

# Kingston and Wandsworth Area Quaker Meeting Spring 2026



*Figure 1 Ann Ulrick (Wandsworth) – Jade Vine*

"When I pray for peace, and that the hearts of those in authority may be changed, it is a promise that I shall do such things as write to those in power, share in vigils, and above all lead my own life, as far as possible, in such a manner as to take away the occasion for strife between individuals and between peoples."

QFP 2.27 Anna 1984

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## *The Future*

### *Christine Cannon (Esher) - Personal Musings on The Future*

Our every breath moves us into the future, which we then appropriate as the present. Taking a longer perspective, and surmising that we might live a bit longer, we make plans, have projects, plant seeds, post letters, take journeys, save money, email MPs, support charities. All signs of engaging with the future, hoping to influence it.

Some say 'live each day as though it were your last'; a bit solemn and worthy, a bit imponderable perhaps, or maybe just minimising cares and responsibility. The implication is that we can exercise choice bringing our personalities, our inherited abilities and learnt values into play. The words encourage reflection so that we avoid misfortunes.

But I was born a few years before 'the bomb'. I am of the first generation that grew up with the reality of the imminent threat of nuclear warfare, and knowledge of its immediate devastation and long-term genetic consequences. At some level of awareness (elusively unreal? still a possibility?), we nine-year-olds in the school playground, in between skipping, playing marbles, and hopscotch, would discuss how we would use the last minutes after a national warning. What would we choose to do in those last 4 minutes? Even at that age we mocked the Civil Defence advice about pasting brown paper over the windows and hiding in the cellar (if you had a cellar).

All this existential angst resulted six years later in some of us joining the Easter Weekend Aldermaston March.

And now seventy years on, despite hopes for non-proliferation treaties, nuclear weapons create international imbalance. Chemicals pollute the planet and remote-controlled drones annihilate cities and target and kill individuals. There is no escape.

My childhood imagination was blighted. Not for me chance or luck. I was never interested in fairy tales or science fiction. I have never invented an after-death existence - gardens of paradise, celestial angels, beautiful virgins?!

Our personal future is death. We don't know when or how, which is a blessing, but as we age we can surely hope it won't be too far off. Lovely personal experiences with siblings, of Spring and friends will have no lasting significance. I only hope not to have caused damage hurt or neglect.

And so I plant the seeds, tend and water them, watch the plants grow delighting in their beauty....and wonder whether I'll fade out before they do.

*Mona Saad (Esher) - House of Tomorrow*

**Kahlil Giblan – On Children, from The Prophet**

'And she said, Speak to us of Children.

And he said:

Your children are not your children.

They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you,

And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts,

For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls,

For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.

For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.

The Archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you with His might that His arrows may go swift and far.

Let your bending in the Archer's hand be for gladness;

For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so He loves also the bow that is stable.

*Mark Frankel (Richmond) - Quakers don't care about the future:*

When I saw the theme for this edition of the KWAM magazine as 'Quakers and the future' my reaction was, 'But the Quakers don't care about the future. They live in the present'. As the guru Kung Fu Panda says,

Yesterday's the past, tomorrow's the future, but today is a gift. That's why it's called the present.

Another guru, the Quaker parliamentarian T. Edmund Harvey (1875-1955), taught that the essence of Quakerism is freedom and fellowship under the living Christ. In an address to Guilford College, North Carolina, delivered in 1922, he spoke of openness and continuing spiritual renewal, noting that unity comes from the evolving freedom at the heart of Quakerism. He emphasised the importance to historic and modern Quakerism of freedom as the basis of the act of collective worship. The need is not for a worked-out system or philosophy but for seed-thoughts that live and grow in the individual and in the changing generations, for 'the living heart of Quakerism must find new expression in each succeeding age.'

Freedom can only happen in the present. If we look fearfully to the future or sorrowfully to the past, we are tying ourselves to suffering.

Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. (Matthew 6:34, KJV)

'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof' is rendered in other translations as 'Each day has enough trouble of its own.' The advice to focus on today's troubles highlights the importance of living in the present and addressing current responsibilities with faith. In other words, don't multiply troubles with debilitating regrets, fears and anxieties. We humans are programmed by evolutionary psychology to negative, defensive emotions. Random events, even a difficult piece of ministry in meeting for worship, can spark emotions whose origins are mysterious but may lie variously in our own upbringing, in the primitive fight-flight-freeze-fawn response or in the collective psyche. The freedom of the Quaker silent meeting for worship is an opportunity to practice digesting difficult emotions. This is not to say the Quaker meeting is just therapeutic; it is also a religious and spiritual event — though as T. Edmund Harvey suggested, these things ultimately are imponderable.

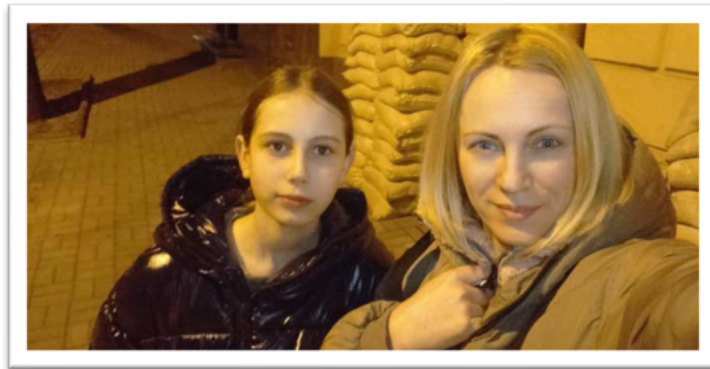
It is an exaggeration to say that Quakers don't care about the future in the sense they are irresponsible and live only for the moment, but we have faith in our process of waiting in the Light as an experience of transcendent freedom.

*Geoff Smith (Wandsworth) – Spring Tanka*

Tanka is the Japanese name for a short poem with syllables on each of its five lines following a 5-7-5-7-7 pattern, as in the following tanka to Spring.

