

THE YOUNG QUAKER

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Rest Issue

We live in a world where real rest is becoming a luxury. Our work demands more and more from us but gives less and less in return. Our social lives are increasingly structured by screens that we find hard to turn away from due to their demands for constant activity. Our consciences drive us to struggle against injustice wherever it is found - even to the point of burnout. We must value rest but we also must not be fooled into believing that access to rest is open equally to all. Rest in itself is a thing of personal, political & spiritual struggle. It is this complexity of rest in all its forms and how we as Quakers can restore rest to its proper place in our lives that we will explore in this issue of The Young Quaker.



"True silence is the rest of the mind; and is to the spirit, what sleep is to the body,
nourishment and refreshment."

William Penn, Quaker Faith & Practice 20.11

News

YEARLY MEETING 2018

In May 2018, at Yearly Meeting – the main decision-making body of Quakers In Britain – a number of important decisions will be made that will begin to shape Quakerism over the coming decades. It is vital that a diverse range of voices are included in those decisions – and that all Quakers feel included in the discernment of our community.

This year, YFGM is partnering with Woodbrooke and Britain Yearly Meeting to run a series of sessions designed to empower and inform 'young adults' (18 to 35ish) to be part of those decisions. We hope that young adults will be present in the main sessions - contributing to the discernment of the Yearly Meeting – but alongside that, we will be providing a space in Friends House (London) where we can meet to debrief, learn and share our unique and important contribution to these decisions.

We're looking for volunteers to help facilitate the space. If you're interested or would like to know more, please email Chris Venables – Engaging Young Adult Quakers Project Officer – with a few lines about yourself and why you'd like to take part (youngadults@quaker.org.uk).

Funding is available to help all young adults wishing to attend Yearly Meeting who would otherwise be unable to do so.

EMEYF GATHERING COMES TO IRELAND

European and Middle East Young Friends (EMEYF) is holding its week long Spring Gathering just across the Irish Sea. EMEYF builds closer links and encourages exchange on spiritual matters and international friendship between Quakers aged 18-35 living across two continents. The community has contacts across at least 15 countries and is ever expanding. The main focus of EMEYF is the spring gathering hosted in a different country each year in which a theme is explored through worship and discussion, friendship and deepened spirituality. In the past they have been in Syria, Georgia, Spain, Poland, Russia and many more countries across two continents.

This year's Spring gathering will be held between 25th March and 2nd April in Ireland with trips to Dublin and Belfast but based at the Moyallaon Quaker Centre, near Portadown. In these times of divisions the gathering's theme is creating community with a particularly focus on Quaker Peace building in Ireland. The event will include trips across Ireland, connecting with Irish Young Friends, an introduction to the Irish 'times of troubles' and Quaker peace work, workshops, business sessions, creativity and socialising.

YOUNG FRIEND PART OF NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNING ICAN

Young Friend Clare Conboy was a key activist in a campaigning group that won the 2017 Nobel peace prize. She works for the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and founding UK partner Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy. ICAN won for their campaigning that lead to over 120 countries supporting a global treaty for banning nuclear weapons. This creates massive pressure for worldwide nuclear disarmament and ICAN is central in coordinating this campaign.

Clare said "ICAN's campaign has removed the abstraction in the debate around nuclear weapons and security. We have worked with survivors of nuclear weapons use and testing to make clear the fact that they are inhumane weapons of mass destruction which target civilians with catastrophic consequences which cannot be justified. The ban treaty gives us hope and is the tool which will allow us to dismantle nuclear weapons economically, politically, socially and legally. There has been a very deliberate attempt by those who want to keep nuclear weapons to sanitise the debate, please do what you can to challenge this narrative. In the UK, you can ask your MPs to sign ICAN's Parliamentary Pledge and also follow ICAN in the UK's social media channels: Facebook & Twitter."

FAITH AND PRACTICE REVISION COMES A STEP CLOSER

The December 2017 meeting of the governance body of Britain Yearly Meeting - Meeting for

Sufferings (MfS) recommended the revision of Quaker Faith and Practice (QF&P) our current book of discipline for the first time in 30 years. QF&P acts as the central book on Quaker practices and traditions in Britain. After years of deep discernment with the wider Quaker community, the revision preparation group recommended not only the wholesale revision of QF&P but also that its governance sections be divided: with the basic principles and processes remaining within the red book but the ever-changing details being within separate pamphlets. After much discernment MfS agreed to follow these recommendations to revise QF&P and support the discernment of Yearly Meeting 2018 on this important matter. If Yearly Meeting approves QF&P revision then this will be an amazing opportunity for our Young Quaker community to reshape the central book of British Quakerism for our time.

