

# QUIET WAYS



The Newsletter of Sussex East Area Meeting

May 2017

## Dates for your Diary

**24 May:** Ecumenical Thinktank: "India Revisited": A talk by Andrew Wingate, an Anglican priest who taught for seven years at Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary in Madurai, South India. At Christ Church, Prince Edwards Road, Lewes, 7:30 – 9:00 p.m. All are welcome; free event.

**2 June:** Family Day at Friends House in London – 10:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. An opportunity for families with children to explore Friends House and find out about the work that goes on there. For details and booking, email [cypadmin@quaker.org.uk](mailto:cypadmin@quaker.org.uk) or ring 020 7663 1013.

**3 June:** LGSRAS Plant Sale on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers – 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. at the Market Tower, Lewes – please email [lgsraslewes@gmail.com](mailto:lgsraslewes@gmail.com) for details or offers to help

**10 June:** Area Meeting Study Day at Herstmonceux, 10:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. with a picnic lunch – theme will be the refugee crisis – details to follow

**10 June:** Memorial Meeting for Terry Baker at the Luxford Centre in Uckfield, 2:30 p.m. Uckfield LM hopes that Friends will stay for refreshments afterwards.

**10 June:** Summer Fayre at Bernhard Baron Cottage Homes, 2 – 4 p.m. – details to follow

**17 June:** Regional Meeting: "The Life & Writings of James Nayler" – at Westmeston Parish Hall (one mile east of Ditchling on the Lewes Road)– 10:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. – please bring food to share for lunch – venue opens just after 10 a.m. for tea / coffee / fellowship – all are welcome.

## Refugee Tales

In July volunteers will "walk in solidarity" with refugees and detainees in UK detention centres, between Runnymede and Westminster, from 1 – 5 July, and you are invited to participate. The Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group (GDWG) (Registered Charity 1124328) has organised this walk in the hope that participants will reflect on the long and dangerous journeys refugees make today as they seek sanctuary.

Refugee Tales will present stories at each resting point, where writers and musicians will perform tales written following conversations with refugees and detainees. These people held in immigration removal centres in the UK have asked the charity to help spread their words so together we can end the scandalous detention suffered by people whose only crime has been to flee war and persecution.

GDWG befriends immigration detainees at Tinsley House and Brook House at Gatwick Airport. Detainees are vulnerable, often traumatised by their experiences before arriving in the UK, isolated by detention and by a lack of English, fearing the future whilst held indefinitely for weeks, months or even years.

GDWG is calling for the introduction of a 28-day time limit on immigration detention. At present the UK is the only country in Europe to detain people

indefinitely. Such psychological torture should not be tolerated. It is a waste of money and a shocking waste of human life and health.

You are welcome to join Refugee Tales for the entire 5-day walk, a day's walk (between 6 – 11 miles) or an evening's reading. Your participation would be helpful and uplifting to refugees detained in the UK. Details and online booking can be found on [www.refugeetales.org](http://www.refugeetales.org) If you cannot participate in the walk, please consider writing to your MP regarding the scandal of indefinite detention in the UK. Any additional information you might need to compose a letter can be found at the website named above.



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## Editorial

Dear Friends, a number of the articles in this Quiet Ways come from the excellent Lewes Meeting newsletter for May, edited by Liz Brookes. They all resonate beyond the local meeting and I hope that sharing them will help Friends across the AM.

It strikes me that it might be helpful if we had a regular Dates for your Diary Column for the whole of AM too. What do Friends think?



*Hastings Friends Meeting House.*

## Triennial Report Hastings Local Meeting 2017

*Peter Bolwell - Clerk*

Meeting for Worship has regularly been held at the Meeting House every Sunday at 10.30 am. On alternate Sundays various Friends are requested to choose an appropriate reading from either Quaker Faith & Practice or from the Advices & Queries. Several copies of both are placed around the Meeting House before Meeting for Worship begins for Friends to use and refer to. In addition an informal "reading group" has been formed which meets at the homes of various Friends and which as its first project studied many of the chapters of Quaker Faith & Practice in detail over a period of several months.