The sky is clear blue,  
The trees are tipped with green leaves,  
Flowers are blooming,  
The air is filled with birdsong,  
As happens each year in Spring.

*Tanya Williams (Richmond) - The Art of Presence*



*Figure 2: Olha and her daughter in Lviv, 2026*

When images of war fill our TV screens, newspapers and social media feeds it's easy to feel numb, helpless and hopeless. Even more so when living in Ukraine.

"We need to run a workshop in Ukraine," said Friends Peace Teams' Olha, two years ago at our monthly meeting. Her face shone in the Zoom gloom of a Lviv bomb shelter. I was amazed that she had wifi. Electricity blackouts were frequent as Vladimir Putin was attacking Ukrainian power infrastructures.

Olha's hope is now coming to fruition. Friends Peace Teams are running a workshop in May titled 'The Art of Presence: Connecting with Yourself and Others in Times of Crisis.' It focuses on tools for trauma counselling that Olha and her colleague Yuliya have been using with groups and individuals in their work in Lviv since the war began in 2022.

Participants will be teachers, psychologists and social workers from smaller, more remote towns all over Ukraine. The venue in the Carpathian Mountains, close to Slovakia, is the safest area in Ukraine. People from regions experiencing war can travel there easily and meet safely and enjoy much needed respite from the more tense areas.

People will learn psychological counselling and peacebuilding tools, practice new skills, and share methods for restoring inner strength in a turbulent world. These resources are greatly needed in Ukraine, supporting people who can often feel alone in their efforts. As follow up, Olha and her colleague Yuliya will create a support group to provide ongoing training, companionship and support in using the tools when they return home.

“My children don’t like going to the shelter. My son ignores the air raid sirens, and my daughter sometimes goes down to the shelter,” said Olha. “There are many parents like me in Ukraine. We all worry about the safety of our children and look to the future with hope.”

The workshop will not end the war. But it will help people to keep going through it. It has given everyone involved something to look forward to and raised hopes of companionship and support.

*FPT Europe and Middle East always welcomes volunteers to join us, directly with our local teams, or remotely.*

Contact [europa.clerk@friendspeaceteams.org](mailto:europa.clerk@friendspeaceteams.org) or see <https://friendspeaceteams.org/eme/>



*Figure 3: Louise Alder, Last Night of the Proms 2025*

### *Hazel Morgan (Wandsworth) - Looking forward to the Proms*

“The trouble with the Proms”, say my fellow Gallery Prommers, “is that once they’ve started, they have to end. But then it’s only ten months to the next season!” So, we wait through the winter for the programme to be published, cheer when it is, and knuckle down to the process of booking which seems to get more complicated every year. But it’s worth it! For the music, of course, and for the camaraderie which is like no other. Eight weeks of standing in the queue, in the sunshine, wearing a T-shirt, tossing opinions around like footballs – a prospect to warm the heart.

*Emma Charleston (Wandsworth) – Speculative Futures*

With the theme of 'future' in mind, I thought I'd talk about one of my favourite areas of my design teaching practice. It's a methodology known as 'Speculative Futures', and the goal is to imagine potential future scenarios which are rooted in reality, but see our world travelling in sometimes radically different directions. Students are often encouraged to consider scenarios which are 'possible' (could happen), 'probable' (will probably happen), and 'preferable' (they think the world would be better if this thing happened).

For example, if we were thinking about 'transport', and the timeframe was 50 – 100 years from now, one 'possible' scenario would be that *'most cars are self-driving cars with no human pilot at the wheel'*. A 'probable' scenario (based on current trends) would be *'electric vehicles now amount for over 90% of cars on the road'* ... And a preferable scenario might be *'an increasing shift away from privately owned vehicles and a renewed focus on new, maintained and expanded public transport infrastructure'*.

Many design students are new to thinking in this way — being much more accustomed to framing their work in the current moment and creating with that in mind. It can be incredibly perspective shifting to imagine future worlds and then work backwards from there to figure out what would need to happen for us to arrive at that future. For design students this is an especially rewarding process — firstly because it is inherently a creative one... Storytelling and world-building are activities that most of them very readily lean into. But it is most valuable because it helps them to realise that every potential future comes about through a series of actions (or inactions), interventions, and subtle shifts, rather than all at once. Some of these actions, interventions and shifts are ones which they themselves might play a part in developing, though their future work.

By looking ahead and attempting to map trajectories, we can potentially start to understand the journeys that we will take to get there, and what might need to happen for us to land on those 'preferable' futures. This works on everything from a personal level right through to a societal level. We might feel that at that 'societal' level we are powerless, as individuals, to enact meaningful change, but by taking the time to understand tipping points, shifts in attitudes and ways of thinking, and collective habits that need to change, we can maybe start to grasp onto what impact we can in fact have.

What are your preferable futures, and how do we get there?