'FIRST REVOLUTIONARY ABOLITIONIST' RETURNED TO QUAKERS AFTER 300 YEARS

A Young Adult Friend initiative led to a C18th anti-racist activist being formally re-associated with the Society of Friends, nearly 300 years after being disowned.

In 1776, Quakers became the first western faith community to make enslavement a disownable offence. Benjamin Lay was instrumental to this outcome, but decades earlier, he was disowned four times for his powerful tracts and theatrical protests urging Quakers to truly enact their equality testimony.

A 2017 biography returned Lay to prominence and revealed how a lack of clarity surrounding Lay's eventual UK reinstatement was used to justify his US disownment.

In response, Young Adult Friends Tim Gee of Peckham Meeting (the closest modern meeting to where Lay worship as a Young Quaker) and Chris Venables of North London Area Meeting, (successor to the body which originally disowned Lay) proposed writing to all communities that disowned Lay to clarify he is 'a Friend of the Truth' for London Quakers. North London Area Meeting agreed and rapidly Quakers in Abington Pennsylvania (Lay's meeting in later life) effectively reinstated Lay.

THE YOUNG QUAKER PODCAST

The Young Quaker Podcast is a new podcast made by, and for young Quakers (although you don't have to be young or a Quaker to listen!). Partially funded by Quakers in Britain, and edited by some of The Young Quaker magazine's editors, it aims to be a space for young people to be able to express and explore their spirituality, engage in lively discussions about social and political issues, and be part of a supportive community of young Quakers. We release episodes monthly with different topics and guests as we tackle questions like young Quakers' experiences of God, Quaker social witness, and beginning to build a better world.

Each podcast includes the personal journey of a young Quaker to their faith, a central discussion about the podcast topic, and a young Quaker focus segment, where we look at what young Quakers are doing locally, and globally. You can listen on iTunes by searching for "Young Quaker Podcast, or via libsyn at <http://youngquakerpodcast.libsyn.com> or SoundCloud. If you're interested in coming on the podcast either as a guest, or to talk about what young Quakers are doing near you, please email us at: youngquakerpodcast@gmail.com.

QUAKERS CHALLENGE GOVERNMENT OVER 'HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT'

Britain's Quakers are pledging to resist the government's policies of creating a 'hostile environment' for immigrants.

Over 40 Meetings have committed to becoming 'Sanctuary Meetings' which show solidarity with refugees and migrants through actions such as hosting people at home, providing legal support, visiting detention centres, holding anti-racism events and dialogue with politicians at Quaker meeting houses.

The 'Sanctuary Everywhere Manifesto', agreed by the Quakers' national decision-making body declares:

"Through Quakers' longstanding work welcoming newcomers to our shores, we have seen up close that the government's creation of a 'hostile environment' is increasingly embedding policies of discrimination into the practices of the British state. Quakers in Britain are committed to working with others to change this, creating a culture of

compassion and welcoming hospitality.”

The position takes a stand against the scandal of indefinite detention, pledges support for ‘new, peaceful, safer routes of migration’, and opposes unjust deportations and forced removals.

Tim Gee, formerly Sanctuary Everywhere Programme Developer for Quaker Peace and Social Witness said:

“We are inspired by Jesus’ very last public speech, in which he invites every one of us to ‘Welcome the Stranger’. As a church minister’s daughter, Theresa

May is no doubt familiar with this teaching. We invite her to put it into action.”

Further details of the ‘Sanctuary First manifesto’ can be found at <http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/social-justice/migration>

Thank you for this issues news contributions **Chris Venables, Laurence Hall, Tim Gee, and Jessica Hubbard-Bailey.**

The written prayer

Lynda Berry explores writing as a spiritual practice

“Writing can evoke connections in our lives, transform us, and engender an authentic humility...”
Knowing the Mystery of the Life Within: Selected Writings of Isaac Penington - R. Melvin Keise

It is at once both hard and easy to describe what brings me into writing. Whilst sitting in Quaker meeting I feel pulled to writing my thoughts down, opening what is for me an important source of support and relaxation. Some have challenged, ignored or seemed to question my spiritual discipline because of it. Yet, I would resist placing those who write in meeting as either spiritually less evolved or more self involved. My writing is a part of my mental processing, not an escape from the meeting around me. I may not share what am I writing due to the pangs of embarrassment, fears of privacy violations, or the guilt of not being so open to community in the collective worship.

Writing can be a de-stressor. To offload sticky thoughts and place them somewhere can act as great catharsis. I often find myself telling the blank page all I either can not admit to anyone, or can hardly admit to myself; is this another way of communicating with the divine? Is it praying? It wasn’t until I encountered the journal writing session during Woodbrooke’s Young Adult Leadership Programme, that I had the revelation that writing itself was a means to speak to that which is beyond ourselves; by offering up your secret self, desire and suffering for transformation. To have my writing recognised in this way brought a lot of joy to my heart. I felt encouraged that my writing had a purpose.