Meetings for Business are held on the first Sunday of each month and full minutes are kept. In addition we try to inculcate a "social" dimension to the Meeting by holding a discussion group on topics of general interest after Meeting for worship on the third Sunday of every month, and a "shared lunch" on the fourth Sunday – including the fourth Sunday of December 2016 which happened to fall on 25th December. Twelve people participated on that occasion and found it to be a joyful and rewarding experience.

We maintain a library at the Meeting House and a Friend is specifically appointed on a triennial basis to monitor and organise this. We have set aside an annual budget of £150 for the acquisition of new titles when we become aware of any that are

likely to be useful or of interest to Members, Attenders and Enquirers.

Elders and Overseers are appointed for the care and guidance of the Meeting and of its Members. However the provision of "Oversight" is augmented and supplemented by a gathering held for the purposes of reviewing Oversight matters after Meeting for Worship once every alternate month to which all are invited. In addition Oversight is also carried out in a more informal and social atmosphere in "circle groups" which meet at Friends homes twice a month.

One of the tasks regularly undertaken once a year in respect of Oversight is the decision which Members and Attenders should receive a Schedule inviting them to contribute financially to the support of the Meeting. The accounts of the Local meeting are meticulously kept by the local meeting Treasurer and in addition are scrutinised by at least two other Friends before the accounts are finalised every year.

A major outreach project in 2016 was organised to publicise the 150th anniversary since the opening of the newly-built Meeting House for worship in 1866. Representatives from various organisations and from the local community were invited to a special celebration in the Meeting House to coincide with the launch of a new book on the history of Hastings Quaker Meeting written by local Friend and historian Paula Radice.

## Sheer Gratuity

As human beings, no matter how virtuously we try to live and construct our relationships, there's always a sense in which we are in tension, in competition, in which our attempts to love will be compromised. But precisely because God is not one of us .... God's love is of the overflowing kind which we cannot control but which is simply sheer gratuity. And that is ultimately where a sense of security as a theological orientation is going to come from ....

Simon Barrow, Director of Ekklesia  
See also:

<http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/>

## Seeing God in Service

**Sunetra Sarker, actor, whose credits include 'Casualty' and more recently, 'Broadchurch', appeared on "Who do you think you are?" on 22 February, 2017 exploring the Bengali heritage that she had tried hard to ignore as she grew up in Liverpool.**

Sunetra's great, great aunt was Charu Probha. Charu received her school certificate in 1895, one of the first Indian girls to do so. The programme asserts that this was because her father was an enlightened man. She went on to be an early feminist in the sub-continent and was imprisoned by the British Raj three times because of her views. Her longest period of imprisonment was for sixteen months.

Charu met Mahatma Gandhi several times and corresponded with him. Sunetra, full of emotion, reads part of the following from one of Gandhi's letters to Charu in the programme.

As at Patna, April 9, 1934

My Dear Charu Probha.

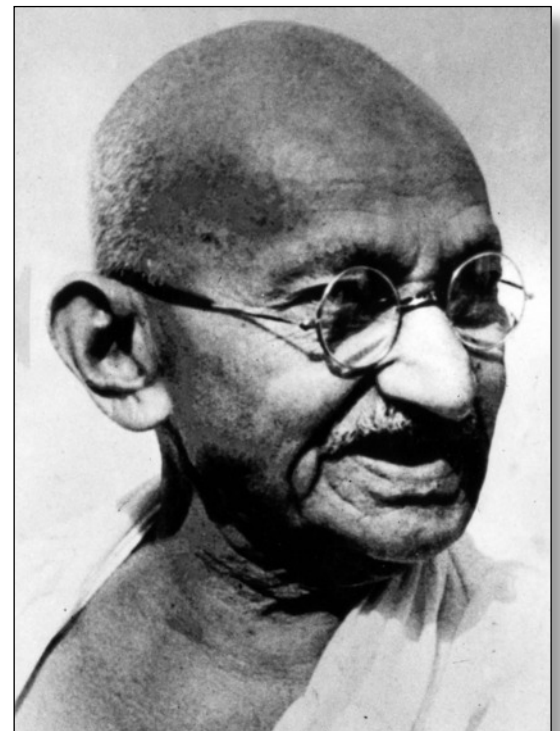
Nonsense, you must not give way to despair like this. Sadhus will only put one interpretation on the Gita. It is the third chapter of the Gita again and again. There Krishna says, "I do not stop working for one moment. If I did, the whole world would perish." He says again, "No one stops work for a moment, only everyone but the knowing works helplessly." Let us work knowingly and voluntarily, not for self but for the whole of humanity and we shall surely see God face to face. Our humanity is in India. We may not serve her so as to injure others and [then] it becomes service to God. We must learn to see God in such service. This is the yoga of the Gita and no other.

