

the Quiet Word, April 2020, Leeds Area Quaker Meeting



- | | | |
|----|--|-----------------|
| 2 | Diary | |
| 5 | Good Green News Stories | Bridget Robson |
| 6 | Climate change, postgrowth and Wellbeing | Milena Büchs |
| 8 | <i>The Peace Of Wild Things</i> , Wendell Berry | Clare Wigzell |
| 9 | Letters to the editor | |
| 10 | <i>Angel</i> | Tracey Martin |
| 11 | Spiritual practice in daily life | Andy Watson |
| 13 | <i>Three haiku for spring</i> | Rose Anderson |
| 14 | Seeing with Art : The Hay Wain as an interior path | Patrick Herring |

Leeds Area Quaker Meetings for worship:

Adel Friends Meeting House, New Adel Lane, Leeds LS16 6AZ
0113 267 6293, Sundays 10.45am

Carlton Hill Central Leeds Friends Meeting House, 188 Woodhouse Lane, Leeds LS2 9DX ,
0113 242 2208, Sundays 10.45am, Thursdays 6.00pm

Gildersome Friends Meeting House, 75 Street Lane, Gildersome, Leeds LS27 7HX ,
0113 285 2466, Sundays 10.45am

Ilkley Friends Meeting House, Queens Road, Ilkley, Leeds LS29 9QJ
01943 600 806 and 01943 601 181, Sundays 10.30am

Leeds University Claire Chapel, Emmanuel Centre,
University of Leeds, Tuesdays 1.05pm

Otley Friends Meeting, in The Robing Room,
The Court House, Courthouse Street,
Otley, 01943 463 351, dmr@cooptel.net
1st and 3rd Sundays of the month 10.45am

Rawdon Friends Meeting House, Quakers Lane, Rawdon,
Leeds LS19 6HU, 0113 250 4904, Sundays 10.45am

Roundhay Friends Meeting House, 136 Street Lane,
Leeds LS8 2BW, 0113 293 3684, Sundays 10.45am



Diary

We could not have imagined one month ago how our life would be changed beyond our comprehension or recognition by the end of March. The diary items this month are very different. Sadly, advance events listed previously are all cancelled if they weren't online.

All Meeting Houses are now closed until further notice but there are lots of online events.

If you have not yet participated in online worship, it is quite easy to install Zoom here:

<https://zoom.us/download>. It will run on laptops, iPads, and smart phones. Once you have installed it and signed up, just click on the relevant link to join a Meeting.

If you can't join by Internet you can access a Zoom meeting by phone, at normal geographic rates, by dialling 0131 460 1196 or 0203 4815237. You'll be asked to key in the meeting ID which is the nine-digit number at the end of the Zoom link.

Meetings for worship:

Sundays

Adel 10.45 – 11.25 at <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/8898678975>

Carlton Hill 11.00 – 11.45 at <https://zoom.us/j/650598877>

You are welcome to join quietly from 10.45am – the delayed start enables people to also attend the 10.30 -11am worship from Ilkley.

Ilkley 10.30 – 11.05 at <https://zoom.us/j/178477823>

Roundhay please contact the clerk, Ray Middleton, if you would like him to send you a link to their online worship: home@raymiddleton.com

Midweek

Tuesdays 1.10pm to 1.40pm: BREATH Quaker style worship with the Leeds Universities Chaplaincy Team led by Robin Fishwick (Quaker Chaplain): <https://zoom.us/j/110978502>

Wednesdays 2.30pm – 3pm at Adel: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/8898678975>

Thursdays 6pm – 6.30pm at Carlton Hill: <https://zoom.us/j/976534634>

Woodbrooke is also offering frequent online **Meetings for Worship**. See <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/about/online-mfw/>

Saturdays 10am – 12 noon at Carlton Hill: The **Light Group** will continue to meet on the 1st Saturday of the month. All are welcome to join us – please attend at <https://zoom.us/j/665432992>

There is currently no Meeting for Worship at Bedford Court.