I don’t write every meeting. Some meetings pass without the turning of a page. I can’t explain why some meetings have to involve a pen and paper, and some do not. Though there are times I know I can’t concentrate without first writing out the thoughts of my mind, this is not always the case in meeting, and not always the reason for my writing within it. It is a mystery, an individual need and even another form of prayer. I have gotten to whole new places of personal transformation and come to realise the creative process itself is a kind of prayer. I feel a deep parallel between the experience of writing this article right now, and meeting for worship. It takes time to centre down, where day to day distractions will effect my mind, and only after sometime, I will focus and the article will start to take shape. I will start to feel flow and connection, and this is what writing in meeting can begin to reveal for me.

It is hard to describe how or why writing either does or does not happen in meeting, it is a mystery, like the one that lies at the heart of meeting for worship itself. I know I have experienced personal transformation from the written prayers I have offered up either online, in meeting, or alone. I know my mind has made connections to neglected parts of itself, has prayed in poetry for healing, and I know I have moved forward. Writing as a spiritual practice happened naturally to me, and I can accept that writing does not hold the same central position in the spiritual practices of others. Being that we are all individuals, it stands to reason, that we all have a different way to rest and pray. ■

How to do Nothing

Rosie Clarke

Rest is an important and under-discussed part of life. None of us can, or should try to, be productive at all times. Resting prevents burnout, allows us to be more efficient when we return to productivity, and is enjoyable. However, some of us are better at it than others. Sadly, I have recently had to come to the conclusion that I am bad at resting. I always feel as though I haven't got enough time to do so, and spend my time at work or doing everyday chores waiting for free time. But even when I have a long chunk of free time I come away at the end of it feeling about as drained as before. So what am I doing wrong?

There are different types of rest, which I personally categorise in the following ways;

- 1) Downtime – this is your classic slobbing in front of the television, reading, daydreaming, napping; whatever you like to do when tired and alone that requires no energy or thought.
- 2) Socialising – anything from chatting on the phone to a night out on the town.
- 3) Fun time - can be alone or in a group, but implies more planned, purposeful activity. E.g. going to a theme park, playing tennis together, etc.
- 4) Rejuvenating time – I suspect this is what is more fashionably called self-care. Think yoga, meditation, exercising, engaging in hobbies, etc.

My problem, which I suspect is common, is that when tired and in greatest need of rest, I always default to the first category, downtime. It requires the least mental and physical energy and no advance planning. The problem is that it doesn't refresh you. While everyone has different needs, I suspect that we all need all four types of rest, perhaps just in different proportions. Each type of rest gives us something – relaxation, connection,

fun and re-centering, respectively. It's so easy to end up doing the same activities, particularly when at our most drained. For some people it might not be downtime – perhaps you always feel the need to be on the go and doing something Instagram-worthy in the social/fun categories, and you somehow never find time to have solitary, unplanned, relaxation, until you are completely exhausted. Perhaps, like me, you drift into unstructured inactivity far too easily, even though you would probably benefit more deeply from some energising company or activity.

I am currently going through a phase of frequently feeling overwhelmed by work and responsibilities, and lacking in rest. In the middle of this I'm starting to realise that those times when I feel least like doing any of the more active kinds of 'rest', are often the times when I would most benefit from them. Watching television alone might be all you feel you have energy to do after a long day at work, but when this happens almost every day you can end up feeling trapped in a rut, and like you haven't truly put down your responsibilities at all. Forcing yourself to do precisely that which you don't feel like – whether that's going for a run, calling a friend for a spontaneous meet-up, or breaking out that instrument you swore you'd learn this year - might be exactly what you need to snap yourself out of the slump.

Of course, true relaxation in the form of downtime is still important and arguably necessary. For myself, I'm going to trial a new method. Put aside a block of time to do guilt-free nothing, but remain mindful as I do so. Let myself fully benefit from and luxuriate in the pleasure of doing nothing. And then, when the time is over, move on to something else. ■



For a Rest Society? Post-work visions and their limits

Laurence Hall

Work seems to dominate all. Most of our waking hours are controlled by our bosses' demands. Our work income dictates what we are able to do beyond our workplace. New technology seems to ensure not only that we work more but even during our leisure time, as our activity creates data for corporate profit. Beyond our everyday, this ideology of work seems to dominate the social imagination. For the elite, work is the only measure of any worth. The result is millions forced to choose between powerless, low paid and precarious jobs or the horrors of workfare (i.e. systems of benefit cuts and sanctions). Institutions and policies are more and more judged by one measure: how they help people to work for profit. Even those demanding social justice seem under the spell of the work ideology. Most trade unionists, feminists, anti-racists and socialists can only think of improving work but it is the worship of work itself that is causing all of these problems.

