quaker is less about the details of what you believe, and more about having a direct experience of the divine – and then allowing space for that experience to inform the way you live, hopefully making the world a better place.

Do you have a favourite book, or quote that sums up what being a Quaker means to you?

The 'Everlasting Gospel' of Friends is largely unknown in the wider world and not all that well known in the Quaker world. The book that describes it best is in my view is "A Universal Christian Faith" by Lewis Benson.



Jason Evans – www.betterlifehypno.com

Epistle from Britain Yearly Meeting

Held at Friends House, The Frontier Centre in Northamptonshire, and online from 1 to 4 May 2026

To Friends around the world

Loving Greetings to Friends everywhere

Gyfeillion annwyl ym mhobman, anfonwn atoch ein cariad a'n cyfarchion.

Battered by the certainty of some of those around us, we seem to live in a world polarised by conflict and fear. The world around us appears even more frightening and unstable than it did last year, and yet we experienced deep joy at being able to come together.

Almost 2,000 Friends registered in advance for Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) May 2026, including 100 children and young people at Friends House and at the Frontier Centre in Northamptonshire. Over 600 registered online and almost 400 attended for the first time.

We gathered around the themes:

What unites us as a spirit-led community in a divided world?

As a Spirit-led community, how can we handle conflict well?

We heard about overwhelm and helplessness, and a feeling that what we each are able to do is not enough: our hearts are resonating with the cry of the earth and the earth's people in pain.

A Friend shared their experience of the recent Earthcare Gathering where they came to understand that listening and upholding the witness of others is an important Quaker ministry. The Salter Lecture investigated the multiple moral catastrophes in the Middle East. We must work for "the just and equal and safe future where every life is precious and dignity belongs to everyone". The Recording Clerk summarised recent work relating to the right to protest in the United Kingdom.

Change, which can bring a sense of bereavement, as well as renewal, is coming to Quakers in Britain. We enacted structural changes to BYM. As we laid down Meeting for Sufferings after 350 years, we heard the Testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of Meeting for Sufferings and the many changes it weathered in its lifetime. We feel excited about the evolving landscape and look forward to the next session of BYM in Manchester and online in July. The draft of our new book of discipline will be with us in November, with a variety of resources to help us contribute towards a further draft, which will make it our own. We are reminded that the book itself is not our faith, but that unmediated access to the divine is the most important thing for British Quakers.

We became aware that our spiritual language over the weekend showed a return to our roots. Maybe we are becoming more comfortable with living with the tension between theistic and other language. We shared a greater willingness to hear the meaning which underlies our words.

In the Swarthmore Lecture we were reminded that we are still living with fundamental and productive tensions which have existed since the beginning of Quakerism.

We have heard from a minute of Junior Yearly Meeting that we need to hold differences tenderly and distinguish between acceptance, which comes as a result of being authentically yourself, and belonging, which is the result of shared values. Our children's and young people's groups worked on co-operative artwork on bridge-building and led us in singing "Building Bridges" in all-age worship on Sunday.

We feel in our bodies the pain of conflict. Embodiment can also sometimes be how the Spirit convinces us of the way forward.

We need to let go of certainty, the certainty that we know the answer. We need to let go of the outcome, and let the Spirit move: Friends who were in Friends House meeting room will long remember the improvised cheerful hymn-singing when the Zoom sound failed. Can we be open not only to this kind of gentle wind, but also to the storm that sweeps through and blows down trees, leaving room for new seeds to sprout? Let us hold spaces which are safe not just for the still small voice, but also for the wind, the storms, the power that makes us uncomfortable and which stirs us to action.

Do we still have the power to turn the world upside-down? Let it be so!

Signed in, and on behalf of, Britain Yearly Meeting

Fred Langridge, Clerk

Request for donations

Current members of our refugee cooking group are from many parts of the world. Please consider donating sanitary products, specifically sanitary pads as culturally these are more acceptable for most of the women. Donations can be left in the box near the automatic door into the Meeting Room. The women cannot afford to buy these necessary items on the weekly £9.00 they receive from the Home Office. Regular donations are particularly welcomed.

*Helen Ledger
Sanctuary Group*

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. If you can, please make your donation through the appeal's website www.clareproject.org.uk

Alternatively, you can 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.

The Appeal this month is for: The Clare Project

Trans people need other trans people. With trans people I can fully be myself. When considering transition, from about 1998 to 2002, I was completely terrified of transition, yet more and more clear that it was the thing I wanted more than anything else in the World. Facing the questions, "Was I really trans?" "Was transition right for me?" I came up with objections because of the enormity of what I wanted. I found places where I could discuss all of this with trans people. The support of trans people and the acceptance of Quakers gave me courage to transition.

