

a Quiet Word

The Leeds Quaker Newsletter: March/April 2011, No 2.



Leeds Central Friends marking Fairtrade Fortnight (650 fair-trade bananas given out in under two hours!)

*Love the Earth
And she will love you in return
Touch your soul
And heal your heart
Nurture you
As she embraces your care
For of all life*

*We are a part
Dependant on each other
Like a new born child
Lying safe and warm
In its mothers arms*

*We must learn to listen
And learn to give
As nature heals
And nature calms
Our broken humanity
Born of creations song
Then let nature's beauty
Sing on and on*

'Love the Earth', by Paul Martin Emery

Leeds Area Meeting: 12th March at Carlton Hill



We enjoyed an afternoon of Worship, discussion, reflection and a well earned tea just after 4:30pm. Copies of the full AM minutes and attachments are available on request from LM clerks or AM co-clerks (robertkeeble@hotmail.com) Many appointment minutes were taken 'on draft' which meant that less time was needed for minute writing and more time allocated to worship and discussion. This move proved popular and will be extended at our future meetings. We agreed to invite YFGM – Young Friends General Meeting to lead a workshop looking at other ways of improving our business meetings.

We welcomed Lorne Wolf of Carlton Hill into membership and enjoyed a 'tour' of our **Leeds Quaker Website**, details of which were projected onto the wall with the help of Carlton Hill new data projector and WIFI system. We 'visited' each meeting in turn and discovered that some meetings have made greater use of the website than others. We discussed how we might make better use of the website, our AM newsletter 'The Quiet Word' and e-mail communication.

Yearly Meeting Gathering, July 30th – August 6th We agreed that Donald Purves of Roundhay and Maggie Rice of Carlton Hill will represent us and also agreed to provide Ben Wood and Rhiannon Grant with bursary help to enable them to attend YMG. All who are planning to attend YMG need to be aware that central bursary help is also available, that **train travel for Leeds Quakers** is to be co-ordinated by Gavin Burnell of Carlton Hill and that applications must be returned by 31/03/11! Carlton Hill is planning a preparation session at 12:15pm on 19/06/11 followed by a shared vegetarian lunch – all friends are invited

We enjoyed listening to the '**Sate of Meeting Reports**' from Adel, Roundhay and Rawdon meetings. It was good to hear that so much is happening in our Local Meetings. We also received a report from our **Trustees** who informed us that the main project currently under consideration is the front wall at Rawdon, which is now leaning and needs appropriate remediation. Trustees are also giving thought to how to **find new tenants for Carlton Hill when Age Concern leave** at the end of the year. If anyone has any contacts with organisations that may be interested in using what is a fantastic resource at Carlton Hill, please inform Audry Acton or Juliet

Prager. We also received a report of report of the **NFPB** meeting held on 26/02/11. Meetings are reminded that speakers are available to talk about the Ecumenical Accompaniment programme and that Living Witness Workshops are also available to meetings

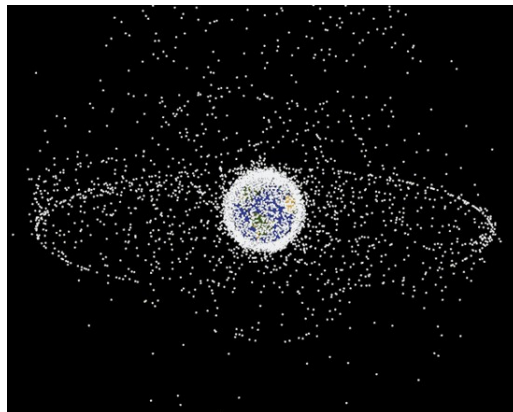
The Leeds Quaker Criminal Justice Group is organising a Conference on **Risk and the Criminal Justice System**, to take place in Leeds on 14th May 2011. Please promote this conference and book in good time. Una Parker also told us about a Circles of Support Conference she had attended.

Finally, the annual AM outing will be to the Bradford Peace Museum and include a visit to Bradford Quaker Meeting House!