Or at least this is the understanding of our society according to a movement of activists united by a vision of a post-work society. For them, work is inherently repressive and the only path to real human liberation is a world where rest dominates over work. In a post-work society freed from the control of work all humans will flourish in freedom. This is achieved through three central demands; the progressive reducing of the workday, a universal unconditional income and the automatising of work. And much like Marxism this ethical vision is very in line with the sociological understanding of post-work thinkers who argue that technological progress will lead to increasing automation of most work making the post-work vision the inevitable choice for society.

So do post-work ideas offer us a way to a truly liberated society? They have certainly helped challenge the horrible system of benefit cuts and sanctions, but the wider post-work claims must be seriously questioned. The fundamental weakness of post-work reasoning is its lack of a sophisticated analysis of power relations. It offers

a simplistic picture of the solely repressive world of work and the purely liberated world of non-work. Yet this black and white picture misses the great complex of social hierarchies as well as the importance of the struggles against them. In the non-work sphere, post-work theories seems to ignore the great number of repressive hierarchies not based on work which will continue in the post-work world. The unequal control and distribution of housing, healthcare, education, the automated machines and technological process among others would continue to sustain repressive institutional hierarchies in a post work society. The same is true of cultural hierarchies of gender, race, disability and sexuality which will continue in the post-work world. Furthermore, in seeing all work as inevitably repressive post-work theories ignores the many challenges and alternatives to hierarchical workplaces, both past and present, that could create a new future for work itself.

In essence post-work theories offers a simplistic mirror image of the social order it claims to attack and can't really escape work's shadow. In seeing work as only repressive and non-work as only freedom it is fundamentally blind to the struggles for equality both within and beyond work.

It is these egalitarian struggles that one can find a truly quakerly alternative to the post-work approach. Throughout the world, real movements are arising that are fundamentally driven by a radically democratic egalitarianism that challenges all social hierarchies in and outside the workplace in a truly quaker spirit. It is their demands for a world governed by non-hierarchical radically democratic structures which will truly empower us to reshaped both work and rest for themselves. ■

Learning to sit in the light

Kim Edwards outlines five keys to finding rest.

Rest. There is quite a lot one can say on rest, when one has had M.E. However, these five keys to rest have so far been confirmed by my experiences and I continue to work with them as I carry on along the way.

1. Peace - inner peace, of mind, heart, spirit, and body is such a deep form of Rest. Stillness (which meditation and prayer, nature, Reiki and Quakers have helped teach me) is good for that.

2. Self-care, prioritise yourself – it helps to bear in mind that to sacrifice your welfare, well-being or needs is to consider something more important than a person's welfare, well-being or needs. Nothing makes that ok; nothing ever could. You can only best serve your life and your calling (and serve the world and others) when functioning at your most balanced and whole.

3. Value just 'being' - 'just to be' is active, not passive. Being Still, is not 'Failing' to move forwards; things are happening in the seeming stillness, the seemingly 'not moving': valuable things like rest, recovery, happiness, feeding body, heart, mind or spirit, a period of calm before a time of use of energy, growth, learning, tasting and steeping in the truths and realities. The important things, the core truths and beauties of life and reality are found in stillness: peace, safety, connection, love, or being thankful, or getting stronger, letting go, trust, patience, building faith, building you, getting you ready. Still and Stop are equal in value to other ways of being or doing and important and necessary; sometimes perhaps critical or essential.

4. Let go of control. We have none except over what we do with our own thoughts and reactions in the present moment. Let go of the lie, the responsibility and soul crushing pressure of having to craft your own destiny on your own, through nothing but your own hard work. This is the most liberating thing we can do. It was never true, and it doesn't have to be. God's (or "the Light's" -whatever is helpful for you) truth and gift now and always is Love, 'Grace', unconditional love and acceptance, that wants and asks for nothing from anyone. It is peace, safety, assurance, connection, rest, abundance, joy, freedom, lightness, light, and ease. That doesn't

mean life shall always feel comfortable or easy. It means that you have available now, and will always be given, all you truly need. God/the Light is and shall always be with you. You need not ever try to live your life by forging on alone on your path, or through only your own efforts or by your own strength. Give it all to God. You are meant to. You can't do it on your own, and you don't have to. Not driving the car, but trying to let God drive, changes everything. No one can walk, under a burden we were never meant to carry.

5. Turn the other way. Not all thoughts or feelings need to be had. This took me a long time to realise. In fact, 99.9% of them, seem on experience, to be completely unnecessary, but they sure expend energy, and add to your burdens. So, say no. The world won't end. The present moment, has all you need. It does, truly. Free your mind, body, heart, spirit. Clear the space so that suddenly the right thoughts and feelings and actions can appear exactly when they're meant to.

