

# CROYDON FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

## April 2018

Dear Friends - Our bumper Easter edition. Report of various conferences and lots of news. Enjoy! We'd love to hear back from you. *Gillian Turner and David Parlett*

Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast. Not with the old leaven nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.  
1 Corinthians 5.7

### Being Dead Already

Being dead already  
I had no need of the fear  
That had constricted me  
Like a winding shroud.  
I wondered at first  
Why I felt so free,  
Then realised I had forgotten it  
And left it behind in the grave.  
"Couldn't I go back and tell them  
They won't need their fear either?"  
I suggested.  
"That's just what I did"  
He said.

*Cecily Taylor*

### News of Friends

- Tima and John Beckett** don't get out much now but still keep in touch, especially with Rhiannon.
- Wilf Hayler** sends greetings from Bernhard Barron homes where he is experiencing his first winter and is being well-looked after.
- Veronica Double** is still not well enough to return to Sunday meetings, but sends her love to us all.
- Marjorie Evans** is still in good form, living in her own home, well looked after by carers she likes and with kind neighbours. She asked after her old friends by name and sends loving greetings to us all.
- Jade Flahive Gilbert** is coming to the end of her gamelan studies in Indonesia and expects to return home in July or August. She has played a great deal of music and seen many beautiful places, but has missed meeting for worship.
- Yvonne Kassim** is back home after another stay in hospital for quite painful treatment. She is hoping to get back to Meeting when the weather improves.
- Celia Snaith** has been in hospital She is home now and being supported by her son and daughter.
- Cecily Tayler's sons** are seeking a care home which meets her needs more fully. Meanwhile she sends her love through Paul, her elder son. Thank you Cecily for your beautiful poem.
- Mavis Parker** moved to Rutland many years ago and still keeps in touch with us through the newsletter. She is looking forward to spending Easter with her son and daughter and their families in East Sussex.
- Matt Alton** writes: I am going to be one of the Eva Koch Scholars at Woodbrooke this summer. I'll be conducting qualitative research on what young adult Friends think about the future of Quakerism, and asking them for ideas on what Local Meetings and individual Friends can do to support them to create that future.
- Margi Ashley** broke her wrist when walking her dog in the snow last month. To cheer herself while waiting for the splint to be removed she went to the theatre, and sent this report.

Last week I was with a group from Bromley U3A joining an almost full house at The Duke of York's Theatre in London for a matinee performance of *Mary Stuart*. We had seats in the front stalls, able to see and feel all the action!

Mary Stuart and Elizabeth I were played by either Juliet Stevenson or Lia Williams. The choice was made at the toss of a coin every performance, the spinning coin shown in a dish also on screen either side of the stage. (We saw Juliet Stevenson play the part.)

A gripping, tense, powerful play, tender in parts despite an almost blank stage with extremely clever lighting and music; the centre revolving stage added to the drama helping the play come to life. All set in modern dress, drab in colour seeming to add sombre tones to the story. The elaborate Elizabethan bow was used whenever coming or leaving the Queen's presence.

Mary being imprisoned on English soil wrote often to the Queen, wanting to prove her innocence also to meet her cousin . History tells us they never met. On stage they did! A wonderful "what-if " situation. Elizabeth being so strong and powerful could have almost whatever she liked. Mary Stuart had been stripped of all her belongings with one faithful nurse in attendance.

The politics, manoeuvres and plots surrounding the monarchy shows how corruption grew, also how distraught Elizabeth was at signing the death warrant for Mary Stuart, including how lonely she felt amongst all the grandeur.

The play lasted three hours: we left feeling exhausted and happy. A wonderful experience! The whole cast amazing. Would love to go again, seeing the coin flip the other way.

A lovely bit of history and I feel so blessed to have had the chance to go.

### Does it improve upon the silence?

In our fortnightly discussion group, ('*Gods, Words and Us*') the subject of compassionate listening came up. It was agreed that the gift of being listened to and really heard by another can be a very supportive and healing experience. Sometimes, however, when we listen it can be tempting to appear to be engaged whilst inwardly framing a reply. This is not true listening as our attention is focused elsewhere and the other person will feel it.