Robert Keeble

(co-clerk) robertkeeble@hotmail.com

Quaker Nontheists



A few months ago, our Friend Miriam Yagud, decided that it would be a good idea to have a meeting for Quaker Nontheists and those interested in exploring nontheism at Woodbrooke. She enlisted the help of David Boulton, author of *The Trouble with God, Real Like the Daisies or Real Like I Love You, Who on Earth was Jesus?* and many another must-read volume. He also compiled *Godless for God's Sake*, an anthology of personal stories from people who are content to call themselves nontheist.

What is a 'Quaker nontheist'? Well, like much else in Quakerism it defies easy definition, and indeed many nontheists would prefer another name. What's wrong with 'atheist'? Many people think it sounds too militantly hostile to religion. 'Naturalist' might do, as denoting someone who believes that all existence is contained within a single 'natural' order – that is, there is nothing 'supernatural', except that 'naturalist' has another meaning. Some like 'humanist' or 'religious humanist', but some don't like the implication that the 'human' is the only mode of being that we need be concerned with. Myself I favour 'naturian', an archaic word

defined by the *OED* as synonymous with 'naturalist' at a time when both words could mean one who rejects the notion of a supernatural world or being: why not resurrect the old word and keep it for this sense? Nobody seems inclined to take me up on this. So we are stuck with 'nontheist' having won some measure of acceptance and no very strong opposition.

The event ran from Friday evening to Sunday lunchtime. We began on Friday evening with a chance to share our experiences of Quakerism and of personal faith. Because we were so many we divided into groups of six for this and subsequent discussions, so that everyone had a chance to speak. In our next session we talked about diversity in our meetings and how we can nurture it. Is 'diversity' of religious belief a concern of your meeting? Do we care what other friends believe? Next we heard from David of the long history of what may be called 'nontheism' among Quakers – beginning with the seventeenth-century radical Gerrard Winstanley, who, before George Fox began preaching, advocated that the much-abused concept of God should be replaced with that of 'Reason' – by which he meant something much less chilly and abstract than the common denotation of the word today. Winstanley joined Fox and the Quakers in his latter days. (See Boulton's *Gerrard Winstanley and the Republic of Heaven*.)

Next we got to talk about what happens in meeting – and how non-theists understand concepts like 'the will of God', 'the leadings of the 'spirit', the 'Light Within.' A surprising amount of variety here, but it seems nontheists value the silence of Meeting for Worship and the discipline of the Quaker business method quite as much as anybody else. And we ended by appointing a Steering Group, as a stage, perhaps, in becoming a properly constituted group within the Religious Society of Friends. Plans are already underway to book a weekend for 80 nontheists (or interested enquirers at Woodbrooke next year. Don't miss this event! And here is the Minute and Epistle from the meeting. Don't say we don't do things in Right Ordering!

Joanna Dales

WHAT NEXT FOR QUAKER NONTHEISM? Minute and Epistle of the gathering of nontheist Friends at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, Feb 18-20 2011

"There are nontheist Friends... Friends who might be called agnostics, atheists, sceptics, but would nevertheless describe themselves as reverent seekers." So began the report of the first formal workshop for nontheist Friends, held in New York State in 1976. A generation later, nontheist Friends are a widely accepted strand in the multi-coloured fabric of theologically diverse liberal Quakerism in both the United States and Britain.

Forty Friends from all over Britain, identifying as nontheists or wishing to explore nontheist perspectives with an open mind, met in Woodbrooke this weekend. Some for whom Woodbrooke rooms were not available were accommodated in the

adjacent Fircroft College but another forty would-be participants were unable to attend because of lack of available beds.

In plenary sessions and small groups, through discussion, worship and creative listening, we explored varieties of Quaker nontheism – atheist, humanist, agnostic, non-supernaturalist. We listened to the words of Friends through the ages, from the 17th to the 21st century, who declared for free thought and free expression within the Society of Friends, thereby laying the foundations on which an authentic nontheist understanding could be built within our beloved Quaker community.

In an informal session with Friends on other Woodbrooke conferences (“Becoming Friends” and “Churches Together”) many of us were able to share our different experiences of what it means to be Quakers today. We shared epilogues and joined together in meeting for worship. In our business session we addressed the question in the title of our gathering: “What next for Quaker nontheism?” Acknowledging that the burden of organising and financing our work has tended to fall on isolated individuals, we explored ways in which we might share responsibilities in a more formally organised way. Recognising the concern among some Friends that open differences can lead to division, we looked to find a way forward that would celebrate and enhance the Society’s diversity of religious opinion. After careful thought and collective discernment we resolved to form a steering group to prepare proposals for a Nontheist Friends Group within BYM. Six names were brought forward and accepted. The steering group was asked to liaise with Woodbrooks on possible dates for a further gathering next year to continue our work and explorations.

