

# Minutes of a meeting of Quakers in Yorkshire held at Leeds on 21 January 2012

## Representatives

<u>Brighouse West Yorkshire</u>	Helen Brockley, Hilary Browne, Jean Elliott, Doreen Glover, Mike Glover, Carol Hayward, Trefor Howarth, Ian Johnson, Jill Mollitt, Anne Marshall, Jane Morris, George Race, Sylvia Sheard, Judy Shorney, Colin Spencer, Carol Swift.
<u>Central Yorkshire</u>	Roy Love, Arthur Pritchard.
<u>Craven and Keighley</u>	John Cope, Sharon Hodgson, Jette Howard, Chris Petrie, Evelyn Shire, Ken R Smith, Alison Tyas.
<u>Leeds</u>	Tosin Abbey-Philip, Christabelle Davey, Pam Dale, Eileen Fowler, Quentin Fowler, Lea Keeble, Brian Meara, Margaret Meara, Phil O'Hare, Betsy Randolph-Horn, David Robson, Susan Robson, Chris Whichelo, Barbara Witt.
<u>Pickering and Hull</u>	Susan Dickinson, Peter Grayley, Jill Hetherington, Mary Rowlands, Diana Sandy, Kate White.
<u>Sheffield and Balby</u>	Keith Burdett, Romayne Gayton, Margaret Lawson, Chris Love, Faith Rodger.
<u>York</u>	John Anderson, Karen Baker, Margaret Bryan, Hilary Evens, Nicholas Evens, John Gravely, Margaret Gravely, Lynn Harrison, Peter Jarman, Susan Hartshorne, Joyce Pickard, Ann Strauss, Kurt Strauss.

## Minute 1 Welcome

We have been warmly welcomed by David Robson to the Leeds Methodist Centre on behalf of Leeds Area Meeting.

## Minute 2 Testimony (Dennis Binns)

We have heard a testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of our Friend Dennis Binns. This testimony was accepted by York Area Meeting on 10 September 2011. We endorse the testimony and thank the Friends who prepared it.

## Minute 3 "Reaching Out" - Quaker Outreach in Yorkshire and Easter Settlement

Quentin Fowler spoke to us about Quaker Outreach in Yorkshire and asked for our help in addressing the future activities of Quaker Outreach in Yorkshire. He spoke of recent ventures such as Quaker Quest, Becoming Friends, and the use of the DVD "Meeting Voices", which are moving along successfully, but events for Enquirers have not been popular. We were reminded that Quakers in Yorkshire offers bursaries to support Quaker Quest. Easter Settlement is the one fixed point in the programme, and Quaker Outreach in

Yorkshire asks for guidance about the way forward with other initiatives.

Representatives of local meetings reported some of their outreach activities: Quaker Quest; Light Groups; Heritage Open Days; Peacemaking events; Quaker work in prisons; Turning the Tide; school liaisons; links with arts events - all of which have been very helpful for outreach. Opening meeting houses to outside events is also a form of outreach. Going out from our meetings seems to be taking the place of hosting events in our meetings, and this might be the way forward. Quaker Outreach in Yorkshire will be addressing the future in their February meeting, and it will be helpful if local meetings could forward their comments to Quentin Fowler ([quentin.fowler@virgin.net](mailto:quentin.fowler@virgin.net)).

Meg Forrest spoke about Easter Settlement. Last year Easter Settlement was shortened because of the school calendar, and this is going to be repeated this year, as it was found that the consequent reduction in cost was helpful. Eighteen children attended, and Meg Forrest emphasised the value of the continuing fellowship that results from these gatherings. Meetings should be aware of Friends who might need bursary support to attend. This year the topic will be *Simplicity: Living Simply in a Complex World* and the speaker will be Jennifer Kavanagh. Friends are encouraged to offer other activities for the Settlement. Every Friends Meeting House should by now have a poster. Posters and application forms can be found on the Quakers in Yorkshire website ([www.quakersinyorkshire.org.uk](http://www.quakersinyorkshire.org.uk)).

Quentin Fowler went on to tell us about the Leeds Area Meeting working party which is looking at the issue of death and assisted dying and how we think about our own mortality. Not all members of the working party are in agreement, but an Area Meeting workshop was held, and a one-day conference will be held here at Oxford Place on Saturday 12 May 2012.

