

WEST SOMERSET AREA MEETING
QUAKER NEWSLETTER
DECEMBER 2019



MINUTES FOR WSAQM AREA MEETING NOVEMBER 16TH 2019
Taunton Meeting House

Clerks: Martin Wall Anna Mullett

19/72 A reading from 'Living our Beliefs' was read in our opening worship today.

19/73 Local Meeting Representatives:

Bridgwater	Rosemary Dagley, Gilly Lee
Burnham on Sea	Unable to appoint
Ilminster	Russ Chapman, Margaret Stenhouse
Minehead	Unable to appoint
Spiceland	Ali Dominy
Taunton	Shelia Harvey, John Ainsworth
Wellington	Brian Collingridge
Elder for the Meeting	John Ainsworth

19/74 Membership

We record the death of Wendy Best who died on 21st October. Wendy was a friend and attender of Ilminster meeting for many years and will be much missed.

We record the death of Susan Lamont who died on 28th October. Susan was a much valued member of Minehead meeting and will be much missed.

19/75 Nominations

(a) Martin Wall is appointed to serve as an elder for Taunton meeting from November 2019 until the end of December 2022.

(b) Margaret Stocks is appointed to continue to serve as a Trustee for a further 12 months commencing January 2020.

(c) Faith Cartwright is appointed to serve as a Trustee for a further three years commencing January 2020.

(d) Martin Wall and Anna Mullett are appointed to serve as Area Meeting co-clerks, Martin to serve until the end of 2021 and Anna until the end of 2020.

(e) Steve Trelfa has asked to lay down clerkship and eldership of Bridgwater meeting. Correspondence should be sent to co-clerk Phil Parratt until a new clerk is found.

(f) Kate Warren has laid down her oversight of Minehead meeting. Minehead are looking to nominate a new overseer and elder.

(g) Alan Keith of Wellington meeting has been appointed by Meeting for Sufferings as a member of Quaker Peace and Social Witness Central Committee (QPSWCC).

Area Meeting have requested that the procedure for accepting nominations be reviewed at a future AM.

19/76 Reports.

(a) Sufferings

We have heard from Fran Hicks that the main areas under discussion at MfS at Woodbrooke in October were the climate crisis, the court and prison register, the issue of assisted dying and Trustees' encouragement of more de-centralised support of local meetings. In considering climate justice those present were asked to recognise the sometimes radical work that is being done by Friends in response to our commitment to stewardship of the planet and how we might

all be called upon to act. Quakers need to be part of a whole community in addressing environmental degradation and its injustices. Fran was encouraged by the possible introduction of three eco justice workers who will support meetings and local communities. With regard to the prison and court register Sufferings agreed that a record should be kept both of the costs that some Friends are paying for their faith and witness and of their prayerful support within the Society. We ask that a full report appears in the Newsletter.

(b) Gender Diversity

Kathy Gollin has talked on gender diversity with two local meetings in order to take soundings back to Sufferings. Feedback showed a sense of concern and anxiety from both meetings. Where Friends have a personal or emotional attachment to the issues they should be acknowledged, otherwise we accept that Kathy will report her findings back to Sufferings with the understanding that it is an ongoing concern of our Area Meeting. We need to be aware of the challenges that these issues present to us all.

(c) Quaker Life

We have heard from Lynda Stewart, our representative to Quaker Life, about her weekend course at Woodbrooke on the theme of Quaker Life and Mental Health.

The report began with a simple exercise which gave us the understanding that we are all in this together. Topics covered during the meeting included the importance of language and hearing people's stories, and of listening with an open mind and loving heart. Delegates also considered queries such as: How do we recognise and deal with mental distress in our meetings? How, when, and to whom, do we refer to other professionals? Lynda has offered a 'Games Night' to Area Meeting or Local Meetings to further explore these issues. We thank Linda for her report and a full version will be printed in the Newsletter.

(d) Trustees

We thank Kathy Gollin for giving the report on behalf of Trustees. We note that at some time in 2020 there will be a special AM when Trustees will express their views and concerns about the future for this AM. Trustees are advised to consult with the stewardship committee at Friends House. The Business Team will arrange a date for this meeting and Trustees are asked to circulate a briefing document prior to the meeting.

(e) Taunton MH Management Committee

Peter Burgoine reported on the management of the Meeting House garden with regard to 'rough sleepers'. The committee proposes to increase the security of the garden with additional fencing and the installation of a gate.

We undertake to look at creative ways to engage with those that have been making use of the garden. We agree these changes with a profound sense of sadness and regret.

19/77 Elders and Overseers.

AM Elders and Overseers have suggested a residential weekend at Othona from 4th-6th September 2020. This has been met with enthusiasm from Friends with the AM. It was agreed that a Quiet Day could also be arranged during the year.

19/78 AM 2020 Calendar

Additions and Deletions

Additions:

- . Britain Yearly Gathering – Bath – 1st to 7th August.
- . AM Residential Weekend – Othona - 4th to 6th September.

Deletions:

- . Quaker Camp - Spiceland – 11th -13th September

19/79 Notices

(a) A Memorial Service for Jeanne Brown will be held at 13:30 on Sunday 19th January 2020.

(b) After MfW on 24th November Wellington Meeting will be looking at Group Oversight and Eldership. All are welcome. Provisional timing - Pip Harris will start the meeting at 12:00 this will be followed by a shared lunch at approximately 13:00.

(c) The Earth Action Group ask West Somerset Friends either individually or as local meetings to ask questions of the general election candidates in their constituencies to ascertain their views on climate justice.

19/80 Closing Minute

We thank Taunton Friends for their hospitality today. We hope to meet again as an Area Meeting on Saturday January 25th 2020 at Taunton Meeting House. The next AM Business Team meeting will be on Monday December 2nd at 7pm at Taunton Meeting House.

QUAKER LIFE AND MENTAL HEALTH

Dear Friends; To begin my report on the weekend at Woodbrooke on the theme of Quaker Life and Mental Health may I ask if you are all willing to join me in a simple exercise? I am going to ask you some questions and you may, or I hope will, raise your hand if they apply to you.

This was one of the things that stood out for me over the weekend - the sense that we are all in this together. There are no sheep and goats.

If you have never had your mental wellbeing compromised, however slightly, I would like to hear from you!

The second thing was language. How do we describe mental ill health? Putting someone in a box with a label may not always be the best way forward for them or us. And anyway what is 'normal'?

The third thing was hearing people's stories. I was moved to tears more than once by these and people's courage in speaking out and willingness to be vulnerable.

And then there were the workshops.

We had to choose two out of eight and I could have happily done them all. I felt the two which would deepen my own self-knowledge would ultimately be of more use in understanding and perhaps helping others.

On reflection I would like to have learnt more about how we recognise and encourage one another to be more open about our mental distress in meeting and when, how and to whom do we refer someone when the need arises and we feel out of our depth.