At certain times, in a fast, tiring and complex age we may feel rather dry and overstretched, leading to the development of aspects of "compassion -fatigue".

The conscious use of attentive, timed-managed listening skills and care with our choice of language when speaking may help us to be an upholding presence for others thereby nourishing ourselves at the same time. We allow ourselves to receive the speaker's thoughts instead of assessing and sifting through our own internal chatter.

Rachel Pinney's *Creative Listening* booklet is published by The Friends Fellowship for Healing and in it she examines the importance of sufficient levels of real listening in each area of life and gives tips on successful communication skills:

"The failure to listen runs through all levels of society and all activities. In discussion groups interruptions and repartee occur, causing disruption and irritation. The over-talker over-talks, the under-talker under-talks; both are frustrated and neither is fully heard". **Barbara Earl**

When a trout rising to a fly gets hooked on a line and finds himself unable to swim about freely, he begins with a fight which results in struggles and splashes and sometimes an escape. Often, of course, the situation is too tough for him. In the same way the human being struggles with his environment and with the hooks that catch him. Sometimes he masters his difficulties; sometimes they are too much for him. His struggles are all that the world sees and it naturally misunderstands them. It is hard for a free fish to understand what is happening to a hooked one. *Karl Menninger*

### Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, 2018

(to give it its full title) 4 - 7 May at Friends House

The particular focus this year is on knowing *Quaker Faith and Practice*, our book of discipline so that we can decide whether we should revise it. This edition was first published in 1994. We should read some passages on church government, about our structures and procedures, and from the anthology with its insights from a range of voices.

We are also asked to read *God, Words and Us*, a book of conversations about religious differences.

There is also an exciting Children's Programme which is always greatly enjoyed.

Please book online or by phone [www.quaker.org.uk/ym](http://www.quaker.org.uk/ym)

## The twenty-first century and the need for the bilingual (at least) Quaker

Go to Woodbrooke? No worries. I'll be there. Any stay, just a couple of days or, please, a lot longer, offers thinking time, friendly company and green, green surroundings. But going there is not hiding from the world. Just outside the gate is the ever-busy Bristol Road that goes up the hill and on to the centre of Birmingham.

Well, we're here for the seventh Non-theist conference. (Yes, there is talk during the weekend of changing the name of the network to something a little less forbidding. Perhaps even a little inviting). The conference is setting out to discuss 'Quakers in 2032: What will our society look like?' (At this point, am I the only one working out how old I'll be in 2032? It's going to be a close call). Complementing this discussion was an exploration of some relevant issues as set out in the new publication *God, Words and Us* (edited by Helen Rowlands, Quaker Books, November 2017 £8). (Both the Monday and mid-week study group are currently working through it).

But first, Linda Murgatroyd gave us some helpful facts and figures about religion in Britain. In 2015 49% of those surveyed had no religion. The figures showed declining Christian engagement (and a doubling of the Muslim population between the 2001 and 2011 census). Interestingly, Quaker numbers are holding up comparatively well. David Boulton gave a historical overview entitled 'Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: what our past tells us about our future'. Both these talks in their own way were exploring current and shifting paradigms.

One very interesting question asked what if our model of the future for Quakers is dependent on continuing liberal views in wider society? What might happen to the Quakers if the rise of populism and fascism continues? (One speaker asked us all if we read *The Guardian*? No prizes for guessing that the majority of the people in the room did). Harvey Gillman was also a speaker and, as ever, was in great form. He gave his listeners lots of things to think about...for example, being present in the moment, the invisible church and the passive/aggressive squabbles in meetings. It was the latter point that could be said to have emerged as another theme of the conference. Stories emerged in main sessions and in the smaller discussion groups about non-theists in meetings feeling intimidated (yes, that was the word used) by theists in meeting. Harvey had made the meaningful point that Quakers are also, if not more so, about the God between us than the God within.