Finally, we noted the recent statement on the Britain Yearly meeting website, as follows:

“There is a great diversity within the Quakers on conceptions of God, and we use different kinds of language to describe religious experience. Some Quakers have a conception of God which is similar to that of orthodox Christians, and would use similar language. Others are happy to use God-centred language, but would conceive of God in very different terms to the traditional Christian trinity. Some describe themselves as agnostics or humanists or non-theists, and describe their experience in ways that avoid the use of the word God entirely.”

We expressed our appreciation of this public recognition of our diversity. We are all in the Quaker mainstream now. This Minute was agreed by the 40 participants at the gathering and signed on their behalf by the newly-appointed steering group:

Anne Bancroft

David Boulton (convenor)

Maureen Tinsley (treasurer)

Tim Regan

Michael Yates

Miriam Yagud

February 20th, 2011

Contact: dboultondent@btinternet.com

Making Scripture 'Speak to our Condition': The Art of Jewish Midrash



The Story of Abraham and Isaac Revisited And the Tale of Moses' Marvellous Cat

Midrash is an ancient Rabbinical technique for interpreting Torah which attempts to discover the spiritual significance of a particular scriptural text, or word by reaching into the nuances of language and shades of meaning until one arrives at a new, altogether deeper interpretation which may respond to a contemporary issue or question. Often this new understanding takes the form of a story, in which the things which are only implied by the written text are explicitly elaborated upon in accordance with the needs or queries of the reader. In this way each individual can come into a personal relationship with the text as a living and responsive source of inspiration. Below are two offerings from Friends.

Genesis 22: 1-18
Marion McNaughton

Kindly provided by Otley Friends

And with heavy heart Abraham went to his wife Sarah and said, "God has told me to take our son Isaac, whom we love, and sacrifice him as a burnt offering".
And Sarah said, "A shrewd move. This God is no fool. This is Her way of testing you. What did you say to Her?"

And Abraham replied, "I said nothing. I want God to know I will obey Him without question. I will do as He commands".

And Sarah threw up her hands in despair and said,

"Abraham, you are a bone-headed fool. What kind of a God do you think you are dealing with? What kind of a God would want you to kill your own son to prove how religious you are? Don't be so stupid! She's trying to teach you something: that you must challenge even the highest authority on questions of right and wrong. Argue with her, wrestle with Her!"

But Sarah's words smacked to Abraham of blasphemy, and he went into the mountains with his son Isaac.

And Sarah said to God, "Sister, you are playing with fire. He is too stupid to understand what you are up to. He won't listen to me and he won't challenge you: if you don't stop him, he will kill our precious son. Is that what you want? And God said, "Sarah, they have a long journey to the mountains; I'm hoping one of them will see sense".

And Sarah said, "Like father, like son. You'll have to send an angel".

And it came to pass as, Sarah foretold, and the angel of the Lord spoke to Abraham the first time and told him not to kill his son. And Abraham sacrificed a ram as a burnt offering. And the angel of the Lord spoke to Abraham a second time and told him his offspring would be as numerous as stars in the heavens and would possess the gates of their enemies.

And the angel of the Lord spoke to Abraham a third time and said, "Because you were ready to kill your own son in the name of your God you will be known as a great patriarch and millions will follow your example. And they will believe that He is indeed a jealous and a demanding God, and they will willingly sacrifice their sons in His name and to His glory .And there will be bloodshed and slaughter in all the corners of the earth".

And Abraham returned to his wife Sarah and said, "God is well pleased with me for I am to be a mighty patriarch".

And Sarah said nothing. But she took the garments of Abraham and Isaac that were stained with the blood of the ram, and she carried them to the river to be washed.

And the river ran red with blood of generations to come, and Sarah wept bitterly.