The Clare Project provides a social space for trans people. It also provides advice on a wide variety of needs. It has a weekly drop in to connect and chat, an over 50s' group, mindfulness and fitness groups. It gives the help I needed to the people who need it now. Brighton has a large trans community because of its tradition of acceptance, but the Clare Project provides places where we can be fully ourselves. Please go to: www.clareproject.org.uk to find out more information about The Clare Project.

Abigail Maxwell

Asylum Seeker and Refugee Cooking Group

The Cooking Group which is run by the Quaker Sanctuary Group has been running for 3 years. We support the residents of the Home Office run hotels in Hove. Sessions are held at the Meeting House and in turn different groups of refugees cook food that is a 'taste of their home country'. The sessions are happy occasions when people from the hotel can meet together, cook together and relax. Our volunteers say how rewarding it is. We currently meet on a Tuesday morning and need 3 volunteers a week to run the group. The group is entirely financed by Quakers. The menu is planned by the hotel residents and we buy the food.

We need support! Volunteer helpers needed - Could you become a volunteer, usually only once a month, possibly twice, from 10.00 - 2.30?

Financial support - could you make a one-off or a regular donation towards the cost of the cooking group?

To find out more please contact me or write to brightonquakernewsletter@gmail.com.

*Helen Ledger
Sanctuary Group*

“I have never seen God – I’ve been shown him all too often, and the demonstrators all got in the light.”

Pierre Ceresole, a Quaker writing in *The Spirit of The Quakers* edited by Geoffrey Durham

Introducing The Swarthmore Lecture Discussion

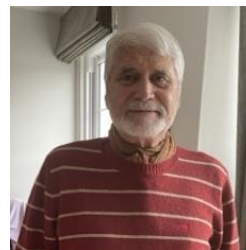
As part of the Area Learning Group activities, we are suggesting a follow-up discussion by West Sussex Friends of this year's Swarthmore Lecture. The subject this year is "Tangled Roots: navigating the complex legacy of early Quakers" given by Stuart Masters.

In his lecture, Stuart explored the diverse mix of characteristics visible in the early Quaker movement that produced several creative tensions between inward experience and outward tradition, communal order and individual freedom, the quietist and the charismatic, and the new creation and the world. He argued that engaging with these issues can help Friends better appreciate the diversity present within the global Quaker family and enable us to discern how to respond to these dilemmas today.

The Area Learning Group suggest that this will have wide appeal both for those new to Friends and not so new looking at the beginnings that weren't without tensions and again today when we also face tensions.

Several Meetings will have gathered friends to view and discuss the lecture. Others will encourage individuals to view the lecture online.

The Learning Group will organise a discussion and reflection on the Swarthmore Lecture via Zoom from 7.00 to 8.30pm on Wednesday, 3rd June. We hope many Friends from Brighton meeting will join this discussion.



*Gerard Rosenberg
Brighton Representative, Learning Group.*

"For good or ill, I embody the kind of messy complexity we have been exploring...and this prompts me to ask myself an essential question: how much of what I believe, or say, or do, has its source in the inward experience of divine guidance, and how much is a response to all those other factors? This is a question that I think we, as Friends, need to keep perpetually in mind, if we are to claim any integrity"

Stuart Masters *Tangled Roots: Navigating the Complex Legacy of Early Quakers*

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

Community in Action

Fourth Sunday Shared Lunch

24 May, 28th June, 26th July, 23rd August, 27th September.

Join us for regular Friendly lunches at 12.30 - Everyone welcome. Vegetarian soups & bread provided, plus shared dishes. Edible or financial (£2-£3) contributions appreciated.

It's a team effort. Help is appreciated:

- Setting up, heating up, and clearing away.
- Making newcomers feel welcome.
- Usually ends with a cup of tea to thank the helpers 🤍🤍

Helen Holtam

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

Connecting Friends meet in the Meeting House on the first Monday of the month. It is a time to get to know each other. At present we take one item from Advices & Queries, each read it aloud in turn, and then reflect on it together in silence for about 15 minutes. We then share our reflections, spending about an hour together in our groups. Following this, we meet together as a whole group to share drinks and snacks – everyone is asked to contribute – and we break no later than 9pm. It is important that everyone understands that this is a confidential exercise, not to be shared outside our own group, either in person or on social media. Zoom Friends are invited. The Pastoral Friends are convening the June Meeting so please contact them at bqpastoralfriends@outlook.com so we can organise a Zoom link and laptop. The next meeting is **Monday 1st June, 7-9pm**. Please arrive at the back door.