## KWAM Quarterly Spring 2026

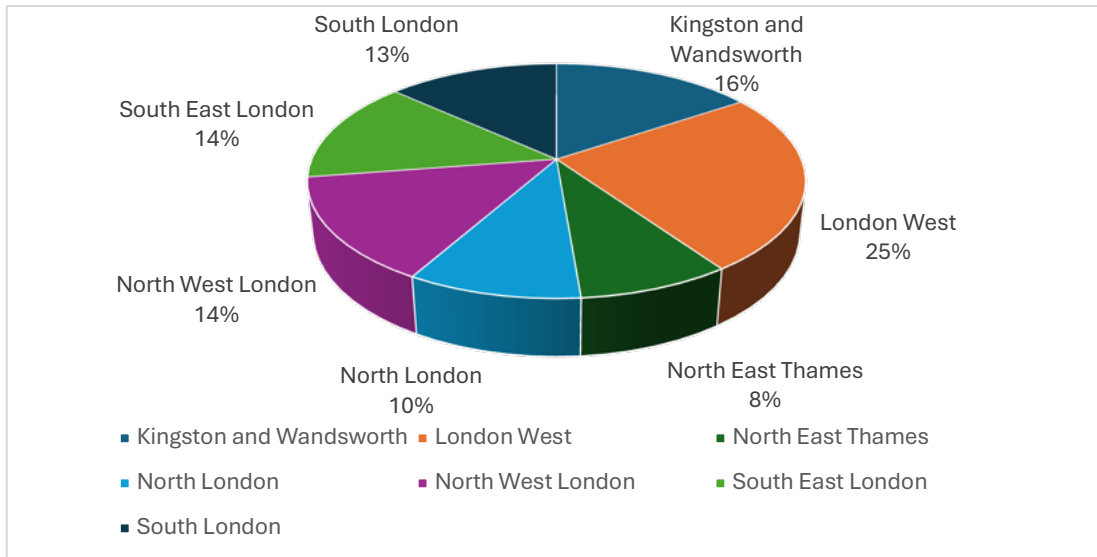


Figure 4: Share of Quaker members by Area Meeting in London 2025

### *Keith Walton (Wandsworth) - The state of Quakers in London*

At the turn of the year, there were 955 members and 601 attenders in the seven Area Meetings that make up the London Quaker Area. This is a drop of 40% in the 20 years to 2024, and nearly 30% in the last ten years.

Our Area Meeting started the year with 149 members and 101 attenders. That's a typical size for London, although London West AM had 236 members and North East Thames was down to 80.

In the same time, the number of meetings has fallen a bit more slowly, from 44 to 34. Two meeting houses have recently been sold – Esher and Romford – and three are on the market – Purley, Staines and Harlow. The planned refurbishment of Wandsworth is part of this process of us having fewer, but more inviting, meeting houses.

It's not clear that this decline will stop or slow down soon. That's why I'm keen that we reduce the number of jobs that we need to run our meetings and, where possible, simplify those that remain. That's the objective of the planned merger of the seven London Area Meetings into one, Quakers in London.

However, that's only half the work required. We need to encourage more people to attend. That's why our Area Meeting's outreach work is vital. We all need to play our part supporting the outreach team's excellent work, and be able to succinctly say, if asked (and perhaps sometimes if not asked), why our Quakerism means so much to us.

*Carol Griffiths (Wandsworth) - After the threshing comes the winnowing*



*Figure 5: Winnowing*

I have been reflecting on our recent Threshing Meeting to help determine whether Kingston and Wandsworth Area Quaker Meeting should join with the six other London Area Meetings and London Quakers Property Trust, the charity which looks after Quaker meeting houses across London, in the creation of a single London-wide Area Quaker Meeting.

Since I've always been interested in linguistics, I looked up the word 'threshing' and found out it's the second step in the process of making grain edible. The first stage is obviously harvesting or reaping. After threshing comes winnowing, which is when you separate the chaff from the grain or remove pests from stored grain. However, the word can also mean narrowing down a big group to a smaller, better-quality one.

I really hope that the hopes, fears, and sentiments expressed at our threshing will help friends in KWAM and those working on the single Area Meeting to winnow the current proposals and find a solution that works for us all. A solution that works for Quakers in South West London as well as for the wider London Quakers - supporting us as a worshipping group, strengthening our community, helping us get more people interested in Quakerism and encouraging newcomers to stay with us, and securing the future of Quakers in South West London.

*Mary Russell (Richmond) - Quakers in London: the Future?*

It is April 2032. My grandson Liam is 22 and making his first visit alone from New Zealand to London. We walk along by the Thames near Teddington, he has to go slowly and start talking about religion.

“I am interested in spirituality but I’m not in any group. Do you belong to a church Grandma”

“Yes, I go to Quakers in Richmond. There have been a lot of changes in the past few years. Can I tell you about them?”

“Yes, go on”. He looks as though he hopes this will be interesting, but suspects it may not be. It is important to me though, so I press on.

“In 2027 the seven Areas in London merged into a single Area Meeting with one board of trustees. This was partly because we did not have enough capacity to run our smaller Area Meeting.”

“So how did things work out?”

At this point the future divides into two:

**Sliding doors: The first future**

“Since then we have had some problems, but also a lot of successes. At first all the focus was on setting up ‘The Centre’, and no attention was given to local groups of Meetings. We did not realise that a lot of our energy as a faith group lay in local groups doing things together. However, in the last few months before we reorganised, we did set up groups of Meetings, particularly for working with outreach. That meant we could work together as small teams which were accountable to the London Area Meeting but also had some freedom, and budget, for local initiatives. We were close enough to meet regularly in person as well as on Zoom.

Now our Local Meetings are going well and we have attracted several new people.

You might like to come along on Sunday. There will be a few other people your age.”

“I’m not sure about being quiet for an hour, but go on”

“Now we are doing well. Thanks to London Area Meeting we have more energy to work together and support each other. We also have more knowledge and connection with what is happening across London. The London Area Meeting has done everything it could to encourage this.”

**Sliding doors: The second future**

“Things did not go well. The focus was on setting up ‘the Centre’, but no attention was given as to how local groups of Meetings might work together. We were told we could get together if we wanted to, but in practice everything went through the Centre.

The trouble was that any changes took such a long time to make. Some larger Meetings could do things on their own, but there was nothing to support their work with smaller Meetings. These were left to themselves and many closed. In London ‘the Centre’ was in charge, and a lot of power lay in various committees which were very remote from ordinary members. I still go sometimes, but a lot of the life has been drained away.”

Liam remembers something

“That makes sense. In NZ I had a job in a sports shop. We were part of a chain but the local store had a lot of freedom and staff worked well together. After an earthquake we were able to think of a couple of ways to stay in business, including a stall in the local market. I know of another shop where they did nothing for six months because they were totally directed by the Centre, which needed to make detailed plans for each area. It took them a really long time to do this, and in the end their business failed.”