And God came to Sarah at the water's edge and said,

"My sister Sarah, do not weep. You were right, it will take time. Meanwhile hold firm to what you know of me and speak it boldly. I am as you know me to be. Many generations will pass and a new understanding will come to the children of Abraham, but before then I shall be misheard and misrepresented except by a few. You must keep my truth alive".

And Sarah dried her eyes and said, "As if I didn't have enough to do".

Exodus 2:2 Ben Wood

This Midrash is dedicated with love to Lorne who has recently come into Membership

As a cat owner (or put more accurately, round the clock staff member!) I was recently saddened to learn that the domestic cat appears no-where in the Bible; either the Hebrew Scriptures or the Christian Second Testament. I felt this needed to be corrected and decided to embark on a bit of imaginative story-telling to fill in this

unsatisfactory gap. I will begin my Midrash by considering the Hebrew word תִּבָּה (tebah) as found in the Book of Exodus.

The Torah tells us that when Moses' mother was unable to hide him any longer from the Egyptians she 'got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch; then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile' [Exodus 2:2]. Interestingly 'basket' תִּבָּה (*tebah*) in Hebrew is understood elsewhere in the Torah to mean 'Ark', as in the vessel which carried Noah in the midst of the flood [Genesis 6:14]. By this double-meaning the Torah indicates that Moses was intended to be a *second Noah*. Just as God had made a covenant with Noah to renew the earth after the deluge, so Moses was to make another covenant of renewal, whereby God would equip the Hebrews to be a blessing for all 'the nations' of the world [Malachi 3:12]. Yet, in bringing about this second covenant God in no-way intended to end the old one, since it applied, not simply to Noah and his children, but to 'all creatures' of 'flesh' from generation to generation [Genesis 9:11]. As a witness to this continuing faithfulness God came to the aid of a mother-cat who was no-longer able to feed all her kittens because the land was at that time barren of many creatures to eat.



Phil welcoming Lorne into Membership

The mother, in her shrunken desperation, thought of dropping the weakest of her children into the Nile so she could save the rest. But God heard her despair and sent an angel to lead her to the river-bank near where Moses' basket lay tangled in reeds. The angel told her:

"I am come from the Holy One dear mother. Your child will not die but live. See those reeds? Between them sits a basket. In this basket is a future servant of the Most-High, who will be saved from death so that he might sanctify the human nations of the world. Yet in doing this magnificent thing, the Almighty wishes to break no obligation with other beings, which She also loves and cherishes. As a sign of fidelity to you and to the earth, the Eternal-One promises that your son will be saved, as

She saved your ancestors at the time of the deluge. The basket shall become an Ark, a saving vessel and a sign of God's love”.

In the cat's heart bubbled up an unspeakable joy and in deep praise she tilted her head towards the sun in prayer. With the softness of light snow the angel took the kitten under its mighty wings and placed him in the basket next to a sleeping baby Moses. The angel then returned to the mother and said, “Don't weep mother. Believe with a faithful heart that your son shall be well. He will be found with this child and afterward his days will be long and plentiful in the service of the one who made him. He will witness many great sights and his heart will please God. Go now and be glad for what is to come”.

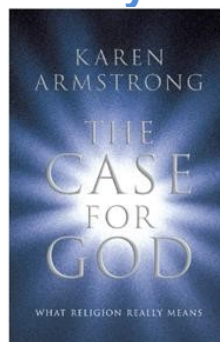
The Torah continues the story in this way; ‘Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, and her maidens walked beside the river; she saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to fetch it. When she opened it she saw the child; and lo, the babe was crying. She took pity on him and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children" [Exodus 2:3-6- 0].

At first she did not see the kitten for its coat was as black as the pitch which lined the basket. Yet as one of the maidens took the basket in her arms she heard a soft purr from within and exclaimed to her mistress that she had discovered a secret passenger and the Pharaoh's daughter declared, “Surely this is a sign from the great Bast [an Egyptian cat goddess] this the child is blessed. Let them both be dedicated to her on this day in her temple”.

And so the boy and the cat were brought with all the finery of the Egyptian state was brought to the temple of the goddess and cleansed by sweet incense and song. And when sunset came Moses and the kitten came to the palace and dwelt there for many years in contentment. Such was God's joy at the sight of their companionship that She opened vault which contained the turning of years and gifted the little cat with long-life in which he saw the wonders of God's power at work in Her people Israel. And only did the little cat depart this world when the Hebrew people were gone from the land of Egypt.