Here's a personal reflection. Each of us makes our own choice about the language we use to define and conduct our relationship with God. Language can be subversive and inventive and also can evoke and carry on traditions and culture. Surely it is possible to say that one language, one discourse, be it non-theist or theist, should not predominate. (The nature of the traditions and culture that hold us together as a group is perhaps another discussion). After all, it could be that in some way each one will be found meaningful and understood by us all. In the twenty-first century, in the new globalised and multicultural context, surely it will be necessary and beneficial to understand and communicate in more than one language?

**Helen Johnson**

## Before and after thoughts

"Where will we be in 2032?", a question prompted by the prognostication that, at the present rate of membership loss, there would be only one Quaker left in Britain by that year, was the title of a recent Woodbrooke Conference organised by the Nontheist Friends Network (NFN). I can't say that we reached any answering prognostication, but it was fun trying. In my case it has given rise to an 'afterthought' prompted by Harvey Gillman's startling extension to it: "Will we [The Religious Society of Friends in Britain] still need to exist? Do we deserve to?"

My afterthought was an extension of my recent presentation to Croydon Friends entitled *Quakers Before Quakers*, in which I pointed out that the claim that "Quakerism began in 1652" needs questioning. It stands up only if by "Quakerism" you mean the starting point of our present Society. But all the elements of belief, vocabulary and testimony that we now regard as Quaker essentials had been current in various forms throughout Europe for several centuries before.

The 10th century Greek Orthodox saint Symeon "The Theologian" declared that the divine light "shines on us without evening, without change, without alteration, without form. It speaks, works, lives, gives life, and changes into light those whom it illuminates". The 12th-century Waldensians stoutly opposed oaths, war, and capital punishment, and declared "A church is not a building but a company of good persons... Everybody can preach, including laymen and women". "The real Church", said John Wyclif in the 14th, "is not the ecclesiastical system with inalienable magic rites

but the society of good persons holding their spiritual gifts from God, and rendering service appropriately.” The “invisible church”, described by Robert Barclay in 1684, was foreshadowed in the 16th by Sebastian Franck: “We possess an inborn capacity to hear the inward Word of God... [it is] the Word of God, the Lamp of the soul, the Inward Light...” Everyone must prove the authority of their religion and through this truth and insight enter spiritual unity with all who form the invisible Church. “The true Church is not a separate mass of people, not a particular sect to be pointed out with the finger, not confined to one time or one place; it is rather a spiritual and invisible body of all the members of Christ... The assembly and communion of all truly God-fearing, good-hearted, new-born persons in all the world, bound together by the Holy Spirit in the peace of God and the bonds of love...” Later, in Holland, the Collegiants held meetings for worship based on silence as we still do today.

My afterthought is this: just as there were “Quakers before Quakers”, albeit in all but name, so there will continue to be “Quakers after Quakers”, even if that charitable entity now known as “The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain” is no longer extant. So long as I believe in the future of humanity, so I will continue to believe in an “invisible church”, embracing those “silent assemblies of God’s people” that so convinced Robert Barclay.

*David Parlett*

### **Quaker Peace and Social Welfare Conference, 23-25 March 2018**

I attended the above conference from Friday 23 to Sunday 25 March at the Hayes Centre, near to Derby. I was sponsored by the South London Area, for which excellent opportunity I am most grateful.

There were about 75 Quaker attendees, of whom 70% women. Of these, about half were under 35, which gave the gathering vigour and outspokenness. I personally took this as a positive sign for the future of Quakerism.

The gathering was diverse in background and geographical area: a former police officer, three Anglican vicars (one divorced), someone still getting over combat in Afghanistan, a former secretary to an (unnamed) MP, an expert on nuclear warfare, and two experts (both women, one Muslim) on peace initiatives in Afghanistan, both having lived there (Urdu and Dari speakers). GLB representatives were also of course present. Non-white faces were however few, and I was not the only person to note this.

The Hayes centre was at the same time hosting conferences for prison visitors, those with hearing impairment, and amateur taxidermists with their specimen Capercaillie. Despite this, the arrangements, meetings, catering and transport all went smoothly.