“That’s such a good example, Liam. I wish we had understood about teams a few years ago. But you are still welcome to come if you are interested”.

“Give it a rest, Grandma. Let me tell you about my last epic surfing sesh.”

*Thinking Allowed*

*Geoff Smith (Wandsworth) - Ode to the Dogmatic Mind*

A dogma's like a choking weed,  
Its wretched self is all it feeds,  
With claims to know what's right and best,  
To hell, it says, with all the rest:  
A bully craving wide applause,  
With cheap insults and loud guffaws,  
Bereft of brains, devoid of sense,  
Smug advocate of ignorance,  
Presenting shallow certainties  
As fathomless profundities,  
And sharing feelings so damn strong,  
There's just no way they can be wrong:  
A common failing, as is known,  
To which we all are sadly prone:  
Thank goodness, then, the spoken word  
Is not the only way we're heard,  
And sometimes when we would express  
Thoughts such as these silence works best.

*Kathryn Perry (Richmond) - Being Fair*

I used to volunteer in the local comprehensive school; once a week, I would mentor a Year 7 student during his General Studies class. He was a lovely kid, but he struggled to keep up with the work and, if he found it too hard, he would start to misbehave. I was there to help him stay on the rails. Knowing someone was there for him made a bit of a difference, and I was glad to be that person.

There was another kid who had much more help, paid for by the council, but the outcome was different. One of my children was at a special school in early childhood, so I was familiar with learning difficulties and neurodivergence, but my sympathy with this child, and the way his behaviour was handled, gradually ebbed away. The problem seemed to me to be less a diagnosable condition, than failure by the school to manage a behavioural problem. Each week, there was the risk that he would disrupt the class and waste everyone's time. His assistant had become his advocate, as is so often the case, and said, 'He's a diamond, really'.

I thought, what about the effect of his behaviour on the other kids?

Year 7 children are very young and often eager to learn. At the end of one ruined class, I was told by a boy who had been enthusiastic about the day's topic, 'He does this all the time', with a look of hopeless sadness.

It wasn't fair.

The problem wasn't money. It stemmed from a culture which has lost sight of the balance between the needs of individuals and the needs of the groups to which they belong. It has forgotten about mutuality and co-operation. This is not an argument in favour of utilitarianism ('the greatest happiness of the greatest number'). It is in favour of thinking carefully about how we can all flourish, with a bit of give and take. It is an argument for fairness, which is relative, rather than for some absolute notion of justice.

The child I mentored hadn't qualified for SEND provision and honestly, I think that was fine. He just needed a helping hand to feel included amongst his peers. The other child ended up with an advocate rather than a teacher, which did him no favours. I'm inclined to see this as a micro example of what Paul Ovenden, former special advisor to Keir Starmer, has called the Stakeholder State, where government and the civil service are bombarded by the demands of special interest groups. We're not special, friends: we're all in it together.



Figure 6: Ann Ulrick (Wandsworth) - Magnolia, Kew Gardens

### *Susie Paskins (Wandsworth) – Larkin's The Trees*

I like this poem partly because of the marvellous first lines which express so well the way that the leaves first appear so quietly and gently after Winter's barrenness, until they burst forth in the wonderful abundance that we are currently seeing. Of course, since this is Larkin, the feeling of death is never far away. Yet the poem ends with a glorious affirmation of the future: the trees begin once more to flourish and so can we begin again 'afresh, afresh, afresh'.

#### **The Trees**

The trees are coming into leaf  
Like something almost being said  
The recent buds relax and spread  
Their greenness is a kind of grief.

Is it that they are born again  
And we grow old? No, they die too,  
Their yearly trick of looking new  
Is written down in rings of grain.

Yet still the unresting castles thresh  
In full grown thickness every May.  
Last year is dead, they seem to say,  
Begin afresh, afresh, afresh.

*Oli Griffiths (Wandsworth) – A Special Space*

Among the several projects in which I am engaged perhaps my favourite is the development of what could loosely be termed an 'edible forest garden'. The central idea is that pretty well everything in the patch produces something that is edible by humans – and it turns out various animals too – from rhubarb to herbs and berries, to nuts and apples and even grapes from the vines that climb through the trees. My self-imposed challenge is to make all of this fruitful (or 'abundant' in the lingo) without using 'inputs' from anywhere else. No poisons to kill insects or 'weeds', no additives to change the nature of the soil, no fertiliser or supplements to make it more bountiful.

It is an exercise in encouraging the natural cooperation between the various flora: gaudy flowers attract pollinators to their drabber cousins; plants with tap roots bring minerals to the surface to help out nutrient-deficient companions; aromatic plants (we have many, many chives) put off pests; trees provide shade to those that prefer a cooler existence, and so on. The important thing is to disturb the soil as little as possible because that's where the magic really happens, through a sub-surface network of mycorrhizal fungi. A brief lifting of the soil reveals these very fine filaments everywhere doing their work shuttling nutrients and signals from plant to plant so that new ones can quickly grow and older ones be nurtured and supported when they find life a bit tough.

Each organism can contribute according to its ability, to each according to its need. Some are full of show but don't provide much to their companions – yes you, you pretty sunflowers – others do apparently simple jobs such as keeping the soil protected from sun and rain with no fuss at all (thank you thyme). A few are each wonderful and productive in their own way but just can't get on with each other, such as tomatoes and potatoes. The allelopaths such as fennel get along with almost nobody but they still have their place, albeit perhaps not in the centre of things.

In this I seem to have stumbled on my ideal community, where each contributes as much or as little as they will and finds its own particular niche. There's no need for great organisation, or straight clear lines, or for a controlling genius – just a chop here and a bit of weed control there. Wordsworth reflects in Tintern Abbey:

On that best portion of a good man's life,  
His little, nameless, unremembered, acts  
Of kindness and of love.