Don't write doleful letters to me. Just begin the service that easily comes to you and you will soon expand and find joy.

Love, Gandhi



Gandhi spinning. Location unknown, late 1940s. *Image from Wikimedia Commons*



Mohandas K. Gandhi *Image from Wikimedia Commons*



## Quaker Voluntary Action Retreats

**Quaker Voluntary Action (QVA) organises working retreats in Britain, Europe and beyond, in which volunteers participate in practical projects and reflective sessions promoting spiritual development and meaningful engagement in the world.**

The range of activities includes gardening, renovation, olive harvesting, decorating, sustainability and woodland management. The retreats include practical engagement as well as elements of study, reflection and fellowship. In 2017 working retreats are available in: Estonia (June / July) - Poland (July) - Swarthmoor (September) - Slovenia (September) - Ramallah (October).

Participants arrange and pay their own travel and insurance costs, and the host centre, organisation or meeting provides accommodation. The cost for these events includes all meals. Work tasks are matched to participants' skills and capabilities.

Each retreat is led by experienced facilitators, and groups consist of 8-12 people, of all ages and abilities. Retreats are open to Quakers and those in sympathy with Quakers. Bursary help is available.

For further details see [www.qva.org.uk](http://www.qva.org.uk) - email [mail@qva.org.uk](mailto:mail@qva.org.uk) or ring 07530 844611.



## Restorative Justice

**Princess Anne visited East Sussex in February to mark the third year of coordinated restorative justice efforts across the county. She is patron of the Restorative Justice Council and on her visit she met not only with Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner and local dignitaries, but also volunteer restorative justice facilitators, victims of crime, and a former offender. (1)**

The chaplaincy team at Lewes Prison is involved in restorative justice via the Sycamore Tree Project, a victim awareness programme teaching the principles of restorative justice. It is taught in prisons in groups of up to twenty, by trained volunteers. Prisoners explore the effects of crime on victims, offenders, and the community, and discuss what it means to take responsibility for their actions. (2) The Sycamore Tree Project brings victims of crime, and offenders, face to face. It runs in 40 prisons across England and Wales. (2)

Quakers have been advocates for restorative justice since the 1970s. A 1979 Quaker publication, *Six Quakers Look at Crime and Punishment* states:

“We believe in overcoming evil with good. We must speak and act from our own inner light to the inner light in others as Jesus did. He showed and taught love, respect and concern for all, particularly those rejected by others, reaching out to the good in them. (3)

Restorative justice is an alternative to retribution and punishment, and makes reconciliation possible. (3)

The Restorative Justice Council, a national charity promoting restorative justice, holds that “restorative processes bring those harmed by crime or conflict, and those responsible for the harm, into communication, enabling everyone affected by a particular incident to play a part in repairing the harm and finding a positive way forward” (3).

Initial studies suggest that restorative justice reduces post-traumatic stress disorder in victims of crime, as well as reducing rates of re-offending. A reduction in re-offending is of course hoped and planned for, and research is being undertaken to measure the effectiveness of the Sycamore Tree Project in particular. (2)

For more details, you might want to visit the Prison Fellowship website see Note (2)

### Notes

1 The Eastbourne Herald on-line 23/02/17, accessed 31/03/17.

2 Prison Fellowship website, [www.prisonfellowship.org.uk](http://www.prisonfellowship.org.uk) specifically <http://bit.ly/2qvEBQQ> accessed 31/03/17.