NEW: Good Friday Quaker Meeting for Worship 11am – 11.30am – followed by hot drinks and hot cross buns! At <https://zoom.us/j/172931871>

Other meetings or talks

Repeated events

Mondays 10.30am – 11am Coffee morning bring your own hot drink and cake/biscuit! Enjoy discussion with friends. At <https://zoom.us/j/113614798>

Tuesdays 7.30pm 1st and 3rd of the month, Bible Book Club session on Zoom. We are looking at Daniel – all are welcome – we value different opinions! At <https://zoom.us/j/460739906>

Wednesdays 7pm Talk/discussion by **Ben Wood** on 'How to be Happy: Ancient Greek Philosophy for Beginners'. At <https://zoom.us/j/481536330>

Thursdays 6.45pm Advice and Queries Discussion Group led by Robin Fishwick at <https://zoom.us/j/976534634>

Fridays 10.30am – 11am Coffee morning at <https://zoom.us/j/172931871>

Fridays 2pm 1st & 3rd of month, Poetry Afternoon Bring two poems to share, ideally a favourite and one written by you. You can tell us why you have selected them. The session will be facilitated by Clare Wigzell (stc) <https://zoom.us/j/486859473>

One-off events:

Area Meeting

The next meeting will be via Zoom on **Wednesday 22 April 6.30 – 7.30**. This is a business-only meeting.

Sustainability Group

This is not meeting at the moment. It may be possible to set up a Zoom group, but in the meantime, if you have any positive news about climate change, or want to be included in the email group, please contact Bridget Robson bridget@cooptel.net

Outreach Committee

Clearly the next meeting planned for 27 April will not take place, but maybe Tracey is planning a Zoom meeting. Contact her if you want to know about this: ttracey@live.com

Sanctuary Gathering in Yorkshire

Tracey Martin tells us this is planned for Saturday **13 June 10.30pm to 4.30pm** at Woodhouse Lane Meeting House. If it can go ahead it will be an opportunity to meet and share ideas with other sanctuary meetings and to hear from inspiring speakers. More information soon. Please put the date in your diaries.

Festival of Kindness Compassion and Wellbeing

[presumably to be rearranged - Ed]

This festival will take place from **5 - 13 September**. More details here: <http://kinderleeds.org>. There will be a whole range of organisations involved with some central activities and a few centrally organised activities. Tracey Martin, as convenor of the outreach committee, is liaising with Gloria, the coordinator, and sends this information:

1. Leeds Kindness Xchange - **10 September**. The council has offered the Civic Hall free and Gloria said if we want a stall (and possibly a talk/workshop) we should let her know as soon as possible. We can discuss what kind of stall nearer the time. I think it would be a great opportunity to share what Quakers are and do with people in Leeds.
2. **7 – 9 September** - events in Leeds Market. It would be great if we could offer 'pop-up meeting for worship'.

3. We can offer our own event in the week and that would be advertised on the website.
4. We could offer space to others that week - either paid for, subsidised or free for other local groups - to offer kindness events. Any of the meetings in Leeds could offer events.

If you would like to support any of these activities, or if your meeting would like to offer an event, please contact Tracey so she can co-ordinate Quaker response. trracey@live.com, 07964 672286

Wider Quaker Community

Quakers in Yorkshire

The Quakers in Yorkshire Meeting scheduled for 18 April will not now take place.