It's amazing what can grow, when you clear the space, and welcome in the light.

Rest is possible. Everywhere. Always. This I promise. ■



The Blessings of Rest

Sophie Loewendahl

Every stage of our lives offers fresh opportunities. Responding to divine guidance, try to discern the right time to undertake or relinquish responsibilities without undue pride or guilt. Attend to what love requires of you, which may not be great busyness.

- Advices and Queries, 28.

In the last 2 years life has been teaching me how to rest better. Whilst I did not choose these circumstances, I am increasingly grateful for the opportunity.

In July 2016 I was diagnosed with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME), also known as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS). This was the culmination of months of bad colds followed by a flu virus, during a busy time both with work and other commitments; playing violin in orchestra concerts and ceilidh gigs, choir singing, and taking an active part in several Quaker communities.

Life had become like a runaway roller-coaster; deep down I knew I needed to stop, but I couldn't find the break. After having a month off work with flu the final straw came whilst returning to work part-time in May 2016; having regained some strength, after one slightly busier weekend I was again completely devoid of energy. Even getting out of bed or getting dressed were exhausting tasks; I realised something had to change.

Advice 28 took on new meanings for me. Before, I associated the phrase 'attend to what love requires of you' as being about loving those around you; but I've also discovered it also means love and care for yourself. Giving up work and most of my regular activities was initially frustrating and upsetting,

but I also took some comfort when I realised this situation was bringing about 'fresh opportunities'. The most important of these has been learning how to rest, in various ways. This has been a mainstay of my recovery.

To manage my energy levels I have lie down rests several times daily, usually for thirty minutes each. I find mindfulness meditation extremely helpful, to calm my mind and become more present. Often my mind is still quite busy, but I am developing a greater awareness of its activity, better able to observe thoughts and let them go, rather than getting caught up in them as much as before. Resting also helps avoid the huge peaks and troughs of energy I previously experienced.

On some of my 'bad' days I have spent much time lying down, listening to the radio a little when able; and when I'm not, then listening to the sounds outside, or just looking out of the window at the garden (or lying in the garden, when the weather allows!) The simplicity, for example, of the soft sway of the trees, or a bird darting by, are small joys which I have had the time to cherish.

My illness has reminded me of the importance of listening to my body. As another friend with ME/ CFS once said to me: 'If you don't heed your body when it's whispering to you, it will begin shouting at you'. ME/ CFS is showing me a slower, more manageable pace of life. Perhaps the greatest challenge will be maintaining this, keeping rest as central, as I become more active and on returning to work, which will hopefully be in the Spring. ■

For more information about ME/ CFS see:

www.actionforme.org.uk

Switching off

James Evans explores the challenges of digital life for the modern Quaker

"Do you try to set aside times of quiet and openness to the holy spirit? All of us need to find a way into silence which allows us to deepen our awareness of the divine and find an inward form of strength?"- Advices and Queries, 3.

I find myself reflecting on this after a loud rattle and chime echoed through the darkness of my flat. Besides me, my partner stirred, rolled over and returned to sleep as I became bathed in the aura light from my phone. A message from the Young

Quaker editors group on our restfulness articles... Silence not only nurturing my spiritual existence but also my physical well-being, by allowing sleep, had become disturbed that night.

It's hard to believe that only 10 years ago the first internet-capable smart devices came onto the market. These devices ushered in radically changed ways for us to access information and communicate. Through these always-on portable gateways endless information, news, knowledge, and entertainment are available whether we are at home, in work, traveling or even in the middle of the countryside. We don't even need to choose to be checking our phones for this information to be provided; each vibration or chime your device produces, marks a new and choice piece of information being presented to you. By meeting our needs as humans for information and social interaction we have become like Pavlov's dogs responding to a bell for food, our own phones reflexively draw in our attention, compelling us to check them.

Not only do we now have always-on access to leisure, we also have always-on work. For many, including myself, checking those out of hours pings for changes to work schedules, emails and tasks is now a reality and for many employers an expectation of their staff. The breakdown of the boundary between our private and work lives is concerning; when our minds are always in the workplace all hours, how are we to relax and recharge physically, mentally and spiritually? How can we figuratively switch off? The impact is very real - stress and tiredness are well linked to a plethora of physical and mental health issues.

As well as our mental restfulness, our physical ability to rest can be affected by phone and screen usage. There has been considerable research around the areas of electronic light and sleep; Light and particularly blue light from e-devices prevent our brains releasing melatonin, a chemical that makes us feel sleepy and switches on the sleep part of our sleep-wake cycle. Artificial light as low as 8 Lux (dim bedside lamp) has been shown to have an impact on the quantity and quality of sleep. So, when we are working into the night and checking each buzz and ping as we "settle down" how is our body to know that we are aiming for sleep?