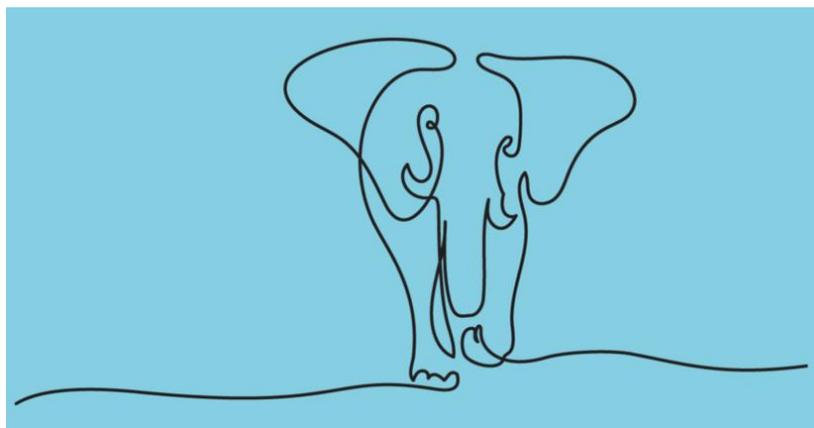
On the last day while waiting in the lunchtime queue, I had a strong sense that I could sit down next to ANYONE in the dining room and listen and be listened to by someone with an open mind and loving heart.

That's Quakers for you! And a vital step in helping someone dealing with mental distress and that someone could be you or me.

As a result of this experience I would like to offer to AM or perhaps each LM, a games evening or two in which we can explore issues in a light hearted yet serious way and go forward together in our understanding of mental ill health and ways in which we might help in our Meetings.

Thank you AM for giving me the opportunity to be Quaker Life Rep.

Lynda Stewart



The Elephant in the Room

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/blog/mental-health-the-elephant-in-the-room>

WEST SOMERSET AREA QUAKER MEETING

2020 CALENDAR - DRAFT

AM start times are 10:15 for 10:30.

Worshipping Together starts at 10:30 unless otherwise notified. Other meetings and events will notify their own arrangements.

- January** Saturday January 25 **AM** at Taunton
- February**
- March** Sunday March 1 **Worshipping Together** at Burnham
Monday March 2 AM **Business Team** meeting at Taunton
Saturday March 28 E&Os at Spiceland
- April** Saturday April 18 **AM** at Wellington
- May** Sunday May 17 **Worshipping Together** at Ilminster
- June** Monday June 1 AM **Business Team** meeting at Taunton
Sunday June 14 **Worshipping Together** at Spiceland
- July** Saturday July 18 **AM** at Minehead
- August** August 1-7 Yearly Meeting Gathering at Bath
Monday August 3 AM **Business Team** meeting (optional) at Taunton
Sunday August 16 **Worshipping Together** at Taunton
- September** September 4-6 AM Residential weekend at Othona Dorset
Saturday September 19 Special Topic AM at Spiceland
- October** Monday October 5 AM **Business Team** meeting at Taunton
Saturday October ? E&Os at ?
Sunday October 18 **Worshipping Together** at Minehead
- November** Saturday November 14 **AM** at Taunton
- December** Monday December 7 AM **Business Team** meeting at Taunton

THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND WEST SOMERSET QUAKERS

Update from the Earth Action Group

Special Topic Area Meeting: Transforming our Economy for Climate Justice

About twenty Friends from the Area Meeting spent an informative and challenging morning at Spiceland on 21st September when Gill Westcott from Devon Area Meeting led us both to review what we in our local meetings and individually are doing to implement the commitment Quaker made in 2011 to become a low carbon community, but also to learn about ways in which the economy fails to support climate justice and how this might change.

We are urged to live simply but for those with limited financial resources this can be difficult, e.g. needing to buy the cheapest mass produced food rather than better quality/locally produced/organic. Similarly, the poorest communities suffer most from the results of climate change, e.g. in the floods in New Orleans.

There is no mechanism to compensate climate-related chaos and subsidies to the fossil fuel industry substantially exceed those to renewable energy. The richest 10% of the population are responsible for 50% of carbon emissions. There is evidence that countries with most inequality have higher carbon emissions.

How do we respond? Three responses were mentioned:

- Resistance – combating the destructive economy
- Changing the Story. Living simply and cheerfully and responding to that of God in others and the world.
- Building the Alternatives. (e.g. social enterprises, tax justice,)

Specifically, we can approach our MPs and councillors, lobby our pension funds to disinvest from fossil fuels, liaise with financial advisers about investing ethically.

Positives referred to include the school strikes, the influence of Extinction Rebellion, meat-free Fridays and the fact that as indicated below, declarations of climate emergency by many local authorities. Gill gave us information about three organisations that we might like to support:

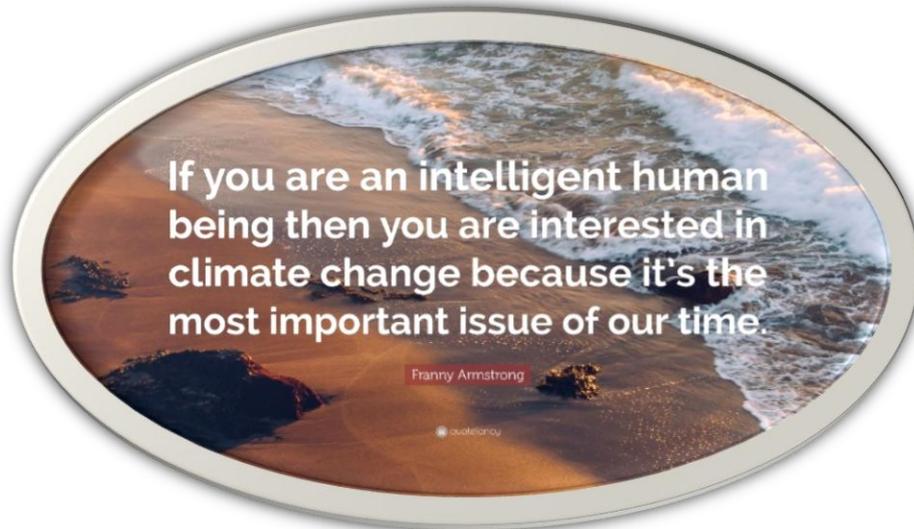
Positive Money seeks change to achieve their vision of a money and banking system that serves a fair democratic economy. See www.postivemoney.org. There is a group in Exeter who meet monthly on a Wednesday or Thursday evening at the Community centre in St. David's Hill.