Good Green News Stories

We're all concerned with the health emergency affecting all of us humans on our planet, and sharing hopeful stories of caring a connection. We also know that the larger emergency of climate change is still looming over all life on earth. Our group has been meeting for several years, and alongside campaigning in various ways, we've been sharing "Good News" stories about the environment:

"Saw this article on BBC Future Planetsan indigenous succulent shrub, spekboom, once covered an area the size of Cyprus, in semi-arid region of southern Africa. After years of drought the region has suffered due to overgrazing too but helped by a national scheme, farmers and environmentalists are replanting. Spekboom acts as a carbon sink, prevents topsoil erosion...." 03/2020

"I wonder to what extent the habit of home working and global internet conferencing may persist in the hopefully new normal that emerges in the future" 03/2020

Sweden has two current campaigns: *Flight-shame* and *Train-boast*. Swedish flights dropped by 4% in the first half of 2019, while train journeys went up by nearly 10 %. (Positive News) 10/2019

Bamford Quaker Community in the Peak District had 18 friends (a full house!) to help on their Woodland Working retreat. 10/2018

Leeds recycling services can now accept plastics marked 5 in our green bins. This means yoghurt pots and tetra-paks. Black plastic is still not accepted, and remember – Refuse, Re-Use & Recycle. 11/2019

Coldplay are cancelling their World Tour to avoid flying. 10/2019

Burger King has announced that they will stop handing out plastic toys with children's meals after a campaign begun by 2 young people. 11/2019

One million jobs: campaign against climate change www.campaigncc.org/climatejobs 10/2019

Indian railways banning plastic use for meals bought on their train services. 01/2020

Finland is setting an ambitious target of 10 years (?) to reach Zero CO2 emission. They are re-flooding dried-out peat bogs so that they become carbon sinks. 12/2019

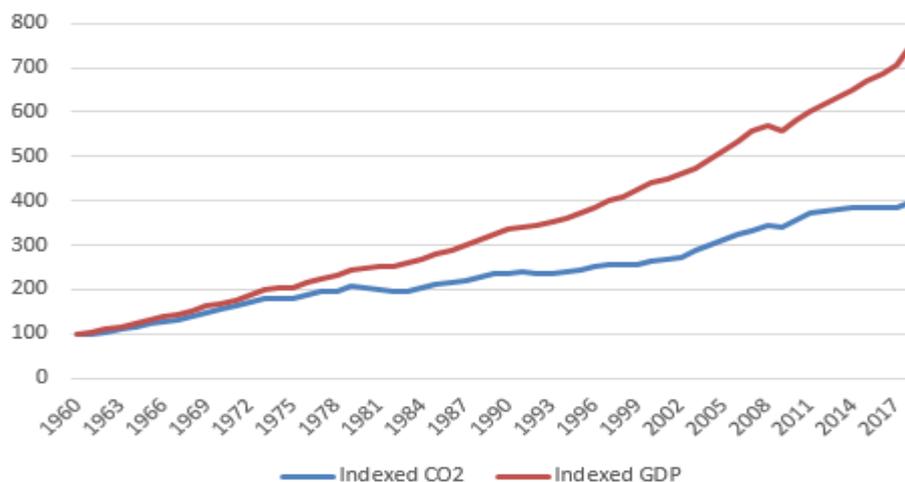
"I've just been thinking what incredible changes the world can make really quickly in an emergency. Wouldn't it be amazing if everyone realised what a climate emergency really means and that it would in fact be possible to make profound changes in a relatively short time scale if the will was there." 03/2020

LAQM Sustainability Group, Bridget Robson

Climate change, postgrowth and Wellbeing – does Covid-19 offer new opportunities?

Covid-19 has flipped the world upside-down in lightning speed. Many things we took for granted turn out not to be, including moving around freely, shaking hands, giving hugs, plenty of opportunities to socialise, and well-stocked supermarket shelves. Many employees found themselves jobless from one day to the other, businesses and freelancers lost their customer base, and parents try to juggle home educating their children and settling into their newly established home ‘offices’. All of this has come as a massive shock to us all and many people are struggling to cope. The Covid-19 pandemic lays bare the many weaknesses of current economic systems. But as difficult as current events are for many, it is important to think ahead and ask which opportunities this crisis might offer for fundamental transformation of current economic systems and ways in which they contribute to human wellbeing.