This is what my floral community exemplifies, and for me this is heaven.

*Jacqueline Merry Bernard (Wandsworth) - Message to Wandsworth Meeting on the occasion of being accepted into membership on Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2026*

In this fast-changing world it has become more and more difficult to make commitments that can remain. In fact, the Quaker Testimonies to Peace and Equality are dear to my heart and to my becoming a Quaker. I feel that however small my contribution is, it still counted and part of an historic hope that endures.

I have asked myself whether this formal commitment makes me feel different. I woke up the other morning and realised I felt full of joy at the thought of coming to the end of a long trek and in tempestuous times. I have found hope and strength in, what I feel is, a special community.

*Ben Mango (Wimbledon) – The Debt of the North*

In the last newsletter I wrote a piece about how important it is to take action about the climate crisis. There was one central piece of context that I left out and that I want to speak to that here.

The climate crisis has come about through industrialisation, the growth and ongoing development of “civilisation”. This is the past and continued exploitation of people and land, particularly in the Global South, so that many (but not all) in the Global North can maintain a convenient and excessively consumerist lifestyle. The greed and desire of the rich to manipulate power structures to get even richer has created a massively growing inequality between the haves and have nots. In this imbalance it is important to remember that the climate crisis affects the least well-off the most, and its impact has been and continues to affect the global South more than the global North, and the global South has done the least to contribute to the climate crisis.

The systemic oppression of the global South by the global North continues now by means of indebtedness, which is another form of slavery in all but name, and manipulation of the means of production, as well as other ways. This is how much of our society runs. It is bound up with an implicit and assumed racism and prejudice which seeks to justify these inequalities. This structure is partly maintained because we do not encounter on a day-to-day basis the poverty and struggling that our society produces. Although more and more this reality is increasingly apparent in the wholesale murder and destruction currently taking place in the Middle East. What would happen if we truly saw everyone in the world as our brothers and sisters and could feel the suffering that we are causing? Would we tolerate the inequality and oppression present? No, we would not. So do act on the climate crisis, but also for the inequality that it is created by.

## *Events*

### *Fred Ashmore (Kingston) – Growing South*

#### **A weekend together at High Leigh for the three South of the river Area Meetings**

What an excellent time we had together! We had 86 Friends old and young (down to two years old, I think) from South London AM, Southeast London AM and Kingston and Wandsworth AM gathered at High Leigh conference centre in Hertfordshire over the weekend 7-9 November 2025. It started with a briefing (yes, it was brief!) followed by the first of the many good solid meals that High Leigh gave us, then a pub quiz delivered by Josh Selfe, our Local Development Worker for London. Josh spent the whole weekend with us being the compere, together with Julia Stacey our London CYP worker who did a great job of corralling, marshalling, stimulating and coordinating the numerous younger Friends. Josh gave us a super quiz, - not a standard skill for Quakers but it stretched us all – the expressions round the table were hilarious. Epilogue led by Mary Russell and Alex Ruffer of Richmond gently led us back to a calmer reflective state before heading for bed.

The following morning kicked off with Kenn Cukier of Richmond LM teasing us to explore building community in three aspects – reciprocity and process and purpose. After the break, South London AM led us to explore together Building a Quaker Life, with table groups and discussion. Fascinating vehement argument at the table where I was, and much to think about.

After lunch we had a less talkative afternoon, about half of us doing a glorious 3 mile circuit of the lovely beech woods round High Leigh (thank you David Holtam of Wandsworth LM and backmarker Barbara Limon of [Forest Hill LM]) and others learning about cross-stitch from Kate Bone, doing puzzles or games or just relaxing. We came back together for SELAM to lead us in talking about the nature of our Quaker welcome- what works and what we do (\*let's hope these coincide). Another enormous meal to ballast us all before the gentle jots of a ceilidh with the Famous Potatoes band, come to keep us on the hop. Wow that was fun. All ages taking part, (even Alice's helping dog I think), and the Barclay Hall at High Leigh straining a bit to hold us all as we danced the OXO, the garden chain and the Circassian circle. What a good band and caller.

When we ran out of steam and music, the reflective among us gathered for an excellent epilogue led by David Bale and Isabel Dooley from Bromley taking QfP 21.22 as a reading.

Sunday morning was all age worship and a children's creation of a model community; featuring a hover bicycle and several other forms of transport as well as a couple of meeting houses in which to be communal. Different and excellent, drawing us together very well.

Younger friends led us again after the break to talk about how they see building community and what they hope to see, all ably compered by Sam Burnside and Eve Holtam.

Our final session after lunch was as led, prompted by watching a fascinating video from Quaker Connect, an American group trying to help Meetings to find their sense of purpose and renewal. There seemed to be a strong feeling that this exploration would interest the whole of Quakers in London, if we can find a way to bring them – us – together in learning and exploration in the spirit.

We went our ways with heads buzzing with the ideas and thoughts we had shared and explored, but without a clear decision on meeting again. I really hope we will. I loved meeting so many Friends from other Meetings, feeling our bond as Quakers and sensing a strong shared appetite for community. We hear that High Leigh is building a bigger hall – perhaps one that could accommodate Quakers in London all together. I'd go like a shot.

We warmly thank our speakers and the staff who so helped us and the amiable efficient people who hosted us at their Conference Centre. And the band! And thank you all, Friends, for whole-hearted participation.

*David Holtam (Wandsworth) - Young Friends Away Weekend*



*Figure 7: Young Friends at Forest Hill Away Weekend*

On Saturday 7 March a group of 8 young people aged 11-18 and 5 adult volunteers made their way to Forest Hill for the weekend. On Saturday afternoon we enjoyed a walking tour around Bermondsey, hosted by local Quaker Sheila Taylor, who showed us key spots from the history of the remarkable Ada and Alfred Salter. Ada had been mayor of Bermondsey from 1922, the first female mayor in London, and Alfred was a GP who became the Member of Parliament. They campaigned for better housing, clearing dreadful slums, planted trees and cared tirelessly for the young, the sick and the poor. Ada ran girls' clubs in the area. Tragically, their only daughter Joyce died aged 8 of scarlet fever. BYM has an annual Salter lecture, named in their memory.