Green New Deal Campaign supported by the Labour Party and trade unions. See under Campaign Against Climate Change Trade Union Group www.cacctu.org

Climate Damages Tax pressure for polluters to pay for the damage they cause. It is part of the group Stamp Out Poverty - www.stampoutpoverty.org

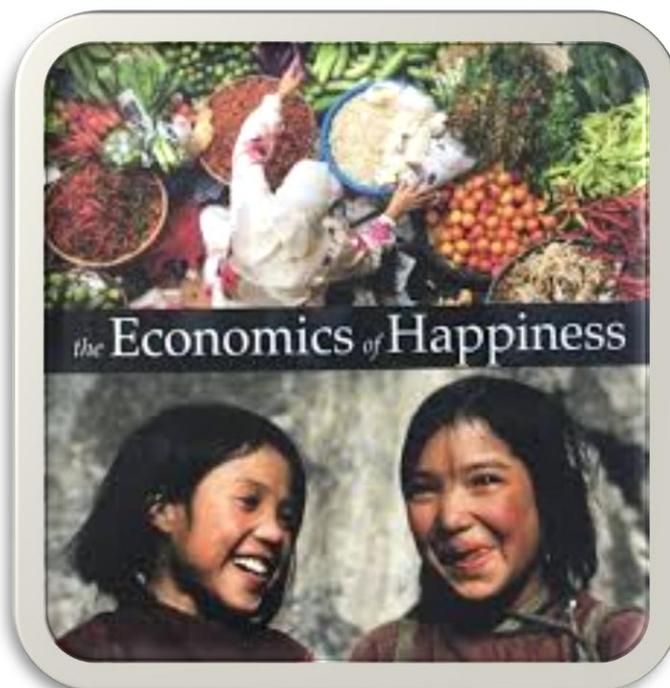
Finding out more with the emphasis on hope:

View the brilliant film *What If* by Franny Armstrong set in a parallel universe where they ARE tackling climate change. See it on You Tube.



Look out for screenings of two other films – both are being screened in the area (but probably before you read this so you will need to look out for future screenings or see if your local cinema or arts centre might do so. They are:

The Economics of Happiness. This award winning documentary spells out the social, spiritual, and ecological costs of today's global economy. Importantly, the film also highlights the many benefits of a shift towards the local and showcases some of the steps people are already taking worldwide. Featuring interviews with Vandana Shiva, Bill McKibben, David Korten, Samdhong Rinpoche, and other inspiring thinkers and activists.



2040:Regeneration - described as a hybrid documentary - is a story of hope looking at ways that we can reverse global warming and improve the lives of every living thing in the process.



Also look at the podcast **Outrage!+ Optimism** suggested by a member of the Earth Action Group – different conversations posted every week with people such as Christian Figueres (former UN chief) and Mark Carney (Bank of England chief) .

Developing a Somerset Wide Climate Emergency Strategy: Meeting with Michele Cusack, Director of Economic & Community Infrastructure Commissioning at Somerset County Council.

Three members of the Earth Action Group met with Michele and a colleague in October at her request. Her job description includes responsibility for producing a county-wide Climate Emergency Strategy in conjunction with the 4 District Councils and she was keen to meet Quakers in view of our commitment to sustainability issues. We shared useful information and although the development of a climate emergency strategy is only a part of her role she seemed keen to work on it. It appears that Exeter University will be acting as the County Council's consultants in helping to draw up their climate strategy. Michele wished to emphasise that the County Council needed to consult with the widest spectrum of the population - young and old - and were open to any ideas at all. The Council saw the consultation as a two-way process and definitely didn't wish to be seen as part of a 'nanny state' telling people what to do.

The County Council have proposed four drop-in events across Somerset. These events, the first of which had been scheduled for 16th November in Taunton, have been put back to the New Year because of the General Election. They are to be organised and facilitated by 'Somerset Climate Action'. These "People's Summits" will be events where ideas can be exchanged; Questions asked and answers given; talks arranged and workshops set up.

Michele is keen to engage with different groups and, as a result of our meeting, is planning for a meeting with faith groups (either one for the whole county or perhaps 2 area based) . She is in touch with Caroline Pomeroy at the Diocese of Bath and Wells (who has led on the Eco Church programme) with a view to setting a date early in 2020. We are sharing information with Friends in Mid Somerset Area Meeting so that all Quakers across the County Council area are involved.

Please continue monitoring your carbon footprint

Two of our meetings (Taunton and Spiceland) have gained Eco Church awards and can give advice to other meetings on how to apply. Whether you do or not, we urge that as part of Local Meetings' sustainability plans Meetings and individuals will monitor their carbon footprint on a regular basis. They need to go down year by year! We hear that Spiceland now have a monthly afterword specifically on environmental issues.

Please let the Earth Action Group know of any initiatives you and your meeting are taking and of how we might help with support or information.

John Ainsworth

Convenor of WSQAM Earth Action Group

Other regular active members are Fran Hicks from Taunton, Huw Morgan from Ilminster,

Pat Bell and Sarah Bovey from Spiceland. If you want to join us, let us know!!

EXTINCTION REBELLION

A Climate and Ecological Emergency

I am writing to share how I am feeling about what is happening in the world right now and in particular the existential crisis that I believe our species and the planet faces. It would be wonderful to engage in some rich dialogue and discussion on this most crucial of.

Being trained as a marine biologist and ecologist, and throughout my consequent career as an environmental educator, I have kept myself informed of the science behind human-induced global warming and over the years have even occasionally taught about climate change to students at colleges and field centres.

Yet despite all this I believe I have been lazily complicit.

By accident of birth, and through a good, loving upbringing, I have enjoyed the immense privileges and benefits of being a white, educated, middle-class male. I have been fortunate to have grown up in one of the most politically stable times, in one of the richest countries in the world. I have not had to suffer war and have always had food, shelter and access to education and health care. I have been free to express myself and my views without fear of persecution.

Even as a gay man, with all the shame and intolerance I hid from over many decades I have reaped the benefits of living in an increasingly progressive and socially liberal society that has come to accept and tolerate diversity like never before.

My complicity has been to allow all this privilege to blind me to what I have always known in my heart. Humans have been destroying our planet and each other. This destruction has gone into exponential over-drive in the last few decades and it is now highly likely too late to reverse much of the damage we have done.

As a child, I took in what I read and saw about human behaviour and greed. I concluded that it was crazy that we should blatantly be lauding an unsustainable way of life based on material consumption and infinite growth on a finite planet. However, as I moved into adulthood that clear, heart-felt insight became buried. It was lost beneath layers of academic knowledge. It was suffocated by the all too human demands of finding a place for myself both in terms of

financial and career security and in dealing with all my own personal inner stuff. Somehow, what I once knew about the planet deep in my heart slipped into a mere intellectual set of facts in my head. I subconsciously convinced myself that even while I was reading about and even teaching about humanity's destruction of the environment, somehow, somewhere we would come to our senses and sort it out... or even worse that someone else would sort it out for me. Even while I joined various environmental groups and good causes and did small things to make my own life greener, things were just too comfortable to have to think otherwise.