Even before the pandemic hit, the weaknesses of the current setup were all too evident: the economy, jobs and welfare systems are dependent on economic growth, but growth is also driving rising global greenhouse gas emissions. The resulting climate emergency is threatening liveability on this planet for future generations and in many places already puts health, livelihoods and critical infrastructures at risk due to the growing frequency and severity of extreme weather events. While it has been possible to reduce the emission intensity per unit of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) – so-called ‘relative decoupling’ of emissions from growth – it has not yet been possible to decouple growth from emissions in absolute terms at the global level. Absolute decoupling would occur if global GDP was rising while emissions are falling – but (up until the Covid-19 pandemic) global emissions have still been on an upward trajectory.



The graph shows the rise of GDP and emissions relative to 1960 in per cent. GDP in constant 2010 \$US, CO2 in trillion tonnes. CO2 data for 2015-8 updated from the Global Carbon Project and Carbon Brief. Data Sources: World Bank.

According to the latest report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), global emissions would need to be brought down from current 37 Gigatonnes per year to a maximum of 1 Gigatonne per year by 2050 at the latest if we want to maximise the chance of staying below 1.5 degrees of global warming without heavily relying on ‘negative emission’ technologies such as carbon capture and storage. This equates to an average annual fall of emissions of around 10% *each year*. However, that figure is just a global average. Reductions in rich countries will need to be much higher than that to enable developing countries a slower and later decrease or even stability of emissions to raise living standards and wellbeing. For rich countries, emission reductions of that magnitude will be a major challenge. For reference: during the 2008-2013 recession, CO2 emissions in the UK fell by an average of 2.4% each year.

Calls for “degrowth”, “postgrowth” or “steady-state economics” have gained traction in response these problems. They suggest that profit and economic growth which are currently the dominant goals of economic and political activity need to be replaced with other goals, especially meeting people’s needs, improving social justice, emission reduction, and respecting other planetary boundaries. To use Kate Raworth’s words, this would help humanity to move into the “doughnut” of a “safe and just space”.

In some of our recent work¹, I and Max Koch from the University of Lund have argued that while the move to a postgrowth economy is undoubtedly necessary from a climate change perspective, it poses a range of challenges. As mentioned above, current economic and social systems are dependent on growth. The impacts of the current pandemic demonstrate this in no uncertain terms. The very second that consumer demand reduces or even dries up businesses stop making a profit and risk collapse, often in a very short space of time. This increases unemployment which in turn reduces consumer spending even further. Demand for unemployment and other social security benefits rises – exactly at a time when state revenues are falling.

Furthermore, it is not only welfare systems and the economy that depend on economic growth, but several dimensions of wellbeing also remain linked to growth, such as subjective wellbeing (happiness), life expectancy and education. The problem is that while growth seems to be less relevant for wellbeing gains at high levels of human development, the *absence* of growth is often related to a *deterioration* of a range of wellbeing outcomes. This can be explained with the welfare state dependency on growth, but also with the idea that our cultures have evolved around the growth concept. People expect ever rising living standards, and for many the continuous consumption of goods and services underpins their social status, identity and self-worth. People also tend to be ‘loss averse’ – while we quickly take improved living standards for granted, it is often a lot more difficult to give things up. More generally, there is evidence that times of rapidly changing economic and political institutions destabilise societies and impact negatively on wellbeing.

What does all this mean for how we as societies should try to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic? I’d like to think there are both dangers but also vast opportunities in responding to this crisis. Several top economists predict that the pandemic will induce a new global recession, probably worse than the one following the 2008 financial crash. Governments around the world are already taking unprecedented measures, mostly through enormous rescue packages to bail out companies and protect people’s jobs in the short term. The danger is that if current growth-based economic systems stay in place, another drawn-out period of austerity measures might follow, economies will remain vulnerable to periods of low economic growth, emissions will continue to rise, and global injustices and inequalities will remain.