Book Review

The Case for God by Karen Armstrong



Vintage Books 2009

The recent (but not the most recent) book from Karen Armstrong's pen is one of her most ambitious. As one of my book group Ffriends says, “It's rich like fruitcake”. It is

not an easy read but one well worth the effort. As the author herself has said, “It’s about God, of course it is hard”. In her Introduction to the book, she deplores the fact that in our world today, we think that religion should be easy, not something which we have to wrestle with. Starting with the God of prehistory in the Lascaux caves where early hunters were trained by ritual to take the necessary life of an animal in the sacred manner and going right through to Quantum Physics, Karen Armstrong takes a broad sweep of philosophy and theology to illuminate our thinking and our searching after the divine. Does she come up with a definitive answer? No—she leaves that to the modern atheist, who is surely as fundamentalist in his own way, as the very religious fundamentalists they fight. The first half of the book is essentially about the God of Unknowing. In this the development of philosophy in Hellenic thought played no small part. Greek religion was essentially symbolic and full of stories. Freed up from a demanding religion like Judaism the philosophers could begin to look outside the box of our shared perceptions and question the very nature of reality itself. How could we know that the way we analyze the cosmos bears any relationship to reality?,” asked Parmenides. I personally found this the most fascinating chapter. Like some of us I had worried about making an application for membership of the Society of Friends because of my incipient agnosticism – how could I say that I believed in a God when I didn’t know what I meant by God? Apparently, Epicurus asked the same question several hundred years before Jesus was born!

The Chapter headed *Faith* picks up the Judaic tradition, which had always been one of interpretation of scripture in the events of the present. So Jews who became the early Christians, interpreted scripture to foretell the coming of Jesus and following Jesus’ teaching, that we should learn to care for each other –to love the lord our God with all our heart and soul and our neighbour as ourselves. A tenet also found in many Eastern religions. In fact, Confucius was first, to name it, the golden rule. This placing of the Christian and Judaic traditions in their worldwide context, is one of the most worthwhile things about this book. One of the points she makes is that no one brought up in the Jewish tradition would dream of reading the Bible as a literal history of the Jewish people. Spiritual history it is but the literal truth, no. This becomes a kind of leitmotif throughout the book – *her emphasis on interpretation*. Readers who have also read the History of God will recognize this distinction between Logos and mythos and the danger of confusing the two. Part 2 of the book deals with the modern God who is altogether a very different being. Less of the mystical and more of a personality – a God who could be known, to whom prayers could be directed, the Father God of the New Testament stories. Karen Armstrong traces the development of concepts about God, through the writings of theologians, philosophers and scientists. The latter becoming more and more distinctive as fifteenth and sixteenth centuries progressed.

In tracing the development of thought through science and philosophy, Karen Armstrong illustrates the development of Christian History and goes some way towards explaining the decline in Church attendance, and the increasing popularity of the evangelical churches and the brash superficial atheism of Dawkins et al. As scientific methodology was applied (or rather misapplied) to theology, then theology was found wanting and the church went on the defensive as Copernicus and Galileo found to their cost. She expands on this theme in the chapter on *Atheism*. In the nineteenth century as the wish for certainty and exactitude grew, so religion felt

attacked, socially by Marx with his contention that “religion was the opiate of the masses and by Darwin’s theory of evolution . In opposition to these ideas the church faced by uncertainty became more dogmatic, especially the evangelical churches of North America. The notion that Science and Religion were opposed began to hold sway.

Karen Armstrong’s thesis is that the tenets of doctrine were never meant to be used in this way. Mythos always needs interpretation. The Christian mythos is about right living and spiritual development and can be applied to the present day. It emphatically is not about how the world was created. Readers may take issue with this view point but Karen Armstrong powerfully support her argument, which helps her navigate the last 500 years of cutting edge thought, in a way that I found extremely helpful. From Newton who besides being a brilliant physicist, was also, a sincere Christian with a clear belief in God as the Creator of the world. Atheism as we currently define it, was unknown. People living in Europe and the Americas shared a metaphysical reference, which was essentially Christian. As a result tensions developed as Science appeared to contradict the Bible. Nowhere was this more obvious than in the furor over the Origin of Species, much to the distress of its author, who was himself a religious man. European and American wealth was founded on technology. Measured against the accuracy of scientific and technologic methodology, theology was found wanting. This could be a helpful way of looking at the phenomena of a lack interest in what most of the churches are offering today.