My politics are green and left leaning. But even this too was largely intellectual. I have always loved a good political debate. From the luxury of my immensely privileged position in the world, I have surrounded myself with like-minded friends with whom I could collectively bemoan the state of the world over a cup of coffee or glass of red wine. All the while I have enjoyed accumulating 'stuff' - even if modestly compared with some others: houses, new cars, luxury items, world travel experiences etc. The benefits of global capitalism were just too alluring even while I allegedly railed against them.

However, I have been trained as a scientist I do believe in science as a rational way of humans making sense of the Universe. The rest of this article rests on this premise.

Scientists have been working on theories around how our climate works for decades and slowly they have come to discover the role atmospheric gases have in controlling it. For over 40 years they have understood the importance of greenhouse gases (especially carbon dioxide) and how they ameliorate global temperature. They have learnt how unlocking stored carbon by burning fossil fuels is upsetting the climatic stability that Earth has been blessed with for many thousands of year - a stability that has allowed human civilisation to flourish and grow and in turn has led to the fossil-fuel driven industrial revolution of the last 200 years which is now perversely destroying that very stability. Scientists have also increased our understanding of the other impacts we are having on our environment from pollution to biodiversity decline and habitat destruction.

These same scientists, joined by environmental activists and campaigners and even some politicians, have been telling humanity throughout that forty-year period, with increasing scientific certainty, that we cannot continue to burn fossil fuels and destroy ecosystems as the basis of our economy. Like many of you, I heard these warnings, agreed with them and told others about them. Yet still I have enjoyed all the immense benefits of that same fossil-fuel driven economic growth and the material progress it brought with it. I was in a kind of personal denial - colluding with others as part of wider societal denial.

Last October, I read about the latest IPCC report in which climate scientists gave us the starkest warning yet of how critical the planetary situation was becoming. What we are now being told is that if we do not act quickly and radically, then 'business as usual' is likely to lead, within many of our lifetimes, to global temperatures exceeding the 1.5 degrees increase above pre-industrial levels that was original set as a target at which to cap any rises.

We are already 1 degree hotter and the increased climate instability that is happening now is real evidence of this: more droughts, more storms, more fires, faster ice melting. These events are directly impacting the lives of millions of people especially in less developed countries - not in some distant future but in the present.

1.5 degrees will be much worse - with predicted 70% coral bleaching, ice-free arctic summers, permafrost melting (releasing dangerous methane), frequent fatal heat waves and

millions of environmental refugees on the move to avoid the worst extremes. Sea level rise (of may be up to 1m by the end of the century) also seems inevitable – flooding island nations and inundating low lying cities and communities around the world.

This temperature rise is unlikely to be stopped even if we take drastic steps to reduce carbon emissions across the world now, but our current slow progress on even beginning to reach the reduction targets with we have set, means in fact 2 degrees is currently looking like the more likely outcome. This extra 0.5 degree will have massive impacts on all the above factors and will likely lead to societal breakdown, famine, disease and war. It will require the human species to adapt massively to just survive.

This increase could well happen by 2050 and doesn't even take into account positive feed-back loops in the system which could lead to rises of 3 degrees or 4 degrees or even higher - unprecedented temperature regimes not seen during the existence of humans on Earth.

All of this is what scientists are telling us – loud and clear. For me the IPCC report began to wake up my own environmental activism and many others too as we grappled with what to do about these frightening messages. Friends in the environmental networks I belonged to, began to talk about returning to taking more radical action – building on the activities of groups like Greenpeace. I heard about one new movement that had sprung up called Extinction Rebellion (XR) and heard they were planning some actions in London.

I then happened to find myself in the Capital on the same weekend in November as XR's first occupation of the five bridges. I went to Westminster Bridge and stood on the pavement watching and listening to the protestors. I was uncertain whether to join in, but as I listened to off-hand comments of other passers-by about “unwashed hippies” and “what's the point” etc., I made the decision to step over the pavement barrier and into the road to join them and then, as they say, the rest is history.

Back in Taunton I joined the local XR group and found myself increasingly involved in helping co-ordinate it. They organised an Intro Talk on XR at a local art centre, expecting may be 30 people to turn up. 200+ came along! We organised a climate emergency march in the town centre and again our predicted 50 attendees turned into over 500!

Then in April I spent eight days in London as part of the XR Easter Rebellion when it occupied five sites and during which over a thousand people were willingly arrested through non-violent civil disobedience. Although I chose not to be arrested myself, I can safely say that week was one of the most significant in my life to date. I was in awe of, and inspired by, the amazing and strong community of XR rebels of all ages and from all walks of life whose passion for change made me, at last, move the planetary crisis back from my head into my heart.

Some of you are already 'on side' and are also intimately involved in XR and other environmental movements, initiations and actions. Others of you are totally aware of the situation the planet is in; any doubts about the reality of climate and ecological breakdown long since put to rest. However, for many reasons you are yet to engage actively beyond making personal life-style choices where you can. Your lives are too full or complex or busy or your priorities have to, for personal reasons, lie elsewhere. Or maybe you just don't like joining groups! Life takes over – the looming crisis just seems too unreal. Cognitive dissonance between what I know is happening and my previous assumptions about how life is and will be battle constantly over my head and my heart.

Maybe some of you are also still hounded by uncertainty and confused by different views, especially on social media, that cast doubt on what is happening or that undermine movements like XR.

Still others of you are may be simply uncomfortable about using civil disobedience as a tool and believe it could end up being counter-productive – alienating ordinary people who we need to be winning over.

I honour all these views and positions. All I can do is share with you why I am now taking the stance I am. In so doing, I invite you to explore with me your own thoughts, feelings and reflections and your own concerns. At the very least I am asking that you honestly review how you might be better able to understand and support those of us who are taking what appears to be quite a radical approach to this most existential of threats to humanity.

For me the situation is becoming increasingly clear and simple.

The overwhelming majority of scientists are telling us that all the models and real-life evidence show us that humans, through their activities, are creating a climate and ecological emergency. They are telling us it might even be too late to stop much of the damage from being halted or reversed. This will take huge adaptations to how we live - to deal with the changed more extreme climate and denuded ecosystems on which we have always depended for survival. Most of this damage, although it started 100s of years ago with the Industrial Revolution, has happened in the last 30-40 years.

Slowly some politicians, policy makers, governments and businesses ARE realising how urgent it is and are beginning to make changes. This is important and encouraging, but throughout this period of technological innovation, international agreements and new legislation, still the % of global carbon emissions continues to rise and targets and deadlines are constantly missed. For me we are not changing fast enough.

I believe we now have to take radical action. Not just actions by small groups of environmental activists as we have done in the past. We have to wake up more ordinary people to the threat and we have to demand, as world citizens, that those with power (governments and businesses) change faster and even more radically in all aspects of how we live our lives and how we interact with the environment.

For decades, we have been organising marches, signing petitions, voting in elections, writing, doing art and making TV programmes to raise awareness. But all of this has simply not worked (fast enough). We must continue with all these approaches and ramp them up exponentially, just as we must keep inventing new technologies and pushing for local environmental initiatives and making personal lifestyle changes in what we consume and what we do. BUT, in my opinion, we must also use other tools which include non-violent disruptive civil dis-obedience. At the moment XR is the movement which is doing this and so I have joined them. If XR fails or falters I would join whatever movement(s) spring up in their place (as they will surely have to).