The tone was set on the first day by an introductory address from Elsie Whittington, (<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/profiles/264576>) who is doing a doctorate on sex and gender at Sussex. She spoke eloquently about the need for both courage and vulnerability in personal relationships – being at times ‘trembling or steadfast’. She said we need to step into the ‘awkward spaces’ to witness ‘desire, communication, messiness and intimacy’. She advocated kindness as a form of ‘disruptive activism’.

The day was then broken into seminars to which one was allocated – though it was possible to flit from one to another. I was allocated to a group looking at Peace in East Africa. I was astounded to learn that Kenya has the largest number of Quakers in the world. However, unlike the UK, they are ‘programmed’. This means that they have pastors, churches and services with bible readings. The reason for this was the impact of US Quaker missionaries on Kenya, who were themselves responding to evangelical Christianity in the US. The end result was some schisms between the various branches.

In Burundi Quakers had however had some success in closing down illegal liquor sales, with the assistance of a policeman who had turned away from the bribery endemic in these situations. In Rwanda Quakers had managed to galvanise support for disempowered women and children, who might be ejected at any minute from their land-holdings.

There was also some useful analysis of what pillars support violence in society, and how these could be nullified. Following on from this we had a practical exercise on how we might organise lobbying of pension funds to stop them investing in fossil fuels – not so clear-cut as it might seem, given that we might be reducing our own pensions in the future, and throwing miners out of work...

After MfW, (with some Ministry sung out loud), Sunday’s format was rather similar, with eight seminars chosen by the attendees, which one could attend sequentially if one wished. I attended

several, including a session called 'Why Welfare for the Wealthy ?' This moved away into a useful but awkward discussion of whether Quakers are 'self-righteous and sanctimonious.' The feeling was that the white middle class nature of Meetings did not lend itself easily to diversity.

This was an excellent conference, well organised and open-ended, allowing for much attendee participation. I would heartily recommend attendance to anyone, who, like myself, is interested in peace or social initiatives, but does not yet know of the wide range of Quaker activities.

I myself hope to explore further Quaker involvement with the UN through QUNO (Quaker United Nations Office) – also mentioned at the Conference.

**John Adams**

### Croydon Festival of Peace

In the February newsletter I reported on a meeting that Gillian Turner and I attended about Croydon's first Festival of Peace, from 16 to 23 June. The organisers describe it as a 'cross-cultural, cross-arts, interfaith celebration of Peace. As the world remembers the centenary of the end of WWI, we can make a powerful, colourful, vibrant declaration of peace'.

The Festival is now fully funded, with a grant from the Arts Council of England and funding from Croydon Council's Cultural Partnership Fund. Children from Ecclesbourne Primary School, Thornton Heath, went to Buckingham Palace with the London Mozart Players to perform the new Anthem for Peace for the first time. This has been composed by Richard Brown, with lyrics by Thornton Heath poet Shaniqua Benjamin. For more information, visit the Festival web-site at: <https://festivalofpeacecroydon.wordpress.com/> or follow @FestivalofPeace on Facebook.

Croydon Meeting decided at our March business meeting that we should take part in the Festival. Among the ideas we were asked to follow up were: booking part of the 'Collateral Damage' exhibition (see separate article) to display in Croydon; having a stall at the Park Hill Park Festival of Peace and Wellbeing on 23 June, where we might have a group making white poppies and talking about our peace testimony; and having a peace meditation at the Meeting House.

Kay has been in touch with the Friends of Park Hill Park, who have been creating a Peace Garden there to mark the centenary of the end of WW1. Helen Buckland and friends from Park Hill Park have also kindly helped in our garden. We have now heard that stalls at the Festival will be only for those groups who have helped create the Peace Garden and we have been invited to plant a plot within the walled garden to represent Quakers. Kay is finding out more about what we would need to do.

Faiths Together in Croydon will be holding their annual interfaith bike ride and picnic on Sunday 24 June. This normally ends at Park Hill Park for the picnic, which will give participants the opportunity to look at the Peace Garden.