#### **Minute 4      “Reaching Out” - Under 19 groups**

Hilary Evens introduced the Under-19's Coordinating Group report which represents Junior Holidays, Yorkshire Friends Holiday School and Easter Settlement. Link Group, which was laid down last year, has left a gap in provision, which is being looked at. As a result, in 2012 one of the two Barmoor weekends will be dedicated to 11-17-year-olds, and three of the four Quakers in Yorkshire days will offer activities for 7-17-year-olds.

Hilary Evens attended a Safeguarding course at Woodbrooke in November. It was good to meet other Safeguarding representatives, and Hilary found the course challenging and valuable. Work is ongoing to organize safeguarding more formally and to devise a reference framework for future activities.

Robert Keeble introduced the young people to tell us about "two fantastic Saturday events and three wonderful holidays" of Junior Holidays in 2011. These were vividly demonstrated in acting and mime, including a brilliant characterization of Robert Keeble's leadership. The Quaker testimony to equality was sorely tested. Dates for 2012 events are listed in Robert Keeble's report, which is at the end of the minutes. We thank everyone who brought these holidays so graphically to life for us.

Guy Milner introduced the report on the Yorkshire Friends Holiday School, which caters for 13-19-year-olds and uses 19-20-year-old helpers for a week in the summer at Queen Ethelburga's College near York. There were 105 in 2011, including 30 Irish Friends and one German Friend. There were speakers on confidence-building and link-forging; debates on topics such as Facebook; activities such as puzzle-solving and cooperation-building. It's the sense of community, where young people are able to share values which perhaps they cannot share in their everyday lives, that brings people back year after year. The Holiday School

concluded with an epistle, which gives a warm and vivid picture of the experience and is at the end of these minutes.

We thank Guy for an impressive and entertaining presentation, illustrated with lively slides.

### **Minute 5      Safeguarding Coordinators**

At the request of the Under 19s Coordinating Group we agree to appoint Safeguarding Coordinators to ensure support for vulnerable people who attend any of the activities organised by a Quakers in Yorkshire group. This means Junior Holidays, Holiday School, Yorkshire Link Group, Easter Settlement.

We appoint Hilary Evens (Harrogate) and Claire Whiteley (Huddersfield) to serve as Safeguarding Coordinators for the three year period 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2014.

### **Minute 6      Delegated authority to office holders**

Quakers in Yorkshire is a registered charity with the members of the Finance and Trusts Committee as trustees. Many of the activities of Quakers in Yorkshire are done by groups operating semi-autonomously. In order that they can function effectively and legally we agree to grant delegated authority to the following office holders:

Quakers in Yorkshire Charity	Clerk of F&TC, Treasurer, QiY trustees (AM nominated members of F&TC).
Rawdon Friends School Trust	Clerk of F&TC and Treasurer [appointed by the Governors who are now F&TC].
Quaker Outreach in Yorkshire	Clerk of QOY and Treasurer of QOY
Easter Settlement	Organiser and Treasurer of QOY.
Yorkshire Friends Holiday School	Joint Secretaries and Treasurer of YFHS.
Under 19s Coordinating Group	Convenor.
Yorkshire Junior Holidays	Convenor and Treasurer.
Yorkshire Link Group	Convenor.

### **Minute 7      Breckenbrough School Governors**

The board of governors of Breckenbrough School at their meeting on 19 October 2011 requested that we agree to appoint a minimum of eight Friends to be Governors, not seven as at present. This is so that the work can be shared around more people and the burden on each one is less. The hope is that for Friends the trusteeship may be a more attractive prospect. Our Nominations Committee has been consulted and is supportive.

We agree to appoint eight Governors to Breckenbrough School.

## **Minute 8      Appointments**

### Releases

Hilary Laurie (Huddersfield) was appointed to The Mount School Committee on 16/1/2010 but never able to take up post due to ill health. She is formally released.

Roy Love is released from appointed membership from Sheffield & Balby AM on Finance & Trusts Committee due to moving his membership to Central Yorkshire Area Meeting.

### From Finance & Trusts Committee

Roy Love to be appointed as a co-opted trustee from 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2014.

### From Sheffield and Balby Area Meeting

Chris Love (Sheffield Central) to serve a first term on Finance & Trusts Committee and as a Trustee from 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2014

Kathleen Wallace (Sheffield Central) to serve a second term on Quaker Outreach in Yorkshire from 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2014.

### From York Area Meeting

Peter Jarman to serve a second term on Finance & Trusts Committee and as a Trustee from 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2014.