Friends may be most interested in the chapters marked Unknowing and Silence in which, Karen Armstrong posits that the pre-fifteenth century theologians were agnostic; philosophers and theologians alike were less interested in the literal sense of the Bible and primarily experienced God through the mystery of the Mass. Attributes of God could not be encased in words, but in silence, mystery could flourish. When evidence and proof became all important during the Enlightenment, the churches began to lose ground. By the twentieth century, a different way of thinking was ushered in by physicists such as Plank In quantum mechanics, at a very microscopic level even apparently concrete objects are fuzzy at the edges and have fluctuating existence, which seems to challenge even our view of reality. As Armstrong writes;

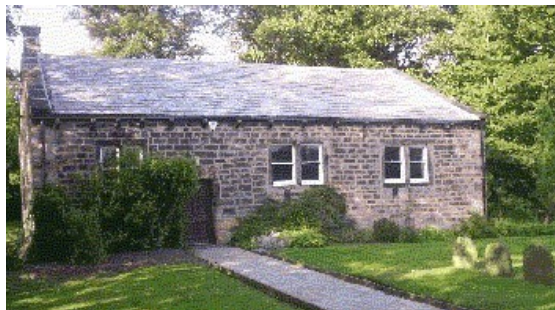
“In the bewildering universe of quantum mechanics, three dimensional space and uni-dimensional space time had become relative aspects of four dimension space time continuum”.

As Karen Armstrong comments that it would seem that “unknowing was built into the human condition. In thinking about God, we are faced with something truly ineffable. Einstein put it simply: “the most beautiful emotion that we can experience is the mystical.” I think that a Quaker Meeting for Worship is just the place to allow for the Mystery of unknowing. This may account for the number of agnostics within our Meetings and a reluctance among some to use the “God” word. What I find exciting about Karen Armstrong’s work is the honouring both of mysticism and also a rich appreciation of the Christian tradition; the passionate cry for tolerance of those with other beliefs and the emphasis on the golden rule. Religion is not easy, the spiritual life demands discipline and hard work.

Anna Needham

Quaker Quest Review

Emma Roberts



We are delighted to report another wonderful Quaker Quest in October 2010 at Rawdon. This was again an opportunity for building links between local meetings and we received welcome help and support from Friends across Leeds. Here are some of the messages received about the enjoyable and peaceful evenings we shared.

Dear Emma,

Just a quick word to tell you how good 26/10 was. An atmosphere of real peace and friendship, and sincerity which we were all drawn into.

Dear Emma,

Just wanted to tell you how much we loved the two evenings of Quaker Quest that we were able to attend. We are very privileged to have them offered regularly in the Leeds Area. Our thanks to you and the committee.

Hi Emma, Thank you so much for inviting me last night. I really enjoyed it and learned much from the talks and my discussion with Chrissie. Can't believe how quickly the time went. Hope to see you at a meeting in the next few weeks.

Review

* The new topic that we tried for the first time 'How Quakers make decisions and deal with conflict in our community' (a friendly introduction to our business method) went down very well. We worked hard to avoid the topic being too dry and the three speakers rose to the challenge and gave very interesting ministry which made the topic relevant to our everyday lives. We wondered whether we may ask new attenders to speak more often in future quests as these speakers were able to offer a different perspective more closely relevant to Questers.

* Our other experiment was to produce 5,000 leaflets and seek to deliver them to adjoining suburbs rather than just Rawdon. Though we were daunted by the scale of this challenge, our four evenings in Sept were well attended and cheerful occasions which ended in the pub and enabled us to deliver 4,500 leaflets across Guiseley, Horsforth and Yeadon as well as in Rawdon itself. Our main concern was to raise

awareness of Quakers and to deliver a short message about our character and style of worship whether or not people attended the Quest. Again we record our thanks to Richard Honey for his design efforts- the quality and impact of the leaflets was mentioned by Questers time and again.