There are many examples in history where major social change has happened through non-violent civil disobedience – from the suffragette movement to civil rights. It works! We don't need everyone to employ these tactics or even at first to have everyone agreeing or supporting the change being fought for. Only a small percentage need to be active and then the majority will follow. Positive change can and does happen and can happen quickly, but often I believe it needs a disruptive push.

XR - for all the inevitable, negative press you may have heard about - is more than just about acts of civil disobedience. It also about being part of a strong, supportive community of people who are passionate for change. It has a great ethos of looking after those who get involved – emotionally and practically. It has values that are bounded by non-violence. It tries not to blame or shame – we are all in this together, have all been complicit and must all work together to solve the crises we are in and/or adapt to their consequences. It accepts anyone and everyone provided they adhere to its core principles. It does not claim to have all the solutions and in that sense is not political. It believes these must come from everyone working together through truly local and national radically democratic processes (in particular citizens' assemblies – google to find out more).

I am not naïve enough to think XR is perfect. My thoughts and feelings about it as a movement are constantly shifting and changing. It is one movement amongst many. It has its faults like all movements. It is struggling to broaden its appeal beyond the liberal educated middle classes. It will be criticised by people from other classes and ethnicities and even by other hardened environmental campaigners - let alone by the press. It will make mistakes. But right here and now I can see no other movements who have grabbed people's attention and offered people some real hope in this scariest of times. The best thing that could happen to XR for me is that it would dismantle itself because it is no longer needed, because peoples and governments and businesses around the world will have woken up to the emergency and will be pooling their vast human ingenuity and compassion to try together to avert the worst of the damage. We are a long way from this at the moment.

In a nutshell, I continue to be impressed by XRs ability to give people the agency and the personal power to make changes and to encourage self-organised actions. It is not for everyone, but it is part of a much wider movement for change springing up all over the country and across the world.

There are local XR groups all over the UK. Please investigate, read beyond the headlines, question everything and support this wider movement for change however you are able to - given your own personal circumstances. And if not XR then why not join and support other local environmental groups that has been plugging away for years in looking for practical solutions and will be continuing to do so long after XR has (hopefully) done its work.

I am both scared and hopeful, realistic and positive. For me this is it. The Time is Now!

Mark Ward

Please, email markward63@aol.com or even better chat in person to me or to anyone else about the climate and ecological emergency. We need to engage with our families, our employers, our work colleagues at every opportunity.

MFS REPORT AUTUMN 2019

First of all I want to thank West Somerset for the opportunity to serve on this committee which I find so stimulating and inspiring.

This weekend at Woodbrooke was no exception. Indeed, the extra time a residential afforded for a timely response to the reality of climate breakdown and environmental degradation and its underlying cycle of injustice, was crucial, and the feedback from some AMs very heartening.

The other areas for consideration were the court and prison register, highlighting the increase in activism of Friends in conflict with the state, especially around eco justice; the issue of assisted dying: a concern of two AMs; the usual stimulating report from Trustees on how they are supporting BYM to be a simple church governed by a simple charity; new developments at Woodbrooke; Quaker Stewardship committee which is in the process of setting up a review of its work and would like some feedback, in order to serve AMs better, and a short report from Anne Van Staverons about speaking out and Advocacy.

Climate Crisis matters

We started our deliberations with this quote from QF&P 23.08

'Two sins have my people committed; they have forsaken me, a spring of living water, and they have hewn themselves cisterns, cracked cisterns that can hold no water' (Jer 2:13)....Seventeenth-century Friends were good plumbers. In and out of season, in and out of jail, in and out of court, counting house and farmstead, our Quaker forebears challenged the conventions of the day – in politics, in commerce, in the law, in the established church, in social etiquette, in education, in attitudes to war, poverty and crime. In face of the sterile institutions of their day they found living answers about the ways in which men and women might go about their business of living together.'

Roger Wilson, 1976

This section started with a presentation by Oliver Robertson, the head of Worship and witness. He reminded us of the radical responses some Friends and others were taking in response to the crisis such as ditching careers to concentrate fully on climate issues, paid and unpaid; moving homes or countries amongst other measures. Taking the biblical reference of our community as the body of Christ, where all parts have a different and essential part to play, he listed possible roles under the headings of Eldership, Oversight, Living Faithfully, Right Ordering and Witness, and asked us how we might be called to act next?

Eldership was the example of writing as in the recent Swathmoor lecture (which is available now in book form, and I hope will soon be in all PM libraries!),

For *Oversight* he shared the example of Friends in Wales, 44 of whom met four years ago, at the Centre for Alternative Technology, to take inspiration for action back to their local meetings but were met with little interest, so the initiative died. However latterly they have been working on building community by turning the disadvantage of long distances between meetings into opportunities to travel together and in so doing building stronger relationships as well as travelling more lightly on the planet. Together they joined with others to stop the extension of the M4 motorway, and are continuing to work for eco justice, meeting again together in 2021.

Oliver noted that the community we need is the meeting that will enable us to challenge the norms. This doesn't need everyone to be involved but does need everyone's support for those that are.

Living faithfully was illustrated by the changes to lifestyle by a Friend in Central England. Do we consider our relationship with the earth every time we make a decision? It is a habit we need to cultivate.

Right Ordering focused on Stewardship of our resources and of the planet's. Some meetings are doing a lot: like Cotteridge meeting in Birmingham: which has achieved gold status as an eco-church, and is working with the Birmingham Council of Faiths to expand its influence. It has produced a very impressive report, as has central England Quakers. We must account for our carbon usage both as

meeting houses and collectively as Friends. and Eco church gives us a good framework to do this. Taunton has used Kingston and Wandsworth's carbon calculator.

Lastly *Witness* was demonstrated in accounts of QPSW's climate activism and advocacy work, overseen by Economics and Sustainability subcommittee, managed by Olivia Hanks and Chris Walker, (soon to be joined by two new coordinators). Together, with QPSW, they work to promote systemic change to avert climate breakdown, and build a more sustainable and just economic system. This involves working on a variety of projects that support Friend's witness and speaking out on their behalf, also working in partnership with other campaigners and activist groups and faiths.(e.g. Faith for the Climate Network) Details of this exciting work is on the website www.quaker.org.uk/climatejustice and in Quaker News. The most exciting news I noted, was that ES are hoping to raise funds to employ three eco justice workers across the country to work with meetings, local government and business: a very timely move given the emergency of the situation.