### From Nominations Committee

Adrian Harding of Harrogate Meeting to serve a first term as a Governor for Breckenbrough from 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2015.

Christopher Hart of Settle Meeting to serve a first term on Yorkshire Junior Holidays from 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2014.

Heather Woolley of Scarborough Meeting to serve a first term on Yorkshire Junior Holidays from 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2014.

David Rubinstein of Friargate Meeting to serve a first term on Quakers in Yorkshire Arrangements Committee from 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2014.

Heather Goodall of Harrogate Meeting to serve a first term as our representative on the North Yorkshire Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education from 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2014.

These names being acceptable, our Friends are duly appointed to the posts indicated.

## **Minute 9      Testimony (Alastair Heron)**

We have heard parts of a testimony to the Grace of God as shown in the life of our Friend Alastair Heron. This testimony was accepted by Sheffield and Balby Area Meeting on 11 September 2011. We endorse the testimony and thank the Friends who prepared it.

## Minute 10 Future of Quakerism in Britain

We have been pleased to welcome Paul Parker who is Recording Clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting.

He started by quoting from paragraph 10.03 of *Quaker Faith & Practice* on belonging to a Quaker meeting.

He told us of his background as a teacher which was good preparation to be Recording Clerk where sensitive approaches to relationships are needed in both jobs. He joined Quakers at about age 13 from a non-Quaker background. He has had considerable experience of clerking. The job of Recording Clerk has many aspects but can be summarised as implementing the discernment of Yearly Meeting and Meeting for Sufferings, a good example being the 2011 Yearly Meeting Gathering concern for sustainability. One reason for applying to be Recording Clerk was that he sees potential for Quakerism to take-off in Britain. There are signs of a new vitalism and a sense of being ready to go “whoosh”.

By asking us, he showed how diverse a community we are currently. This diversity is mirrored in the wide range of work undertaken nationally by Britain Yearly Meeting, some of which supports and enhances local work. The centrally managed work needs the active involvement of Yorkshire Friends, perhaps by offering service on central committees, or by joining the Quaker Life Network. It also needs financial contributions as donations from Friends have been declining as a proportion of total income.

Paul Parker urged us to look for ways of satisfying the popular need for spiritual nourishment. Many people are seeking a faith which fulfills their longings and Quakerism can potentially satisfy them. 18,000 Friends is not enough. We should be aiming for at least ten times that number.

Being a Quaker is not easy and there are many challenges facing us:

- We should be confident in what we have found. We know that there is that of God in everyone and that we can make a difference - for example with the abolition of slavery.
- We should live up to the high standards of Quakerism but also accepting that we may fail and that humbly accepting our failures is part of God’s work.
- We should preserve and enhance meeting for worship. The quality of our meetings for worship for business is also important.
- We should ask at local meetings and area meetings whether we are putting faith into action in ways that appeal to people in modern society.
- We should proclaim our message and our witness by making ourselves more visible in today’s world.
- We should welcome newcomers into our meetings and into our Quaker communities. We need to be aware of those who do not come to Quakerism. Our attitudes may be putting off some groups in society.
- We should recognise the variety of gifts among us and value the potential in each and all of us.

We broke into groups and explored:

1. What have you heard that resonates with you and your Meeting?
2. How vibrant and welcoming is your Meeting?

3. Are there any of these challenges which your Meeting can rise to and what help might be needed?

We had lively discussions in the groups which began to explore the issues. We hope to continue the discussion in our meetings with the task of ensuring that we are ready to go “whoosh” and appeal to many more people. We should think positively as this is the way to influence the future.

We thank Paul Parker for introducing and facilitating this stimulating session on the future of Quakerism in Britain.

### **Minute 11    Young people**

We have heard of the activities for the 26 young people who have been with us today.

### **Concluding Minute**

We thank Leeds Friends for their hospitality today. We look forward to meeting again at The Mount School, York, on Saturday 28 April 2012, God willing.