The opportunity is to take this crisis as a chance to rebuild economic and welfare systems so that they prioritise human needs satisfaction and respect planetary boundaries. This would need to feature not-for-profit, cooperative, democratic economics; publicly controlled financial and monetary systems; a redistribution of work and working time reduction, public guarantees for the provision of essential goods and services to everyone, including minimum levels of energy, water, food, transport and housing. The good news is that many of these ideas and practices already exist in alternative niches – now is the time to shout about them, sign up to them where possible, and demand from governments to upscale them to become the *modus operandi* of our economic and social systems.

Milena Büchs

¹Büchs, M., & Koch, M. (2017). *Postgrowth and Wellbeing: Challenges to Sustainable Welfare*. Cham: Springer (this is in Carlton Hill’s library); Büchs, M., & Koch, M. (2019). Challenges for the degrowth transition: The debate about wellbeing. *Futures*, 105, 155-165. doi:10.1016/j.futures.2018.09.002

The Peace Of Wild Things, Wendell Berry

For many of us, it is in nature that we find ways to stay positive and hopeful in times of stress and upset. This poem address the anxieties we feel, but takes us through an experience to help us to reach 'grace' and that can make us 'free'. This inner freedom is a very Quaker thing, and is important to everyone at the moment as we are not physically free to go where we want. I find this poem gives me solace and peace. It is the best answer to fear and distress.

Clare Wigzell

*When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.*

Wendell Berry

Letters to the editor

the Quiet Word is published monthly. Articles, poems, short stories, and letters should arrive by the end of the month. They can be sent via Robert Keeble at robertkeeble@hotmail.com or the QW email at quietword@leedsquakers.org.uk. A page is about 600-1000 words & an article should be no more than 2 pages; a letter should be around 100 words.

Of course, there haven't been any letters yet, except one from myself. It's an idea for the restart of this newsletter. It offers a way of contributing on a much smaller level in both time and effort.

guest editor – Patrick Herring, Carlton Hill meeting

Something Understood...

One idea is to mention things that people have found useful in giving them a spiritual direction. For me, one thing has been the BBC Radio 4 programme “Something Understood...” in which the narrator - usually Mark Tully - gives a succession of thoughts – in prose, poetry, or music - around a particular subject or theme of ethical or religious significance. This oblique and elliptical approach lets you think of the difficult-to-define more clearly. The BBC stopped making new editions in 2019 but we can always hope. You can get repeats of old editions via the BBC Sounds website, and they are repeated regularly on Radio 4.

Patrick Herring

Angel

*On breathless wings
soft as cat's fur*

*the angel skims
green velvet hills*

*and surfs the streams
where fish glint silver.*

*Swallows write cursive
script around him*

*and rabbits feel his passing
in their whiskers.*

*At his approach
the grey horse shivers*

*while humans sleep oblivious
this bright blue morning.*

Tracey Martin

Spiritual practice in daily life

It seems to me that there's no separation between what we 'do' in Meeting for Worship and how we go about our daily lives.

[it's hoped that others could contribute what their inner practice in for future issues - Ed]

In both instances we're simply being with things as they are. So, when we're sitting in Worship, we ground ourselves in the stillness and connection that is naturally there within the comings and goings of the mind. Thoughts, feelings, sensations, emotions and sounds. The movements within the room, the chiming of the Parkinson bell, the traffic, the pedestrian crossing, the birdsong. All coming - all going.

Even though we may *think* that the stillness – or acceptance – isn't there, actually, there's no way that it can't be; as It's simply the natural, unconditional awareness of the flow of life.

And so, when we're going about our daily lives – washing up, walking, eating, shopping, vacuuming, interacting with folk (and myriad other things) we can bring the awareness that we may have come to know through Worship, to all of these activities, as best we can.

Even if we *believe* we're not aware and connected, we naturally know when we're doing the loving thing - even if it's something as simple as opening a door for someone or letting them go ahead of us at the supermarket checkout. This knowing is pointing to the connection that's naturally there.