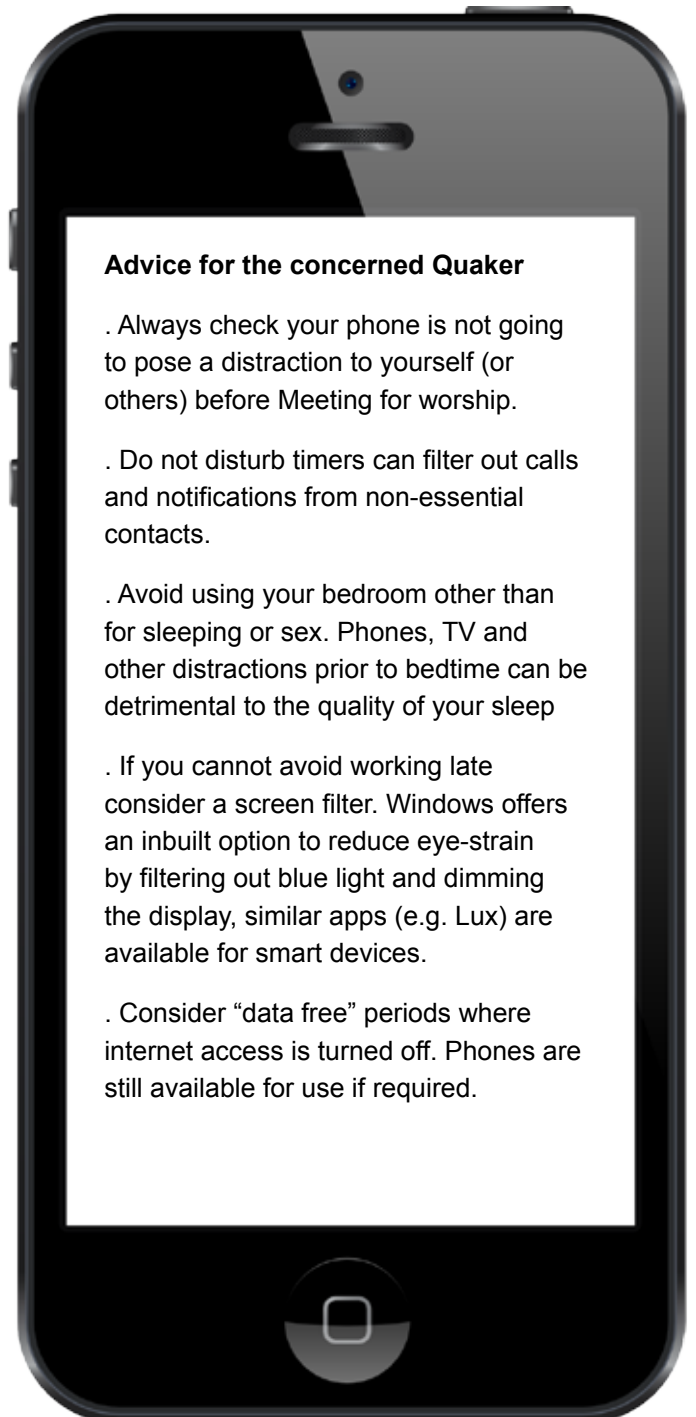
Personally, I often feel difficulty finding time to focus on my own existence and spirituality when I am being barraged with information on the wider

world. My ability to feel grounded can be impaired by the availability of my own smart devices; both by the inopportune buzzes, and the temptation they provide on occasions where I am having difficulty settling into the silence.

However, our smart devices offer us many options that push beyond the physical - allow us to communicate over great distances, access knowledge anywhere. These can be hugely beneficial in life and allow us to grow spiritually as we can learn from a diverse range of sources. There are dedicated software applications to aid spiritual development from meditation to prayer reminders, saint's days to images of a flickering candle. ■

Advice for the concerned Quaker

- . Always check your phone is not going to pose a distraction to yourself (or others) before Meeting for worship.
- . Do not disturb timers can filter out calls and notifications from non-essential contacts.
- . Avoid using your bedroom other than for sleeping or sex. Phones, TV and other distractions prior to bedtime can be detrimental to the quality of your sleep
- . If you cannot avoid working late consider a screen filter. Windows offers an inbuilt option to reduce eye-strain by filtering out blue light and dimming the display, similar apps (e.g. Lux) are available for smart devices.
- . Consider "data free" periods where internet access is turned off. Phones are still available for use if required.



Sustaining Resistance

Hannah Smith from Turning the Tide shares some of her personal journey in learning how to build strength and resilience for the long-haul

We are living in difficult times. Finding hope and resilience in such times can seem impossible. And yet, in the words of Rebecca Solnit, "This is [also] an extraordinary time full of vital, transformative movements that could not be foreseen... Full engagement requires the ability to perceive both."