David Olver  
Barbara Parry  
21 January 2012

## **Report from Junior Holidays for 2011**

*April saw us at Bootham School where we were joined by 19 children for our reunion and we told you about our day then. We had a tour of the school from one of our children who is also a student at Bootham, we played rounders on the school field then after a picnic lunch on the grass we walked to York Minster and all but two of the party climbed the many steps up to the top of the tower where we were treated to panoramic views of York. We were also treated to the sound of the Minster choir practicing as we explored the building, then on our return to Bootham we each enjoyed an ice cream as it was one of the hottest days of the year. We ended the day as we had begun - by joining with all the other friends at the Quakers in Yorkshire Gathering.*

*June saw us return to the ever popular Snowball Lodge near to York for a weekend for our older children aged over ten. Only 14 children attended the holiday and this included three boys from Ackworth school and 3 children who were over 12 who were our Junior Helpers. Without these six extra children, the holiday would not have been viable. We enjoyed what has almost become an obligatory 'night walk' and then on Saturday we went for a longer walk to explore the local area. Later in the afternoon a mini coach took us to the nearby Monks Cross waterworld where the children all had a 'splashing good time' In the evening we joined the cubs who had made a camp fire and we sang songs together into the night. On Sunday, the mini coach returned and took us all to Friargate Meeting House in York for Meeting for Worship which ended a very good weekend together.*

*Our August holiday for 9 to 12 year olds was attended by 19 children and was held at Hebden Hey Scout Hostel near Hebbden. The week followed YMG at Canturbury where the theme was sustainability - a theme that we took for our own week together. The first day saw us explore the wonderful countryside nearby on a long hot sunny walk where highlights included stepping stones, a well earned picnic, a waterfall and a field of pigs. In the evening Richard White, a local Quaker and Mayor of nearby Todmorden, told the children about some of the sustainability projects in the local area and let them look at the Mayoral Chains of Office which proved to be of great interest.*

*The next day was wet, but we kept to our plan - a walk down the valley to Hebbden. When we arrived we were all soaked through and enjoyed the welcome relief from the rain at the Sustainability Centre next to the canal. After devouring our packed lunch, we explored the centre and then enjoyed a canal trip in the afternoon. It never stopped raining and when it came to the return trip back to Hebden Hey, some of the smaller children were simply struggling with the conditions to such an extent that a decision was made to hire a taxi to take three smallest back. This was a decision taken by the organisers and it proved to be a highlight for the three youngsters in the taxi, but it is fair to say that most of the other children were deeply unhappy and there was much muttering about the Quaker testimony to equality.*

*The last day was also wet - too wet to do anything outside in the morning so we did craft activities which proved very popular. Then in the afternoon we set out to visit the nearby Gibson Mill. Unfortunately, the stepping stones were flooded so we had a longer than expected walk to the Mill. The Mill is a National Trust property - it is 'off grid' and generates its own electricity, heating and has composting toilets so there were lots to see and do. The final session at the mill was going back in time to the Edwardian Period where the children enjoyed dressing up and recreating the era when the Mill was an entertainment euphonium. Thankfully, the walk back was quicker as the stepping stones were no longer in flood, but the planned camp fire never happened as it was simply too wet!*

*Our annual holiday to Barmoor for the very youngest children aged 7 to 9 nearly didn't*

*happen this year as the numbers were very reduced and there were late cancellations. Even so, everyone had a very good time. Many of ten children were attending for the first time and quite young, so the 'night walk' was held on Saturday rather than Friday and this worked very well. The highlight of the weekend was visiting the Folk Museum at Hutton Le Hole. Having a smaller group at Barmoor actually worked out very well. This holiday was also noted by the absence of Robert - the first Junior Holiday that he has not attended in the last five years.*

*The final event of the year was an Activity Day in October. As with the Reunion in April, this coincided with the Quakers in Yorkshire Gathering which was held, on this occasion, at Ackworth School. Ten children were able to attend the activity day, after joining with friends for the opening worship, we were led by Susan Robson in a session of 'co-operative juggling'. We then explored the school and its labyrinth of corridors before enjoying a picnic on the lawn for what was to be one of the hottest days of the 'summer'. In the afternoon we had a fantastic time in the schools swimming pool and the day ended when we returned to the last session of the gathering.*

*In 2012 a number of changes are taking place, firstly, the September Barmoor Holiday is now for all young people of High School age ie a JH Link. The 'Barmoor' holiday for younger children has been moved to June so as not to over exhaust those attending so near to the start of the new school term. The Bradley Wood Activity Centre near Brighouse is our summer holiday destination for those aged 8 to 12. This is a new venue for us and it looks very exciting with lots of onsite activities. We are planning a day visit to Yorkshire Holiday School for the oldest children attending our summer holiday so that they can get a taste of what they can look forward to when they are teenagers! This year's programme will also include three day events which, as with today, will coincide with our Quakers in Yorkshire gatherings. We are planning to start the year with bowling and end it with a swimming at the Doncaster Dome Water World - JH is anything but .*