* As ever, the email list proved the most useful in contacting interested people as well as new attenders of our meeting. However, 3 people came to their first contact with Quakers directly as a result of the leaflet. Overall, we had around 12 Questers join us for one or more of the sessions and the support of about 2 dozen Friends. Our posters, website and new Facebook page also played their part. Following feedback from one Quester, we agreed to add a request form to our website so that people could add their email address to our QQ mailing list.

Next step: the optimum timing of Quests are once each year during June. Local Meetings are encouraged to consider if they would like to host the next Quests for 2011 and 2012. The Quest Team would also be happy to help organise one-off evening Quests should LM's prefer this.

Suffering....



During the last weekend of January, Carlton Hill Meeting hosted a residential weekend meeting of 'Trident Ploughshares'. Twenty five people from all over the country ate, met and slept at the meeting house including a number of Quakers including Sylvia Boyes from Keighley. Later in the week I received a thank you card from Sylvia, but this did not prepare me for the shock of seeing Sylvia on the Look North TV news on 3rd February, this detailed how Sylvia had just been sentenced to 14 days in New Hall Prison for refusing to pay fines arising from a series of peaceful protests against Trident in and around Faslane Naval Base in Scotland during the summer of 2009. I have got to know Sylvia quite well because I often see her at Meeting for Sufferings, which is a national gathering of Quakers, held at Friends House in London. I am one of the two Leeds Area representatives and during the opening Meeting for Worship of the most recent meeting on 4th February, Friends from all over the country were able to hold Sylvia 'in the light'. The name of Meeting for Suffering originates from a time when Quakers were persecuted in the C17 and many were imprisoned. Meeting for Sufferings was established to support these friends and to record their suffering, thankfully, the suffering of imprisoned Quakers is not something that we often need to record now but as a testimony to those early Quakers who endured much hardship, we have continued to keep the name to this day.

The main item that we considered at 'Sufferings' was responding to Quakers in the West Bank who have called on us to consider supporting a policy of boycott, disinvestment and sanctions, especially of products from the illegal settlements in the occupied territories. These were some of the comments given during our prayerful consideration of this very troubled part of the world:

We need to develop a spiritual faith based response, to speak truth to power. We must act with love for all and not allow the horrors of the holocaust to be followed by an ever worsening horror in the occupied territories. What will bring about reconciliation? We must seek to change hearts and minds. The work we are already doing in facilitating ecumenical accompaniers is so important and valued - but we are challenged to do even more, especially in supporting the Israeli peace movement. We need to challenge the political systems that deny the equality of all Israelis and Palestinians.

The matter is now for us to consider and take forward at our Local and Area meetings. My day at Friends House was very full and eventful. The main highlight for me was being able to rummage through surplus books from the Quaker Peace and Social Witness department (QPSW). These books were no longer required as QPSW is in the process of moving into new offices at Friends House following a reorganisation aimed at providing more letting space. In my rummaging I stumbled across a real gem titled 'Quaker Biographies - Hubert W. Peet' in the front was a slip which read, **with Greetings from Edith Peet**, my great grandmother whom I remember well from my childhood. I have never seen this book before but the excitement of its discovery was tinged with sadness - Hubert (my great grandfather) died young following many years of imprisonment and harsh treatment by the authorities for refusing to fight in the First World War. His story is very interesting and I hope to share it with others in the future.

Robert Keeble

Risk & the Criminal Justice System Conference



14TH MAY 2011

9:30am – 4:30pm

Oxford Place Centre, Leeds LS1 3AX

Cost £15 (£10 unwaged)

Chaired By Dr. Fiona Macaulay

Speakers include:

Sir David Latham, Chair of the Parole Board

Dr. Bob Johnson, Former Prison Psychiatrist

Eric Allison, Guardian Prison Correspondent

Lindis Percy, Peace Campaigner

Marian Partington of the Forgiveness Project

**Followed by a selection of workshops on a range of related topics such as
Mental Health, Addiction, Rehabilitation, Women and Children**

For further details please contact PHIL O'HARE on 0113 2564072 philomena.ohare

**@btinternet.com or find us on Facebook (search for Risk & the Criminal Justice System in
Events)**