We enjoyed a picnic lunch in the Ada Salter garden at Southwark Park, and from there we visited the Brunel Tunnel museum in Rotherhithe, where the first tunnel under the Thames

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was dug (now housing the Windrush Line). Feeling educationally nourished and physically tired, we headed back to the meeting house for biscuits, luxury hot chocolate and squirry cream, and a game of Mafia.

In the evening we ate double portions of pasta bake, Madeira cake and custard, and got dressed up in the style of 1930s train passengers for a very dramatic and highly entertaining murder mystery game. Most players were able to correctly deduce the identity of the murderer who done it, the guilty character being a detective by the name of Hugh Durnit. We ended a happy day with a short epilogue in the meeting room.

On Sunday morning, International Women's Day, we awoke to news of the Grand Prix result from one or two who had arisen extremely early (or stayed up extremely late!) to follow events in Melbourne, sang a few songs, and enjoyed delicious pancakes and hot cross buns as part of Forest Hill Quaker Meeting's monthly shared breakfast. A bumper 24 children and young people joined the Children's and Junior Meeting, on the topic of the Salters, before heading into the meeting room to join the adults for all age worship.

We were all given a card shaped like a candle to write the names of "shining lights" – Quakers who have inspired us. After meeting for worship some helped in the garden, including clearing a memorial stone removed from the old meeting house/burial ground in Peckham, which included commemoration of Ada and Alfred Salter. Around this we placed all the "shining lights" that Friends had written in meeting for worship. We shared lunch with Forest Hill Friends and went on our way feeling very grateful for a super weekend together and looking forward to seeing each other again soon.

Sheila Taylor shared a lovely short film (6 mins) which was made for the Salter centenary by the local secondary school. (The one which is now on the site of the school that the Salters' daughter Joyce attended.) It depicts Joyce as she was back in 1910 and then imagines her as a contemporary schoolgirl playing football with her friends on the river path and in the Ada Salter Garden.

## *Book Review*

### *Linda Murgatroyd (Wandsworth) – The Rose Field by Philip Pullman*

I have just finished reading *The Rose Field*, Philip Pullman's latest novel, the third in *The Book of Dust* series, which continues Lyra's journey that started in *His Dark Materials*.

These novels are set in a series of parallel worlds; Lyra's home world has many similarities with our own, but others are very different. One of the wonderful aspects of Pullman's worlds is the diverse creatures who live there. They include humans whose souls take physical form as animals, witches who live for centuries and fly on cloud-pine branches, armoured bears, gryphons and many others. These creatures have different needs, likes, and fears, and experience their worlds in very different ways. Lyra's curiosity, search for truth and imagination enable her to make friendships with some of them, sometimes adopting different personas and roles. In taking responsibility for self-care, helping others and accepting help herself, she wins through several challenges on her quest.

*The Rose Field* is a great holiday read - engrossing and entertaining. It also gives much food for thought about the world we live in, our relationships with others, the mysterious, invisible forces around us, and different ways of searching for truth. Separation is a particular theme - both being divided within ourselves and apart from our nearest and dearest, our home, our community.

It seems to me that we are currently between worlds in many different ways. The pace of change is accelerating and this will continue, fed by a mix of AI, climate and nature breakdown etc. Social changes at national and international level are part of this, and communities are having to adapt rapidly, including spiritual communities. How can we best respond, bearing in mind the variety of others' needs and hopes as well as our own?

The spiritual journey is always an adventure. So is working in good faith with those who are different from ourselves. Can we be brave enough to let go of personal preferences, and listen with open hearts to Spirits' leadings? It can feel risky and uncomfortable, but this can also be a way into understanding new truths and finding fresh directions. Like Lyra, we may need to concentrate hard to discern the guidance we are being given, letting go of logical thinking opening our hearts and minds in other ways. But our inner guide is always there, and the more we attend to it the better it will help us negotiate the messynesses and uncertainties in our changing world and help bring about a future in which truth and love can flourish.

## *Absent Friends*

### *Susie Paskins (Wandsworth) - Jane Lapotaire*



*Figure 8: Jane Lapotaire*

On a beautiful Spring day, Shakespeare's birthday, several members of Wandsworth Meeting joined Jane's friends and family for her funeral in the Actors' church, Covent Garden. Outside was the bustle and noise of Covent Garden and the street performers, inside was all calm and a spirit of joyful thankfulness as we remembered Jane and her great gifts as an actor, writer and teacher. Jane had meticulously planned the readings and music, which ranged from her singing 'La Vie en Rose' as Edith Piaf to a recording of her impassioned plea for peace as the Queen of France in Henry V, a reminder of her extraordinary range as an actor. Gregory Doran of the Royal Shakespeare Company gave the eulogy, concluding with 'There's a great spirit gone'. I don't think I was the only one to have a tear in my eye at this point!

Jane's brilliant career was cut short when she suffered a serious brain injury in 2000. For someone whose whole identity was bound up with performance, being on stage and teaching Shakespeare, this was an impossibly hard blow. She found noise and crowds almost unbearable and was glad to find the peace of the Warwickshire Quaker meeting which was near her cottage. She writes in 'Time Out of Mind', 'The silence of the meeting house is balm to my soul. Centuries of peace unfurl from the walls and engulf me. It is easier to discard thought in the healing comfort of other people's quiet. I am filled with gratitude for the peaceful figures around me'. When in London she started coming to Wandsworth Meeting and formed particularly attachments to two Friends of profound and deep-rooted spirituality, Maria Andreanszky and Stella Luce. Jane visited Maria weekly and hoped to publish a fictionalised account of Maria's extraordinary journey from Hungary to the UK through war-torn Europe and her discovery of Quakers, but sadly she could not find a publisher who was interested. She gained an enormous amount from Maria's quiet and resolute faith.