Those of us who turn towards both the light and the dark through activism face enormous demands. We're challenged to stay open to injustice, loss, and suffering in the world around us, whilst meeting our own fears, frustrations and anger. As young people, in order to both sustain and empower ourselves and our communities in uncertain times we are sometimes called to dig deeper in to those fears, frustrations and causes of anger.

For me, both the existential rollercoaster that these past few years have heralded in the world and experiencing the deep personal challenges of bereavement led me to sign up for 'Sustaining Resistance & Empowering Renewal' at Ecodharma in Catalunya. The course invited me to think about how we can best work with our personal responses creatively to achieve our goals? Where can we find the personal resources and skills that could make our action more effective and sustainable? And what collective tools can we use to enable our groups, organisations, and networks to better embody our values?

Before going to the Ecodharma Centre I wondered if it was the right thing for me. I was unsure about how to connect with its Buddhist roots, and I felt that what I needed in the face of the darkness was to crack on, not to slow down. But I knew I was losing sight of hope, and I felt increasingly disconnected from my own strength and skills for the road ahead. Sometimes we need to slow down to speed up. So off I went for the ten-day workshop to explore the causes of burn-out and strengthen my tools for resilience and self-sustainability.

It was an incredible privilege to be able to access such a space to reflect, to be in nature, and to explore the topic with people who had similar experiences. Using reflective tools and creative, participatory activities, I learned that burn-out

wasn't something to ignore, and to recognise patterns in our culture that promote it. I came to understand how strongly my self-worth was linked to the work I do and that while passion is a positive, driving force, it can be detrimental if the thing you are passionate about becomes your sole focus.

I want to emphasise that everyone's journey into burn-out and towards sustainability will be different, and will require different methods. Yet I think that spending time doing inner work can really help support our work in the world, making us both more effective and giving us more resilience for the long haul. And the need to do this collectively is perhaps greater than ever, as increasing pressure is put on progressive movements to confront rising inequality and climate destabilisation. Changing a group's culture can be extremely difficult, especially if you are the lone voice in the group calling for change. So one basic thing is to develop greater awareness in our movements about burn-out and its impact on us individually and collectively, and our ability to achieve social change.

For those who want to explore more deeply there are both bursary-backed long courses (www.ecodharma.com/courses-events & ulexproject.org/courses_events) and shorter UK-based courses (SustainingActivismUK@riseup.net)

We at Turning the Tide are also beginning to take steps in supporting groups with this work, so please contact us at: turningtide@quaker.org.uk or visit our website at: turningtide.org.uk ■

The fairy is asleep in the loft

Michelle Dumont calls for re-engagement with traditional values of hospitality to create spaces of rest.

Some few hundred years ago, Pierre was walking home from visiting his sister along a cliff path on the south coast of the island of Guernsey, a route he was well acquainted with. When he was half-way he heard plaintive moans coming out of the bramble bushes, muffled sobs. But who would be on the cliffs at this hour? Smugglers? Whoever it was they were in trouble. So Pierre raised his arms in the air and shouted "Whoever you are, I am here, I will help you!" Now the sobbing stopped, the bramble bushes rustled, and, silently, a small cold hand took Pierre's. The moonlight was not strong enough to see who it was whose hand he was holding so he continued, silently, home with the stranger. It wasn't until he reached his small-holding cottage and opened the door to find his wife knitting by the fire that they saw in the flickering fire-light that the person he had brought home was one of *les p'tits gens* - a fairy... so the story goes on... in summary the family take Colin the fairy in, the parish community are outraged at the idea but the family will not go back on their offer of hospitality and the smallholding flourishes under Colin's green fingers until one day a message comes that the political circumstances which had driven Colin away from his home had changed and he leaps for joy and mysteriously disappears back to where he came from.

Aren't I supposed to be talking about rest? Why the fairy-tale? My traditional culture (and I'm sure yours too) includes stories which really focus on the value of hospitality.

"Hospitality" as a word today is more often associated with "industry" than with personal or community behaviour. It doesn't tend to feature strongly in our big-hit stories. Advertising tries to teach us to link 'rest' with a holiday somewhere hot, a luxury purchase, an indulgence, me-time (and perhaps we need some of that sometimes). However, we also need to be careful to avoid having a too commercialised or individualised understanding of what rest is. There are many kinds

of rest (physical, mental, emotional) but to truly experience most of these does require the creation of a social space that allows it.