We have also been told that we would be welcome to have a stall at Wandle Park 'Summer of Love' on 16 June, for which we would need a table and gazebo. One of my friends hopes to be there with the banner from the former Croydon CND group and give out white poppies from the Peace Pledge Union and CND leaflets.

So many ideas! We will not be able to do everything but please set aside time in your diary during the week of 16 to 23 June to help and enjoy the Festival!

**Rhiannon Rees**

### Sanctuary Meetings

At Area Meeting in Sutton on 18 February Minute 8 recorded that we had agreed to become an Area Meeting Sanctuary Meeting, with Gillian Turner and Barbara Cairns acting as the link to the Sanctuary Everywhere central group at Friends House. Croydon Meeting is also a Sanctuary meeting, links Kitty McVey and Andy French, and so is Purley Meeting, links Eleri Pengelly and Jo Doherty (see her article below.)

This means that we are committed to linking with local initiatives to build a culture of welcome, with groups opposing racism, and to work with others to change the laws on destitution, detention, deportations and removals.

We should soon be sent a pack with: *A new Sanctuary Everywhere* booklet, *A power and Privilege* booklet and *A Right to Remain* toolkit.

We in Croydon are focusing at present on providing a welcoming space for two groups providing support for young unaccompanied teenage refugees: Pan Arts on Mondays and Refugee Youth aka Amazing People of the World, on Fridays.

Purley Meeting along with Area Meeting as a whole is supporting Jo Doherty's initiative for offering maternity support for refugee women.

### Supporting new and expectant mums seeking asylum – a new Concern

Since the group began at the end of November we have seen 55 women, all of whom have been living in the emergency accommodation for asylum seekers in Croydon. Well over half have attended the group multiple times, with 10 attending six times or more. We are very pleased with this, feeling that it suggests we are providing a safe welcome space for them, especially when set against the fact that they only have a 12 week period in the accommodation, and give birth during this time.

Over two thirds visited us for the first time antenatally, and were provided with hospital bags of the basic essentials for mums giving birth, which have been funded by South London Area Meeting and Purley Local Meeting. We have also recently received a generous grant from London Service Quaker Trust to enable us to expand our provision of these bags. Our first responses (on our anonymous feedback forms) indicate that all of the items are useful and comments included 'Everything was useful and I know other mothers would find the same'.....'Everything is very useful for me.....thanks!!!'.....'Maternity pads were very helpful, I couldn't sit down without them, it would be good to have more'

During the last few months, the group has received around 250 hours of direct volunteering at the drop-in, as well as many more indirect hours coordinating the project. I, along with two other NCT professionals, volunteer our skills, offering support and information around birth, feeding and early parenting. We have another three volunteers, including Sue Balmer from Streatham Meeting, who have trained as Parent Champions through Homestart and offer listening, support and signposting to the women. However, our numbers are increasing rapidly – in the last session, we had 23 women, eight new-born babies and eight older children, so we would really welcome any offers of volunteer support from across the area meeting.

Please watch this space for more ways that individuals or meetings can contribute to this concern. Or, if you want to find out more about it, drop me an email at [jrdoherty98@gmail.com](mailto:jrdoherty98@gmail.com).

**Jo Doherty**

### Nothing More and Nothing Less

Many Friends have been involved in discussion groups, bible study and courses offered for reflection and analysis over the Christian season of Lent.

In the Western Christian tradition (Eastern Christians having different religious calendars), last Sunday was Palm Sunday which brings Lent to a close and Holy Week begins. I attended the last session of a local Lenten church discussion on the theme of "Nothing More and Nothing Less" on Sunday 25th. Using the booklet of that title written by Virginia Moffatt and following the themes raised by the film *I Daniel Blake*, we explored some very challenging topics together.