Jane loved above all a Meeting that was completely silent. She was often impatient of the ministry and found the chatter after Meeting very difficult. She also rebuffed people who tried to say how much her stage appearances had meant to them: 'I am not here as an actor!' She was however extraordinarily generous to the Meeting, offering poetry and Shakespeare readings to raise money. She prepared for these as meticulously as for any stage performance.

When Covid struck and the Meeting for Worship went onto Zoom, Jane was a faithful attender. The Meeting was quieter, more peaceful, and Jane found that easier. She was very grateful to Elders for continuing the Meeting on Zoom even after it was possible to be back in the meeting house.

No one who knew Jane will ever forget her commitment to her art, her intensity, her deep spirituality, and her personal kindness. She battled increasingly with ill health and life was not easy. After her funeral a few members of the Meeting accompanied her simple wicker coffin to a woodland burial ground, where in an atmosphere of silent and thankful worship she was buried. To adapt some lines from her beloved Shakespeare: 'Good night, sweet soul, and flights of angels sing thee to thy rest'.

*Gill Holdsworth (Kingston) – John Ford*



*Figure 9: John Ford*

I first met John when he and Paddy joined Kingston Meeting about 15 years ago. To me, he was always the “Quiet Quaker” – a calm and reliable presence in Meeting for Worship often giving ministry about things that had given him joy. This may have been in the dance classes that he led, or playing the clarinet with Paddy and a group of musical friends; or it could have been tales of his and Paddy’s travels abroad and dancing together in exotic places. Over the past year, as his illness progressed, the joyful experiences became smaller in size but just as frequent. A short drive out to Box Hill to look at the view; sunlight on trees and birdsong in the garden were conveyed to us with just as much delight as his previous, more active pleasures.

But John was not a “daffodil ministry” Quaker. He was upheld by a firm faith from which his insights stemmed. Over the years he gave hours of service to Kingston Meeting and the other Meetings to which he had belonged in the past. He was very firm on doing things in the proper “Quaker way” and in “right ordering”. For several years we were Elders together and I have to admit that often a lot of discernment happened in our meetings before we could find a way forward. After lock-down, John and Paddy also re-instated the Kingston Wednesday evening meetings for worship for which its attenders are extremely grateful.

My memories of John will always be with the pleasure he brought to so many people in teaching them how to dance. John had learnt to ballroom dance while he was a student at Manchester University and from that beginning had progressed his hobby to teaching

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ballroom, folk and circle dancing. Circle dancing became an expression of his spirituality and many of us enjoyed the sessions both in the old Kingston meeting house and later at the Quaker Centre. For years he had also taught a U3A Group in Elmbridge and since his death the organiser has contacted me to say she had received messages of condolence for Paddy – some from people who hadn't seen John for 20+ years but they still remembered the joy, humour and friendliness of his classes.

John must have taught hundreds of people over his working life both in this country and in Switzerland where he lived and worked for some years. I like to think that many of them have been touched by the kindness of this Quiet Quaker.

John used his gifts to give others joy. He is a model for those of us who cannot be active demonstrators or eloquent in ministry – but we can give quiet service to our meeting and kindness to our Friends and all those we meet outside our Quaker circle.

*Joan Bulmer (Wimbledon) – Martin Bulmer*



*Figure 10: Martin Bulmer*

In many ways Martin had a very auspicious start in life, inheriting a talent for public speaking; a thirst for learning and investigating the social aspects of humanity; a desire to improve social conditions and an extraordinary confidence to challenge those who maintained power structures and narrow intellectual endeavours.

He clashed with Norman Lamont at Cambridge in 1963; with Enoch Powell while working at OPCS; with publishers over what he saw as scandalous omissions from academic texts; with LSE departments over their intransigent ways and byzantine rules which led to their refusal to maintain strong systems for research methods in their various and complementary ways. The need to combine quantitative and qualitative methods was an abiding passion for Martin.

However, he was enormously supportive of young scholars, both in Britain and the United States. He opened up the field of Ethnic and Racial Studies by developing ERS into the internationally renowned journal it is now, thereby giving an international community a forum for publishing their findings.

We have literally walked across much of the world. Martin, always with his note cards, his pens and his diaries in his pockets, in case he remembered a crucial line of thought to include in his next book, or pass on to a colleague.

Martin started his academic life in Cambridge studying history in the footsteps of his grandfather, George Otto Trevelyan. He fairly quickly found the syllabus too narrow and traditional. He switched to LSE to study Sociology. In later life he revived his interest in history, both in terms of the history of the social sciences and his general reading. In my

imagination there is an unbroken line, starting with Gladstone in whose reforming cabinet Charles Trevelyan was a junior minister, via Charles' courageous opposition to Britain's participation in World War I and his attempts to reform English education, to Martin's constant support for young academics, his membership of CND and the Labour Party.

A. J. Morris, in his 'Radicalism Against War', 1906-9114: The Advocacy of Peace and Retrenchment, quotes Charles Trevelyan (Martin's father) saying, *'Democracy may arise stronger out of this terrible refining fire. And I hope, my friend, that both the passionate, impatient ones like you, and the slower ones like me ... may be less critical of each other than we have been- For this fearful common enemy has overwhelmed all we care about.*

*But the seed grows in this wonderful earth, and perhaps what we now laboriously sow, watered with the tears of millions, may grow to a great harvest ... it is the right spirit that gives life, as now it is the wrong spirit that killeth.'*

Morris had introduced this quote by saying, *'The genius of Radicalism was the capacity of some of its finer spirits to always to harbour and support a brighter vision of the future.'*

May this give us hope and inspiration for the future in these dark times.