Young Adult Friends have been enjoying meeting together in the Meeting House on the third Monday of each month to socialise, worship, discuss and learn on Quaker themes, and enjoy a hearty shared meal.

We look forward to meeting again on **Monday 18th May at 7-9pm** in Brighton Meeting House, and we warmly welcome other Young Adult Friends (anyone between 18 and a very flexible 40ish years old) to join us. The group is open to anyone who has attended Brighton Meeting and anyone they would like to bring with them.

We set up an 'information only' WhatsApp group so that we can send reminders through to those interested in attending the group. Please get in touch if you'd like to be added by emailing brightonquakernewsletter@gmail.com and it will be forwarded on to me.

Niamh Carmichael

Workshops and community events

Welcome Meeting

Welcome Meeting is held on the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays of the month, at **12 – 12.30pm**, and is open to everyone – visitors, attenders and members.

PLEASE NOTE THAT FROM 17TH MAY IT WILL ALSO BE AVAILABLE TO ZOOM FRIENDS ON THE 2ND, 3RD and 5TH Sundays.

Please contact the clerk at brightonquakerclerk@gmail.com for the link. The same link will be used each time.

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.

In a true community we will not choose our companions, for our choices are so often limited by self-serving motives. Instead, our companions will be given to us by grace. Often, they will be persons who will upset our settled view of self and world. In fact, we might define true community as the place where the person you least want to live with always lives!

Parker J Palmer, 1977, Quaker Faith & Practice 10.19S

Dates For your Diary Brighton Meeting diary

Regular Meetings for Worship

Sundays 9.30–10.15am Quiet Room
10.30–11.30am Blended Meeting

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

5.00–5.45pm in-person Meeting

For more information please contact bqelders@gmail.com

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

Brighton Children's Meeting welcomes all children every week to their own meeting for worship. Children have always stayed in the main meeting for with adults for the first 15 minutes. Recently we have combined the younger and older

children in one group so can now offer a Children's Meeting every week rather than fortnightly. At 10.45am two adults, the leader and the helper, both DBS checked, guide the children out to the lecture room. Children under two need to be accompanied by a parent or grandparent. Stick-on name badges can be useful and we often start in a circle individually sharing some good things. We explore Quaker themes helping children to develop their own understanding of Quakers in a safe and caring environment.

We always appreciate more volunteers to help nurture the younger generation of Friends. If you have an idea or theme to lead a Children's Meeting that is wonderful, but the simple presence of an additional adult for crowd control and peacekeeping is as important. At the end of the Meeting for Worship the children join the adults and when invited can explain their theme and show any handiwork!

If you are willing to be involved please contact either of us. Philip Holtam administers a Whatsapp group for the Children's Meeting rota and organisation. We thank all of Brighton Meeting for their support and patience!

For more information please email brightonquakernewsletter@gmail.com

Helen Holtam

Meetings for Quaker business

Local Meeting for Worship for Business in 2025

Sunday 7 June at 12 noon in the Meeting Room - blended

Items for MWB must be sent to the Clerk at least one week before the meeting, i.e. **Sunday 31 May**. 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.

Area Meetings for Worship for Business in 2025

We continue to vary the formats of Area Meetings to be more inclusive. Hopefully the changes will make these Meetings more accessible to younger Friends.

In the Meeting House and online unless otherwise stated:

Saturday 16 May, 10.30 am at Ditchling

Wednesday 15 July, 7.00pm at Brighton (online only?)

Saturday 19 September, 10.30am at Worthing

Thursday 19 November, 7.00 pm at Littlehampton (online only?)

We will decide at a later date about the July and November Area Meetings being held online only.

All meetings will be in person and on Zoom starting at 10.30am with the option of an afternoon session as required.

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, along with a profile photograph of yours, if you're comfortable to, to the Editor, Laura Fraser at laura@lfraser.com

The deadline for the **June** newsletter is **Friday 5 June** – always 2 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.

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of Brighton Quaker Meeting or any other Quaker organization

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

***"Miracles? That's what the universe and everyone in it run on!
It even trickles down to the ordinary stuff.
Everything is working as it should be when miracles happen,
myself included!
You want proof? I'm right here!
I'm positively brimming with the stuff.
I'm grateful. There'd be no life without them, no love."
Amen"***
Jason Evans.

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