3 From WHY PRISON? A Framework to encourage discussion about the purposes, effectiveness and experience of imprisonment as a response to criminal actions, published by Quaker Peace & Social Witness, Crime, Community and Justice Sub-Committee, April 2013, reprinted August 2014.

## Terry Baker

Our recently departed Friend Terry Baker, left several notes, written over quite a long period, for his wife Rosemary, noting that they should be read "post-mortem." Rosemary read this one at the April Uckfield Outreach Meeting at Holy Cross Priory and has asked for it to be shared with Friends via Quiet Ways.

10/1/10 Much Snow

Dear Rosemary,  
Could you or someone read the following out at an appropriate time in meeting. *But only if you are happy about it*

"I would like to thank all the extraordinary and the ordinary people who frequent Lewes Meeting House for the love and Friendship they have given me since I first started attending

meeting pretty regularly in early 1960. Many of these people don't seem very unusual to start with but the combination of love, commitment, unselfish service and concern, wise and knowledgeable advice has been such a support in my life and without the Quaker influence my life would have been so much poorer. I think the Lewes Quaker Meeting (and wider) is a Treasure of extraordinary value.

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## Update from LGSRAS (Lewes Group in Support of Refugees & Asylum Seekers)

**LGSRAS held an extraordinary general meeting on 29th March, where decisions about the future of the group were made.** LGSRAS is now on the path to becoming a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO), to promote and continue the work being undertaken on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers in Lewes District. In future, Gift Aid can be claimed on subscriptions and donations, enabling the group to maximise their funds. A name change was agreed, so in future LGSRAS will be known as LOSRAS (Lewes Organisation in Support of Refugees & Asylum Seekers). This name change will be enacted at the time of the CIO application, for a complete re-launch.

A new constitution is already up and running, and any member of LGSRAS/ LOSRAS is welcome to receive a full version of the EGM minutes. To do so, contact Alison

Bell whose details appear at the end of this article.

### Donations to Newhaven Food Bank

One useful way to support refugees and asylum seeking families is to support the Newhaven food bank,

where Syrian families settled in the local area are now accessing food.

The Newhaven food bank is seeking:- Toiletries, including shower gel and toilet roll - Nappies & baby wipes - Dry pasta - Pasta sauce - Tinned fruit, veg and fish - Packet soup (Maggi packets are popular) - UHT milk and sugar - Rice, lentils, oil - Kidney beans, chickpeas, cannellini beans, butter beans (dried) - Tinned tomatoes

However, Friends are asked to avoid donating the following (due to a surplus):- Breakfast tea bags -

Baked beans - Tinned soup - Cuppa soup

Donations can be dropped off at 109 High Street in Lewes, or if that is difficult, you can email Tilly (a local volunteer) who can collect and deliver boxes of donations, on [mathildagrivell@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mathildagrivell@hotmail.co.uk)

### Soup Aid

You might also like to drop in to the Hearth above Lewes Bus Station on a Friday, which is raising money for refugees in Calais and beyond. "Soup Aid" is held on Fridays between 12 – 2 pm, and the soup is delicious.

**If you would like to join LGSRAS/LOSRAS, please contact Alison Bell on 01273 470673 or via email: [alison.belldavies@gmail.com](mailto:alison.belldavies@gmail.com)**

## The Massive Open On-line Course (or MOOC)

A recent update from Woodbrooke states: "We are delighted to be running our hugely successful MOOC again in 2017, beginning on 22 May." This free 3-week online course entitled "Radical Spirituality: the early history of the Quakers" charts the key months of 1652, i.e. the birth of the Quaker movement, and will be led by Ben Pink Dandelion. Friends who participate in this free on-line training can expect to:

- Develop an understanding of the civil war as the context for the beginnings

- of Quakerism · Explore the mode and content of early Quaker writing
- Understand the importance of location for the beginnings of Quakerism · Engage with the key ideas of George Fox and other early Friends · Reflect on the consequences of key Quaker theological ideas
- Develop an understanding of Quaker history after 1652. To find out more or to join the course, visit

[www.futurelearn.com/courses/quakers](http://www.futurelearn.com/courses/quakers)