21.65 Art thou in the Darkness? Mind it not, for if thou dost it will fill thee more, but stand still and act not, and wait in patience till Light arises out of Darkness to lead thee. Art thou wounded in conscience? Feed not there, but abide in the Light which leads to Grace and Truth, which teaches to deny, and puts off the weight, and removes the cause, and brings saving health to Light.

James Naylor

*Diary – events in May 2026*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
May 1 <sup>st</sup> to 4 <sup>th</sup>	Britain Yearly Meeting (Friends House)
May 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Singing in the Spirit (Wimbledon meeting house)
May 5 <sup>th</sup>	Wimbledon Meditation Group (online)
May 13 <sup>th</sup>	Exploration of Quaker texts (online)
May 19 <sup>th</sup>	Wimbledon Meditation Group (online)
May 24 <sup>th</sup>	ADHD and Quaker Meetings (Kingston Quaker Centre)
May 30 <sup>th</sup>	Eco-Church discussion (Wandsworth meeting house))
May 31 <sup>st</sup>	Exploration of Quaker texts (Kingston Quaker Centre)

Further information about these and future events can be found at  
<https://quakersinswLondon.org/calendar/>

## *Further Information*

### *Our Local Meetings*

#### **Esher**

The School House, 19 Esher Green, Esher KT10 8AA

Meeting for Worship Sunday 10.30

<https://esher.quakermeeting.org/>

#### **Kingston**

Fairfield East, Kingston upon Thames KT1 2PT

Meeting for Worship Sunday 10.30 and 1st and 3rd Wednesday 6:15

<https://kingstonquakers.org/>

#### **Richmond**

1 Retreat Road, Richmond TW9 1NN

Meeting for Worship Sunday 10.30

<https://richmond-upon-thames.quakermeeting.org/>

#### **Wandsworth**

59 Wandsworth High St, London SW18 2PT

Meeting for Worship Sunday 10.30 and second and fourth Tuesday at 12:30

<https://wandsworth.quakermeeting.org/>

#### **Wimbledon**

40 Spencer Hill Road, London, SW19 4EL

Meeting for Worship Sunday 10.30

<https://wimbledon.quakermeeting.org/>

*Area and Local Meeting Role Holders 2025*

AM Clerk	Shared responsibility
AM Membership Clerk	Mary Aiston (Richmond)
AM Treasurer	Mike Stanger (Wandsworth)
AM Collector/Asst Treasurer	David Holtam (Wandsworth)
AM Marriage Registering Officer	Kate Bone (Wandsworth)
AM Trustees	
Esher	(not represented)
Kingston	Caroline Squire
Richmond	Peter Maple
Wandsworth	David Harries
	Carol Griffiths (Clerk)
Wimbledon	Susanna Riviere
AM co-convenors Elders & Pastoral Carers	
	Anna Barlow (Richmond)
	Linda Murgatroyd (Wandsworth)
Meeting for Sufferings	
Meeting for Sufferings (alternate)	Kim Boyd (Wandsworth)
London Quakers Property Trust (LQPT) trustee	Linda Murgatroyd (Wandsworth)
LQPT members' representative	Rob Campbell Smith (Richmond)
	Clerk to AM Trustees
The Penn/AM Google Group Administrator	
Editor of AM magazine	Ben Mango (Wimbledon)
London Quakers	Oli Griffiths (Wandsworth)
	Fred Ashmore (Kingston) Clerk
AM Outreach	
Esher	Mona Saad
Kingston	Gill Holdsworth

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Richmond

Kathryn Perry

Mary Russell

Wandsworth

Nick Bush

Carol Griffiths

Marcus Morgan

Wimbledon

Ali Wallace

Deborah Curle

Local Meeting Clerks

Esher Co-clerks

Juliet Braithwaite

Mona Saad

Kingston

Clerking Team

Richmond

Rob Campbell-Smith

Kathryn Perry

Wandsworth

Susie Paskins

Susan Williams

Wimbledon

Joan Bulmer

Kate Kernoff

Ben Mango

## *Resources*

Quakers In South West London is our site with Outreach events and news

<https://quakersinswlonon.org/>. There is also a Facebook page  
[https://www.facebook.com/groups/1982816408751225/?paipv=0&eav=AfZlvefJ27z6UmlBU G68rc9RzmuNOZ4YbI5DGRiyT-vxtXc0jQ9VGZk\\_S-4PRapHISU&\\_rdr](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1982816408751225/?paipv=0&eav=AfZlvefJ27z6UmlBU G68rc9RzmuNOZ4YbI5DGRiyT-vxtXc0jQ9VGZk_S-4PRapHISU&_rdr)

The Penn is an Area Meeting wide Google Group - to join please email

[ben@benmango.co.uk](mailto:ben@benmango.co.uk)

Wandsworth Meeting also has its own Google Group – to join please email

[keith.a.walton@gmail.com](mailto:keith.a.walton@gmail.com) ..... and Twitter account. @WandswrthQuaker.

Quakers In London (previously known as London Quakers) – keeping Quakers in London in touch with one another and providing a forum to address issues in the wider world

<https://quakersinlondon.org>

For National Quaker news, sign up to QUAKE! for email updates on the work of Britain Yearly Meeting and Quakers in Britain with some useful information, including short online courses, and advice for the times we live in.

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/resources/newsletters/quake>

Woodbrooke for details of short and longer online courses plus details of online Meetings for Worship. [www.woodbrooke.org.uk](http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk)

## *Contributions to KWAM Quarterly*

**The theme for the next (summer 2026) edition will be WORSHIP and the copy date is 30 June 2026**

If you have an article or other contribution that you would like shared in this magazine, please email it to Oli Griffiths [oliver.g@mac.com](mailto:oliver.g@mac.com)