If we do something unhelpful, we know about that too ! There's some degree of discomfort, that is actually pointing us in the right direction. There can be an unhelpful tendency to judge, but it's worth noticing that the awareness itself doesn't judge.

A monk once said to me ' .. the thing that recognises judgement isn't itself judging, it's simply aware'. We could apply this statement to any 'content' of life. For example, we could say 'the thing that recognises fear isn't itself fearful' or 'the thing that recognises greed isn't itself greedy' (try telling that to Desperate Dan !).

A daily practice of meditation, yoga, chi gong. Prayer or the reading of scriptures / poetry can bring a sense of peace and connection; as can simply sitting quietly and still in a 'meeting for worship with yourself'. All of these things were pointed to in our discussion on 'Spiritual Practice in Daily Life' at Carlton Hill in 2019,

Giving our full attention to the person we're talking with - as best we can - is one of the most wonderful offerings we can give to another. Bringing ourselves back to simply listening - not pretending to listen whilst planning our next interjection, or meal - is a wonderful gift. Avoiding the temptation to 'butt in' is also good to keep an eye on. It's not always easy to put into practice, especially for those of us with active minds, but doing the best we can, really *can* make a difference.

Have you ever noticed what it's like to be chatting to someone who's on 'speakerphone' whilst they're cooking, watching TV or working at the computer (or maybe they're doing all three at the same time) ? There's always a sense of being 'short changed' and not being fully engaged with. Our busy lives may seem to suggest that we've no choice, but what choices are we making - what's the most important thing ? Will we ever have this conversation, with this person, at this time, ever again ?

The way we handle objects can be an expression of love and connection in daily life. Have you ever had a cup of tea handed to you in such a way that it warmed your heart ? Or delighted in the way a gift was wrapped ?

Working in silence can help to create a greater sense of connection with the job in hand. When relaxing, occasionally turning off the TV, mobile phone, laptop or radio can be a relief. It gives us an opportunity to step back and simply 'listen to life'.

John Cage's silent piano piece 4' 33", could be seen as an opportunity for the listener to drop all expectation of sound (and indeed *anything*) and to simply *be*. At the live performance, he just sat down at the piano, lifted the lid - and waited. In silent expectation.....

Maybe that's what we could all do ?

Andy Watson

Three haiku for spring

*Long-awaited spring
all the magnolia blooms
burst open at once*

*A coal tit dancing
high in the silver birch
rehearses a new song*

*Garden at midnight
catkins stir in the shadows
moon so bright it hurts*

Rose Anderson

Seeing with Art

Some art has a spiritual interpretation. It may not be the intention of the artist, nor be the only possible interpretation. But sometimes you see things in a new way. It's worth writing it down to remember the thought. Hopefully others will have such thoughts to contribute.

The Hay Wain as an interior path



This image is on every place-mat in the land, you might say it is the cliché of English clichés. Something to do with pictures on boxes of chocolates I believe. But at some point I suddenly saw it in an entirely new light: there's no hay in the hay wain.

What is shown — besides the effortlessly natural & lovely Suffolk countryside — is the staunching of the hay wain's wooden wheels in a millpond. The wood swells against the iron rims and makes the wheels stronger.

All the humans are going about their everyday purpose without awareness. The maid drawing water to the left, the angler in the reeds to the right, and the two drivers just waiting. But the small dog — whose senses are beyond ours — is sensing something new.

Water is a symbol of truthfulness: it always finds its own level. Gold is a symbol of the divine on earth: it doesn't tarnish and always glows. They are moving in truth, in stillness but with the front wheels turned, towards a field of gold. They couldn't move there by willpower — various physical obstacles prevent that. They're leaving human sustenance behind — water for drinking and fishing for food. And there's no hay in the hay wain: the interior journey needs worldly emptiness. This is a path to somewhere new.

Patrick Herring