'Come to me all you who are heavy laden and I will give you rest' (Matthew 11). Rest is given i.e. it isn't just something to be purchased and we can't always claim it for ourselves. We can, though, give rest to each other by living in the spirit and creating restful spaces of hospitality. This requires some spiritual courage on our part. Some re-learning of the impulse that led Pierre to stand on a cliff and say 'I am here, I will help', to keep our hearts and doors open and to keep a place by our fire for an unexpected visitor who needs shelter, company, a cuppa.

It would be naïve to think that this is easy. We have challenges in where to offer hospitality – with many young adults in cramped, crowded or otherwise inadequate housing we can't always offer hospitality at home. We have challenges in how – it is obvious that much hospitality work has often in the past been left to certain groups (look at the disproportionate amount of work women do to make Christmas happen, for example) and that we need to be careful to avoid creating draining work for ourselves in trying to be hospitable. Despite these concerns, though, in an increasingly competitive and exhausting world we can and must create social spaces for rest reciprocity. Whether that be putting someone up, making someone a cup of tea, listening, chilling together, spiritual nurture, or setting a calm and welcoming tone. Let's make our quaker communities places that celebrate hospitality.

We often recognise rest when we experience it, sometimes you can feel restful as soon as you walk through a door.

Where have you experienced hospitality that has given you rest? Can you help create spaces like that for others? How can you give and receive rest? ■

Writers...

The editors would like **to thank all those who have contributed to this edition** of The Young Quaker.

It would be impossible to produce the magazine without the ideas, articles and artwork that you send in.

We're always looking for new material. If you've got an idea for an article, photo or drawing you'd like to see in The Young Quaker, get in touch with us. The next issue, due out in time for the next YFGM in May, will have a submission deadline of 22nd April.

Read TYQ online at:
www.theyoungquaker.org.uk

Contact us:
theyoungquaker@gmail.com

YFGM CATCH UP (OCTOBER 2017)

Jenny McCarthy and Michelle Dumont,
Co-clerks

We gathered in Bristol for the largest YFGM in recent years. It was good to see each other after a summer break. We reflected on what we could do ourselves and locally to support wider changes to create a fairer world which reflects our Quaker values.

We welcomed Roger Ball, from the Countering Colston Campaign to reflect on challenging the stories we tell about our community heroes which overlook problematic areas of their life and work. We then went on to think about ways to make our Quaker communities more inclusive and open at home.

Special interest groups covered how we are affected by and can challenge white supremacy; how to take forward our mental well-being concern; and how to envision a better charity sector. Some Friends also enjoyed a walk around Bristol.

Spiritually, we reflected on Diwali, the festival of light engaged in spiritual dialogue and experimented with body drumming.

We built our community through sharing space, eating together and a lively quiz. We look forward to gathering in Brighton in February 2018.■

What is...

The Young Quaker is a magazine for young Friends everywhere, produced in print and online. Published by Young Friends General Meeting, TYQ comes out three times a year, to coincide with YFGM weekends, meaning that you can expect a new issue in February, May, and October, full of news, comment, and more.

Young Friends General Meeting is a community for young adult Quakers aged 18-30ish, in Britain. Our main events are the three General Meetings which take place at Quaker meeting houses around the country in February, May, and October each year.

If you'd like to get involved in YFGM, come along to a YFGM event, or to find out more visit www.yfgm.quaker.org.uk or email yfgm@quaker.org.uk. You can also find the YFGM group on Facebook.

Quakers, or the Religious Society of Friends, are a religious group with Christian origins. Quaker worship is mostly silent, with people speaking when called to do so by the 'Inner Light', sometimes called 'that of God within everyone'.

Central to Quakerism are the Testimonies of Peace, Equality, Truth, Simplicity and Sustainability. A commitment to these principles has put Quakers at the forefront of political and social issues; campaigning for the abolition of slavery and more recently for the legalisation of same-sex marriage.

EVENTS DIARY

16th-18th March: Building a Diverse and Transformative Movement for Change - course with Tim Gee
www.woodbrooke.org.uk

19th March-19th April: a Young Adult Friend online retreat
www.woodbrooke.org.uk

23rd-25th March: Quaker Peace & Social Witness Spring Conference, Alfreton <https://www.quaker.org.uk/events/2018-qpsw-annual-spring-conference>

25th March-2nd April: European and Middle East Young Friends Spring Gathering, Molyallon Quaker Centre, Ireland,
www.emeyf.org

30th March-2nd April: Young Adult Friends Retreat
www.woodbrooke.org.uk

13th-15th April: YFGM Planning Weekend, Shrewsbury

4th-7th May: Yealy Meeting, Friends House London
<http://www.quaker.org.uk/ym/>

25th-28th May: YFGM, Manchester

30th June: Young Quaker and the New Economy conference, Friends House, London

31st Aug-2nd Sept: YFGM Planning Weekend (venue tbc)

26th-28th October: YFGM (venue tbc)