The course began by a large group of about 18 watching the film together in church. Clearly, many were very shocked by the film which graphically describes the deteriorating situation of two people who are prevented from accessing money they are entitled to from Social Security, for very different reasons. Over the past six weeks we have discussed the themes of systems of oppression, staying human, compassion, fighting back or giving in and the suffering servant. Each Lent session ended with some comments from the participants before prayers and a short bible reading. By the time the group ended, we were down to seven participants. I'm not surprised in the drop in numbers. Exploring this topic has been very personally challenging, in particular because the church which hosted the Lenten course is the home for our town food bank and the volunteers who run it were on the course. Because of the accounts they gave of the desperation of the people they meet there was no escaping the reality of the situation so many people find themselves in. What was particularly valuable about the course was the fact that participants could ask the questions they hesitate to voice such as "how do you know you are not being taken for a ride as gullible church people by people who just want free food?" was one. The process of how destitute people are assessed by our local Citizens Advice Bureau before they are given a slip to take to the food bank was described. We were also able to discuss the need not to make assumptions about people's financial situation by such things as the quality of their mobile phone (it might be their only means of contact as vulnerable people rarely have landlines nowadays). We were able to discuss

the trap of borrowing money at high interest rates in which so many people get caught. The benefits system was explained and information distributed about how to help people who are applying for Universal Credit – the introduction of which locally has resulted in many people getting no payments for 6 weeks – thus needing the foodbank. We were able to discuss the humiliation of having no money and needing help along with the invisibility of rural poverty. The politics behind all this were never hidden and politicians were always prayed for.

Sitting with these good people who are trying to understand more, and discussing these profound issues framed by the film from the secular world and religious Bible readings for guidance has been very moving. We were expressing our compassion and frustration together. Doing this work with committed Christians has been an opportunity for spiritual growth. Whilst I don't pray as they do and Easter doesn't have the meaning for me as for them, we have so many other things in common. We all share an outrage against the injustice of inequality we see meted out every day. I was able to describe how among Quakers we have talked about, and acted on poverty. We encouraged my new friends to write up the stories of the foodbank for the Trussell Trust website of which our foodbank is a part. We agreed that we will meet again in May to discuss further action steps together. Most importantly, we are now friends and we have a shared understanding among us about the challenges ahead.

***Marigold Bentley Quaker Central Committee for International Relations.***

### **The 'Collateral Damage' Project**

In November 2018 it will be 100 years since the end of World War One (WW1). This war killed about 17 million people and injured over 20 million others around the world. Sadly this was not a 'war to end all wars'. World War two saw around 60 million deaths, and there have been at least another 100 million in the rest of the century. These days over 90% of the victims of war are civilians.

Red poppies have been sold by the Royal British Legion since 1921 to help military veterans. In 1933 the Co-operative Women's Guild began making white poppies, to show they wanted to work for peace. This idea was taken up by the Peace Pledge Union (PPU), which has worked for international peace since 1934. White poppies commemorate all the victims of war on all sides, including civilians and those who have suffered for resisting war. The PPU is currently mounting an education campaign around their significance and is supporting the 'Collateral Damage' project.

This originated in Yearly Meeting Gathering 2017 and 'Art the Arms Fair', an art exhibition which took place at the time of the DSEI arms fair last September. A smaller travelling exhibition has been touring since then and is currently at Kingston Meeting House until 28 April.

We are invited to take part in the 'Collateral Damage' project by crafting a beautiful, textile poppy to honour a particular victim of war and thinking about how we can build a more peaceful future together. Poppies needn't be completely white: each is unique, as is each person, and may have a message attached, commemorating someone. We have a few leaflets with suggestions for sewn, knitted, crocheted or felted poppies and there are more on the project Facebook page.

The idea is to use the crafted poppies to talk about peace. Ideas include: wearing one as a brooch; joining with others to make a wreath or display; or sending a beautiful poppy with a little note to a friend or someone we think can make a difference, such as our MP. Campaign against Arms Trade provides information about the arms trade at [caat.org.uk](http://caat.org.uk).

This seems to fit well with the Croydon Festival of Peace. We do not have enough people or suitable space at the Meeting House to put on the whole exhibition, but one panel might be available to display at the Meeting House or a more public area, such as the Clocktower. We might invite people to come to the Meeting House or an outdoor event to make poppies together and talk about what peace means to us. Craft activities may offer opportunities for meeting people across religious and other divides.