Following this address, we split into groups, with members from different AMs, to listen to ourselves, each other and the spirit in worship sharing, preparing for the session of discernment following. We met in the garden room surrounded by information different meetings had brought, about their eco witness. It was a very rich and valuable time together both in the groups and in the larger worship group. As noted in part of minute 19/10/05 *"We will be stronger if we fully commit together, as a whole community - not just a community of Quakers - to address the reality of climate breakdown and environmental degradation and its underlying cycle of injustice. Part of our discipline is the loving testing of concerns, and we must be active in doing this both personally and in our meetings so that we can support friends in their witness."*

Still on the subject of climate change I noted that Trustees have agreed "to contribute to the legal costs of a coalition of charities and others who are seeking a court declaration of the law relating to charity trustee duties in relation to responsible investments and public benefit..... in the hope that the law will be clarified to require charity trustees to take into account the impact of their investment on climate change"

Also from Trustees was a reminder that they are working towards a more decentralised organisation, to further meeting centered support. This has included working together with Woodbrooke to make the learning it offers more accessible to local meetings. Fewer Friends are taking courses there citing cost as one barrier. More Woodbrooke on the road and e-learning may be the way forward. Our commitment to ongoing learning is, for me, very precious.

We gave more time than was originally allocated to the discernment about what should be recorded on the court and prison register, with the escalating number of Friends being arrested for their witness to peace and the planet.

Our conclusion was

1. To enter the details of the matter into the permanent records to the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) acknowledging Friends witness and their willingness to face its consequences
 2. To remind ourselves that being a Quaker does not come without cost.
 3. To record the Society's prayerful upholding of Friends who are suffering for their faith, and
 4. To serve as a record of the actions of the State in restricting our freedom to worship and witness.
- and also a reminder that we have processes like clearness to help Friends test their concerns and leadings, and our loving duty to uphold them, even if their ways may not be ours.

The full papers and the minutes are on the website: I commend them to you.

Lastly, you might like to read Pip Harris' experience of being a Green Spirit at the recent EX rebellion in London <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/our-stories/experiencing-extinction-rebellion-s-autumn-uprising-as-a-green-spirit>

Fran Hicks

ECO CHURCH GOLD AND ECO CHURCH AT GREENBELT

From The Eco Church Newsletter

We are delighted to announce that the seventh Eco Church Gold award goes to **Cotteridge Quakers**. Importantly, this is the first Quaker meeting to achieve the gold standard. Our Church Relations Manager Helen Stephens says, 'Quakers have a wonderful ethos of seeking to live simply - and in truth, peace and equality - on this earth. There is much we can learn from them. Eco Church is a way of them measuring and celebrating what they are doing as well as giving them more ideas for next steps. Achieving a Gold award requires a significant commitment including wider community involvement. Cotteridge Quakers have embraced it wholeheartedly.' Huge congratulations to them!

Cotteridge Quakers reduced the carbon footprint of their all-electric building by an inspirational 98% over fifteen years, with its CO2 emissions dropping from 26.4 tons in 2014 to 0.6 tons in 2019.

A Rocha UK was pleased to be able to speak about Eco Church and Christian action on the environment at Greenbelt Festival, where our CEO Andy Atkins spoke with Caroline Pomeroy of sister charity **Climate Stewards** on 'Churches' action on climate change - any earthly use?' On our stand over the August Bank Holiday weekend, we heard lots of stories from those already registered as an Eco Church and had many more - both members of the congregation and those in church leadership - show their enthusiasm to know more and join the growing Eco Church network.

PURPLE FIELD PRODUCTIONS



Extracts from the PFP newsletter

Keeping mothers safe in Sierra Leone

The PFP supported Future View Film Group (FVFG) continues to go from strength to strength in Sierra Leone and they're soon to add to their outstanding portfolio of films with a new project, **Safe Motherhood**.

Sierra Leone has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world with 1,360 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. (By comparison, the UK rate is 3.25 per 100,000). The film, an original idea from the group, will be a drama based on true-life stories and FVFG will be scripting, filming, producing and editing the film themselves with backing and support from PFP. Helping the team with this exciting project will be PFP Trustee, Rick Elgood,



PFP has now recruited two UK-based midwives to help with the medical content of the film. Zoe Vowles and Emma Wayman are both based at St Thomas's Hospital in London, and have spent time as volunteers in Sierra Leone working alongside and training local midwives. In addition, Emma acted as a script advisor to Medical Aid Films in Somaliland, reviewing scripts for films focussing on antenatal care. 'There is a shortage

of skilled health workers, which was made worse by the Ebola outbreak, and lack of information also contributes to delays in seeking care,' says Zoe. 'I have been struck by the power of film to communicate information and encourage communities to make their own decisions.' Their involvement has already paid dividends: on Zoe's advice, FVFG Director Tyson Conteh visited the local District Medical Officer to check the government's policy on traditional birth attendants—and as a result of that meeting the Medical Officer has now offered his full support for the project.

Chosadzika hits the road in Malawi

After completing the dubbing of the film into Chichewa, the language of Malawi, we were very happy to get *Chosadzika* on the road and in front of audiences. An initial 12 pilot screenings saw combined audiences of over 2,800 people and PFP Trustee, Kevin Waldie, and Country Representative, Jonathan Mbuna, even managed a feature spread in the Sunday Papers.

Meetings with government departments and NGOs have had a universally positive response, with several organisations wanting to use the film for their own training and outreach programmes. More community screenings are planned and so *Chosadzika* and its message marches onwards!

Screenings of *Lisilojulikana* in Tanzania



With support from our friends at ADD International and disability rights organisation SHIVYAWATA, villagers in Pwani region, to the south-west of Dar es Salaam, have become the first Tanzanians to see 'Lisiljulikana' this summer.

The response was overwhelming; men, women and children, some with disabilities themselves, turned out in large crowds to see the film. At the end of one screening, a man told us about his three-year-old son with cerebral palsy. He wanted to take his son to a physiotherapist but his wife felt their son's condition was due to witchcraft. The screening team and SHIVYAWATA representatives spoke with the gentleman and introduced him to the local district ward officer who has been able to refer the family on for support, including physiotherapy.

Backpack cinema kits - how do they work?

One of the questions we are often asked is how we screen films in remote areas where electricity is unreliable (or non-existent), transportation is challenging and our teams very small. PFP Trustee, Roland Chant, explains how we started with solar and pedal-powered kits, how our kit has evolved over the years, and what solutions the future might hold.

Bringing films to communities which are marginalized and underprivileged is one of the key challenges facing PFP. To begin with, we used projectors and TV screens powered by generators or mains electricity supply. But petrol generators are heavy and can only be transported by car or truck—limiting our distribution. So the idea of 'mobile cinema' was born. Two people would carry a projector and tripod, screen, and simple sound system, travelling on foot or by public transport. All the kit would fit into a rucksack: backpack cinema! We faced several challenges: the kit has to be robust, no more than 16kgs in weight, and compact enough to fit into a backpack. It must be straightforward to operate and battery-powered, so we can screen in any location. And the price has to fit into our budget (as the kits have developed, though, we've found costs have come down). Initially, volunteers would cycle on a static dynamo bike to power the projector and sound system. Our next mobile kits were solar cinema kits, using batteries charged by mains electricity or solar panels so we can show the films anywhere, however 'off grid'. Our most recent projector and sound systems have built-in batteries, charged from the mains, but lasting two or three screenings. Even small mini-projectors now present incredibly clear pictures, but the quality of the sound has sometimes caused some anxiety. If the screening is taking place in a busy town or village centre, the film must compete with motorcycles, or a noisy game of football. Future mobile cinema kits could be computer-driven, stored on a smart phone to link wirelessly to a projector and sound system. This solution requires mains power, however; batteries just aren't powerful enough. But technology changes quickly nowadays—so watch this space.