*You are never too old! Junior holidays are run by a dedicated team of volunteers who are all CRB checked. If you have good energy levels and are passionate about giving our children and young people a quality experience of living together as a community that is grounded in Quaker values and Quaker ways, then why not consider offering service as a volunteer. The 2012 holidays should be really exciting and if you want to get a glimpse of the venues then why not look at the QiY website which also has photos of our 2011 holidays and applications forms for 2012. Paper copies are also available from me today and being sent to local meetings.*

*Robert Keeble*

### ***Epistle from Yorkshire Friends Holiday School 2011***

*It is not easy to communicate what Holiday School is to our friends and family who have never been here to experience the magic. We can use words such as awesome, unique, special, friendly and amazing, but it is so much more than a few words can convey.*

*Our theme this week has been "communication" and it has been an excellent topic for exploring how we relate to each other and the importance of communication - within families, communities and internationally.*

*Guy [Milner] started us off with an interactive session, encouraging us to listen as well as talk, and setting the scene for thinking in depth about communication in our own lives. Bob Gibson - an experienced communicator and clerk of Britain Yearly Meeting Communications Committee - was an engaging speaker stimulating many ideas. His anecdotes explored how we communicate far more than just the message in the words we say as our emotions and enthusiasms are expressed too. He challenged us to go out and communicate about Holiday School to the wider world.*

*Debates gave us a chance to practice our own communication skills by presenting on a given topic and responding to counter arguments. We got our teeth into a range of weighty subjects from capital punishment to responsible use of facebook.*

*On Friday, David Newton - a former Holiday Schooler - gave us a fascinating insight into the vital importance of communications internationally. Having worked in Asia and Uganda, he has direct experience of supporting communities engaged in conflict resolution and reconciliation . He illustrated the complexities in international relations at governmental as well as local level.*

*Our ever popular game also picked up on the theme as nest group teams worked together on a series of puzzles and tasks to collect all the clues for a key phrase: "The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn't being said." It was an opportunity for everyone to participate.*

*For those who wanted to continue thought-provoking discussions beyond what was offered by the sessions, we had a new activity group this year: Room 42. Considering moral dilemmas and philosophical themes, the quality of the contributions to the group impressed those involved. We were all very appreciative of the opportunity to hear some of the work of the "Hear My Song" group, performed in our last night social, and enjoyed the trailer for the Extreme Video group. The newspaper group had its own unique way of communicating its humour and "extremely serious intellectually vigorous articles" too; a source of hilarity and entertainment as we queued for breaks and visited the fabulous Tuck Shop. All our activity groups (which also included Sport, Film Club and the HS Calendar) gave us a chance to develop friendships, express ourselves and turn our focus to something different.*

*The weather hasn't been great which resulted in a successfully tight timetable for potted sports. Everyone was kept moving through circus-themes activities and a lot of fun was had by all.*

*The community we build at Holiday School is such a key feature and you can tell how much people are starting to feel part of the community by the energy they put into the dances and games in our socials. We communicate our enjoyment as shy glances make way to smiles and laughter; communicating without need for words.*

*There are always moments of magic at some stage in the week - special music in Epilogue, singing in the social time before bed, belly laughs in nest groups, hugs in response to tears, hugs from secret friends, the creativity shown in preparations for last night celebrations. It is an intense week sharing the highs and the lows of our lives and developing the bonds of shared experience that can flourish into lifelong friendship.*

*Our morning Meetings for Worship and evening epilogues have given strength and spiritual depth to our week. Thinking about the day before, looking forward to the day ahead and being joyful in each other's company. Although hard to communicate the sense of Holiday School in words, a poem written by one of our student helpers and offered as ministry in Meeting captures an essential element:*

*Epilogue - by Emily Clark*

*There's a fragile moment each night  
When hands clasp and squeeze,  
And in that moment our hearts swell  
With this unique love and security  
That passes from hand to hand  
Felt by all as it is given by all.*

*In that circle the magic is most alive,  
With unfamiliar faces becoming friends,  
Words of comfort passing silently amongst us  
Giving assurance of the beauty and power  
That these days have given us each  
Strength which will remain within.*

*This circle extends beyond this place,  
To all those that have belonged to it  
And by all those that are yet to be held by it.  
So, after you and I are gone from here  
We must always remember that these hands  
Will continue to hold and share and love.*