For more information visit [www.ppu.org.uk/collateral-damage](http://www.ppu.org.uk/collateral-damage) or see @white poppies on Facebook.

### **Queries and advices**

The penultimate queries of Advices and Queries 7 Are you open to new light, from whatever source it may come? Do you approach new ideas with discernment?

When the newspapers were producing their obituaries of Stephen Hawking I came across the following advices by him quoted in *The Guardian* 15 March 2018.

“Remember to look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Try to make sense of what you see and wonder about what makes the universe exist. Be curious, and however difficult life may seem there is always something you can do and succeed at. It matters that you don't give up.”

It has a Quakerly ring about it, don't you think? It could almost be added to *Advices and queries*..

**Godfrey Turner**

### Meeting House News

In our quest to obtain a grant to install heating in the Adult School Hall we have commissioned a feasibility study. Peter Tayler our site manager is kept busy showing prospective builders around in preparation for the work which will follow the Quinquennial Survey – what an upheaval that will be, as it will include the kitchen, the roof and, at last! - The Adult School Hall drains!

### Just a thought...

From *Waiting for the last bus*, the new book by Richard Holloway, former bishop of Edinburgh: 'Many of us are prone to binary simplification in moral and theological debate ... You have to be one thing or the other. There's nothing in between. You certainly can't be both at the same time. This is not only a boring look at the world; it is also inaccurate. Nothing is that simple ... The human experience of religion is various and complex ... there are as many hues on the religious spectrum as there are on gender and sexuality. We should acknowledge that and come to a more generous and comprehensive understanding of this important aspect of human experience ...' **Laurie Andrews**

### Leith Hill Walk

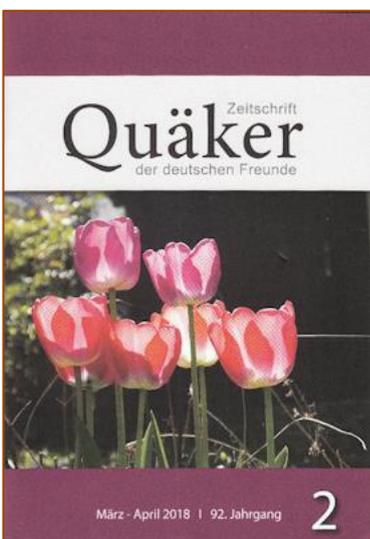
The annual annual Leith Hill Walk will take place on Sunday 22 April. You are invited to join Capel Meeting of Worship at 11:00 and bring a lunch to eat afterwards. This year Martin Hunka will entertain us with the story of 'A Surrey Memory', the extraordinary Quaker recollection which launched the annual Leith Hill walk. Chris Kohler will then lead the walk leaving the Meeting House at around 1:20pm. You can walk there and back - about 8 miles - or get a lift back from Leith Hill if you prefer. Tea and cakes will be waiting at Capel for your return. Who will be first back in 2018? in 2018?

**Frances Touch**

### Collected in March

- 4** South London Area Meeting **£52**
- 11** Croydon Local Meeting **£42.75**
- 18** Young Friends General meeting **£23**
- 25** Campaign against the Arms Trade **£58**

**Collecting in April: 1** St Christopher's Hospice, **8** Quaker Work at Home and Abroad, **15** South London Area Meeting, **22** Quaker Concern for Animals, **29** Quaker UN Office, Geneva



*P.S. The interview with David Parlett reported in The Friend in December has been translated into German and published in the latest edition of Die Quäker, the bi-monthly journal of Bad Pyrmont Yearly Meeting. Other articles in this 92-page issue include Thoughts on the second commandment, Coming to worship, and On conflict amongst Quakers. Please ask David if you would like to borrow it.*

**The deadline for the May edition is Sunday April 29 2018**  
**Please give, send or email contributions (no longer than 500 words, please) to Gillian Turner Tel 020 8688 9659**  
**email [gillianturner033@gmail.com](mailto:gillianturner033@gmail.com)**