WILLIAM BROWN

1861 – 1931



I first encountered William Brown, a resident of Wiveliscombe and a member of Wellington Meeting for almost forty years when I was researching records from World War I for the 'Somerset Remembers' project. William had written a letter to a young Quaker man from the area who had felt that he should volunteer for active service. I was struck by the compassionate attitude that he displayed to the young man, offering words of support, kindness and understanding while at the same time acknowledging the Quaker peace testimony. William continued to give care and support to the men who chose to serve and with the introduction of the Conscription Acts in 1916 he was unstinting in the help and encouragement to conscientious objectors, representing them at their tribunals, visiting them in prison in Exeter and Dartmoor and bringing their plight to the notice of others. He provided support to Quaker conscientious objectors as well as those of other faiths or none. Writing in the Friend in January 1918 William argued against conscientious objectors from the Society of Friends being given preferential treatment at military tribunals. In his prison visits he had communicated with agnostics, Unitarians, Quakers, Anglicans and others and found that these differences counted for very little among the prisoners, love of family and love of mankind were paramount.

William was born in Tynemouth, North Shields on 2nd September 1861, the son of Charles Brown and Emily Spence, both parents coming from families who had practiced Quakerism for several generations. Charles Brown, a corn miller had experienced great sorrow in his life, his first wife, Jane Spence who he had married in 1843 died at the time of their first and only child in 1845, at the age of only 22; further tragedy occurred in the following year when he lost all his property by the failure of a banking venture. Charles married Emily Spence at Wakefield in 1852 and during the next eleven years seven children were born to the marriage, five boys and two girls, with William being the second youngest. Sadly William was to lose his father before he was three years old, Charles dying of pleurisy in the early part of 1864, after which his widow, Emily and the children moved to York, where she had family. William and his brothers attended Bootham School where William, a keen sportsman distinguished himself as an oarsman, winning a number of trophies. The family went to the Quaker Meeting at York in the days when

evangelicalism held sway among many Friends; William's younger brother Edward recalled sitting at Meeting as the youngest boy facing a row of Quaker bonnets and broad brimmed hats, hearing a great deal about 'God's justice' and being 'washed in the blood' rather than what he later regarded as the Quaker message.

After William had left school he moved to Holloway in London with his family and trained as a Veterinary Surgeon. He was a lifelong campaigner for temperance and during his student days he organised a group of students to go out with Salvation Army workers to help to protect them from attacks that they were often subject to in the area. After graduating in 1884 he lived in Luton for four years where he was involved in adult schools and in the work of the Salvation Army. He moved to Wiveliscombe in 1887, setting up his veterinary practice in West Street. On 31st May 1888 William was married to Emily Stripp at the Congregational church at Looe in Cornwall; Emily was not at that time a member of the Society of Friends but was later accepted into membership in October 1889. The couple had two sons; Edgar, born in 1889 and William, born in 1891. In his early days at Wellington Meeting William would arrive in a pony and trap, often filled with young people, on occasions he would arrive late with mud splattered breeches because of an earlier call out to a farm, but he always attended when he could. From 1891 he organised a Quaker Meeting in Wiveliscombe, with twenty-five to thirty people attending during the first years although by 1907 Meetings were held irregularly and by 1909 this was no longer an 'allowed Meeting'.

He was an active member of the Local, Monthly and Quarterly Meeting, serving on a number of committees as well as undertaking clerking and eldership duties. He was appointed as a Minister of the Society in 1897, this being still a common practice among Friends at that time. By 1923 he had become uneasy about this position, expressing this in a letter to the Monthly Meeting that he believed that such a distinction in the membership was out of harmony with the principles of the Society of Friends and asked to be relieved of the office. He was not a man who was afraid to question the traditional practices of Friends and could be unorthodox in his views. Following his experiences in the First World War visiting and talking with conscientious objectors he felt that he was no longer able to insist on the doctrines in the Book of Discipline as being those felt by Friends at that time, he considered that it was injurious to have anything of the nature of a fixed creed and brought this forward with Wellington Friends who recorded a minute in accordance with these opinions in November 1918.

William Brown was an active member of the Wiveliscombe community. He founded an adult school in the local chapel, carrying out the work there single handedly for a number of years and reaching over one hundred men and women. He was also a member of the Urban District Council, a school manager and served as a Justice of the Peace. He was fearless in campaigning for the causes that were important to him even if these were unpopular in the town in which he lived. He was a vocal opponent of hunting, always displaying compassion for the suffering of animals. He campaigned nationally in the antivivisection cause, speaking on the subject all over the country. He viewed any cruel treatment of animals as an act of cowardice, with the strong taking advantage of the weak and betraying their trust. In his work as a veterinary surgeon he had come to understand that animals suffer as we do. He was a man of integrity and refused a lucrative offer of treating mules at a local depot near Wiveliscombe during the First World War as these animals would be bound for the front. The brewing industry was prevalent in Wiveliscombe at the time but this did not deter William from his campaign for temperance; in common with many at the time he believed that alcohol was the cause of a great deal of suffering. He formed a temperance band in the town which would play in the square on a Saturday evening, with William making rousing speeches; the brewers and publicans of the town, not to be outdone, formed a rival band who also played in the square, leading to some interesting scenes. During the Boer War he had his windows broken because of his talks in favour of a peaceful settlement. In spite of all this William was loved and respected in the town; when he eventually left in 1925 the people of Wiveliscombe held a meeting in the council chamber to say goodbye, presenting him with an Utrecht velvet easy chair and a handsome three tier revolving bookcase.

Social justice was another cause that was dear to William's heart and he was passionate in his desire to work for a fairer and more equal society. He was at one time a stalwart of the Liberal party but later found that the fundamentals and tenets of the Labour Party appealed to him; he subsequently became a member and threw himself wholeheartedly into the Labour movement, becoming the Chairman of the Taunton District of the Independent Labour Party. He was at one time invited to stand as the Labour candidate for Taunton but turned this down in order to focus on other things. He was also a member of

the Quaker Socialist Society. Reading a paper to the Quarterly Meeting in July 1903 he spoke of the suffering caused by the Boer War, criticising the riches that some with people had piled up on account of the war. He went on to compare the suffering caused by war to that caused by poverty:

'There is another method of warfare – more fearful and more deadly, more fiendish and goes on day after day, month after month, year after year, knows no mercy, feels no pity, recognises no law...instead of military there is business ability, devoid of morality – vested interest instead of bayonets...instead of wounded and slain men – paupers, tramps and outcasts living on the verge of destitution.'

William believed that wealth used for self came between the soul and God, and that wealth created by industry and thrift belonged to the community. One of his contemporaries described him as being a natural fighter, but with a tender and loving heart.

On leaving Wiveliscombe in 1925 William stayed for a short while in Welwyn Garden City where his younger son was living, and in 1926 moved to Tottenham to undertake work with the Home Service Committee at Tottenham Meeting, occupying living quarters actually within the Meeting House itself. His primary concern was with the young people of the district and with finding some sort of occupation for them away from the streets, public houses and cinemas. In spite of some concerns by the more conservative members of the Meeting William allowed dancing, smoking, billiards and cards at the Institute that he set up. A report given to the Monthly Meeting in 1928 gave an account of the extensive work that William had initiated and maintained since he had come to Tottenham; this included temperance lodges, adult schools, classes in carpentry, leather work and gymnastics, social societies and clubs, sports clubs, rambles and weekend camps. The weekend camps were particularly popular with the young people; these took place on ground at Chingford on the edge of Epping Forest, tents were placed on the hillside and the largest tent was furnished with a groundsheet and hassocks. William would arrive on a Sunday morning, weary from his five mile cycle ride from Tottenham. A meeting would be held with silence and a talk from William. One of those who attended the camps remembered his magnetism, how he spoke softly and directly with his arms resting on his knees and how the young people loved him.

William Brown died in his sleep from heart failure on 27th September 1931 at Digswell Park in Wellwyn Garden City, where he was attending a Young Friends Conference. Following a private cremation ceremony at Golders Green crematorium on 1st October a large gathering of Friends from all over the country attended his memorial service at Friends House, with many young people coming from Tottenham. An account of the memorial meeting in the Friend described how many spoke from their hearts of William's fearlessness and unconventionality, approachability, simplicity, humour and goodness to 'down and outs'.

Wellington Meeting remembered William in their report on 9th October 1931:

'There is a feeling of Friendly unity among members and attenders, and we thankfully recognise that this is largely due to the influence of William Brown, who for so many years came to the Meeting House whenever he could, and who brought so much of the spirit of love that it has remained as his legacy to us.'

Judith Blaker

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MENTAL HEALTH DAY
Taunton Meeting House October 5th 2019

Sanity, Spirituality and Psychiatry

The day was organised by Friends from the Mid, North and West Somerset Area Meetings. Alison Mitchell, the Mental Health Development Officer gave us welcome support both with the organisation and on the day itself. She is employed by the York Retreat Benevolent Fund with a link to the Meeting for Sufferings. So what did we do? In the morning we ran two work shops. Everyone attended both, with each topic having two different facilitators. This kept the numbers to a manageable 12 to 15 folk. One was asking 'How do we support people in our Quaker Meetings?' And the other addressed 'Mental Health in our wider community – a Quaker response?'

These were well received. My experience came from facilitating the question which asked how we can support people in our LMs. So I am unable to comment on the second topic. It was particularly interesting doing it twice with different people. In the first one as Friends introduced themselves, there was talk of a healing group; of long term depression; of a particular interest in supporting those suffering from schizophrenia and of caring for someone with a diagnosis of bi-polar disorder. The second group, by co-incidence, had the experience of suicide as their main concern.

So did we reach any helpful conclusions? Well – the most important thing we decided, is of course to listen and give a person time. If we fear someone may be suicidal it needs to be talked about openly. We acknowledged that we are not specialists and need to recognise when professional help is needed. Occasionally there is a therapist amongst us but they should be allowed to just be one of us and not taken advantage of! Fortunately, the attitude towards suicide has changed and is not as judgmental as it could be in the past. (One of the group had experienced this – it did not help.)

The message here is that there are no panaceas either in the professional world of psychiatry or in the Quaker world of friendship - but – compassion and interested listening goes a very long way.

This takes us to the afternoon session and our speaker, Dr Quinton Deeley, a psychiatrist and neurologist with a wide academic background in anthropology and theology as well. After the customary glitch with the technology we were treated to an impressive selection of slides and a very competent talk.

We covered the definitions of religion and spirituality and the dependence on the cultural context. Quinton clearly takes a lot of trouble to have an insight and understanding of his patient's cultural origins. The secular approach to living, which we see every day, means that religious belief becomes optional. Other ideas in our contemporary life which are significant include globalisation; individualism, rights; democracy/authoritarianism; scientific thought; naturalism and reductionism - (nothing but). Coming to psychiatry today it is moving towards a respect for the patient's autonomy: the importance of choice; the assumption of the patient's capacity where possible;

Respecting diversity and collaboration.

There are tensions between psychiatry and the religious/spiritual perspective. Reductionism tries to explain this approach away. Psychiatry is limited in its account of human life and focuses on 'illness'. Psychiatrists are often from a different social and cultural background to their patients. Patients tend to explore lots of possible explanations for their problems and their ideas may conflict with both the law and the 'duty of care'. Specific examples include brain injury; a background of evangelical belief and religious delusions. So how much of a patient's presentation is cultural?

Quinton talked a bit more about psychiatry and reductionism and touched on C.G.Jung's conviction that our duty in life should be towards integrating the different aspects of our personality, a process which he described as individuation: very different from reductionism.

There is an acceptance that a belief system in any particular group is found in all societies and in all ages, but what about the 'modern mind?' Where does wo/man differ from the animals? It's in the move away from stimulus bound learning and social signalling towards language and mentalising (apparently accompanied by the descent of the hyoid gland – look it up!) So where does religious thought as opposed to symbolic thought come from. Fables and storytelling may be counter intuitive but they are memorable and helpful in this connection.

The talk then turned to the relationship between psychosis and religious beliefs. Psychosis is characterised by delusions and hallucinations with religious ideas frequently being incorporated into the psychosis. Delusions were defined as incorrect inferences which are clung to despite strong evidence to the contrary. These experiences have momentous personal significance for the patient. It is possible that the dopamine production in the brain is abnormal. Aphoresia is the word applied to the patient seeing a connection and meaningfulness where no one else does. Nothing happens by chance. It is often linked with artistic and scientific creativity and the intensely personal feeling experienced here is also true of religion/spirituality.

Quinton is particularly interested and researching into what the difference is between those who have psychotic symptoms and carry on functioning well in everyday life compared with those who don't. Questions followed his talk – we could have had more of this and linked our morning sessions with the afternoon experience more effectively.

With an attendance of around sixty the overall feeling was of a very useful and lively day. There is an appetite for further days and the experience of working together with other Areas has been warmly welcomed.

Sheila Harvey

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Image used at <https://www.quaker.org.uk/blog/mental-health-in-meetings>