

# Quaker Arts News

## December 2020



Welcome to our final newsletter of 2020. Who would have thought, a year ago, that the world would have been in its current situation now?

*Like others, Quaker Arts Network has adapted to COVID. We uphold those in the performing arts whose calling and livelihood have been so badly affected by the pandemic. Please support them where you can.*

*Meanwhile we have found other ways to work together fruitfully through the internet. Although it's not the same as being physically present together our increasing skills with the internet have enabled new collaborations to develop, and our online discussions and workshops have worked well. They have also relieved isolation and offered encounters with new people - rare at this time! We will build on this experience in 2021.*

*June Buffery's 7 years as our calm and competent treasurer come to an end shortly. We will miss her and are very grateful for her service in this role. We are grateful to John Lampen for taking on our treasurership from January.*

***This newsletter has news of Friends working in dance, music, textile art, books and theatre. Others have been sharing work and posts via our(public) Facebook page @Quakerarts and (private) Facebook group. Do join them there.***

Linda Murgatroyd

### Can you support us?

#### ... with a little time?

Loving Earth Project is developing strongly and will require a major effort for some members of our Committee in 2021. We would also like to develop our discussions about how different art forms and practices connect with our spiritual experience and witness as Quakers. (see below) To do this as well as maintaining our core communications to share news and advertise Quaker arts projects and events, we now need to strengthen our small team. If you'd like to help support our Quaker arts community think you can help with simple online admin, communications or organise occasional events on Zoom, please get in touch.

#### or a little money?

We hope you've noticed our ads in the Friend this year. They are proving beneficial in reaching Friends, but they are expensive. Our expenses are minimal, but we would like to support the Loving Earth Project as it develops and grows in 2021 and tours thereafter. Many potential sources of grants have dried up this year due to COVID, and we are unwilling to apply for Lottery money, so please consider a small donation to QAN funds, or ask your Meeting to support us. (We are a Recognised Quaker Body but cannot claim tax

back.)

Details of how to give are at <http://quakerarts.net/contact/joining-and-supporting-us/>

Other ways to support us are of course by buying our new book, and the cards we are producing. See below.

## Quaker Arts Network committee

Linda Murgatroyd (Clerk); Kate Green (Assistant Clerk); June Buffery (Treasurer to end December 2020); John Lampen (Treasurer from 1 January 2021); Elena Krumgold (social media and mailing list) ; Sue Tyldesley (Loving Earth Project).

If you are interested in getting more involved with the network please contact one of us directly, or write to [quakerartsuk@gmail.com](mailto:quakerartsuk@gmail.com).

## "What Can We Say?"

### the arts and the Revision of Quaker Faith and Practice

*"Every child has known God,  
Not the God of names,  
Not the God of don'ts,  
Not the God who ever does  
Anything weird,  
But the God who knows only 4 words.  
And keeps repeating them, saying:  
"Come Dance with Me , come dance."*

*"Come dance." Hafiz*

*"Dance then, wherever you may be,  
I am the Lord of the dance" said he,  
"And I'll lead you all wherever you may be,  
And I'll lead you all in the dance", said he.*

*Sydney Carter*

### **Kate Green writes:**

11 Friends who dance or love dance met on Zoom in October, in a spirit of worship to share experience of dance and our spirituality.

We also spoke a little about the current work of the QFP Revision Committee.

I felt overwhelmed by the richness and variety of the spoken word about our dance and Quakerism, from many different experiences of movement and dance. I am so grateful for everyone's clarity and trust.

I discovered that words can express what we share at the deepest level: freedom, discovery, truth, unity with others without and beyond words, celebrating the sacredness of all life, worship, joy, the still centre, transcendence and mystery.

The group hopes to continue to work together and also with others. QAN hopes to host similar meetings about other art forms: poetry, music, theatre etc. and how they connect (or not) with our Quaker experience. We hope these will both nurture our community and encourage the development of possible contributions to a future Book of Discipline.

If you would like to be involved in this, please get in touch with [quakerartsuk@gmail.com](mailto:quakerartsuk@gmail.com).

## Loving Earth Project

This project, led jointly by QAN and Woodbrooke, is now developing in several exciting directions. A first Woodbrooke online course was held in the autumn and others and others re planned for the new year. See <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/our-courses/Woodbrooke> also offers events on request for Meetings, based around the Loving Earth Project, as part of its work for BYM to support Friends on sustainability.

Details at <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/woodbrooke-where-you-are/loving-earth/>

QAN is responsible for the exhibiting and outreach elements of the project. We are now working with other community groups (eg WI, craft, refugee, sustainability groups, ) to reach invite others to join the project and help people engage creatively with challenges of sustainability, without being overwhelmed. This is proving valuable in reducing COVID-isolation and climate anxiety as well.

An exhibition is planned in January, by the Riverhouse Barn Arts Centre in Walton on Thames (Covid -rules permitting) with about 80 panels made so far, and a range of online events accompanying it . We hope you can join some of them and please help us publicise them. Details will shortly be added to our website at <https://quakerarts.net/events/>

We're also delighted to have a growing international participation and are hoping this project can join up with other sustainability work among Quakers and beyond, as we prepare for COP 26 next year. Is this something anyone in your Meeting, arts group, interfaith, environmental or other community might be interested in? Please put the word about; the project is helping people of all ages who are in Covid-isolation and climate anxiety, and there are plenty of online resources and events to help people get started. We can provide also facilitators for groups if needed.



*Here are a few of the many images of new LEP panels recently received . Please send any panels to Loving Earth Project 48 Kenilworth Avenue, London SWq97LW by 10th December if you would like them to be included in the January exhibition. Please also tell us email [lovingearthproject@gmail.com](mailto:lovingearthproject@gmail.com) with a photo and email us your text too.*

## Loving Earth Project cards for sale

We're about to produce some greeting cards depicting a few of the amazing textile panels made for the Loving Earth Project, and blank inside. We hope these will help publicise the project and raise money for it. Please see details on our website and consider buying some.

If you would like to be added to the mailing list to receive the Loving Earth Project Newsletter, please email your request to [lovingearthproject@woodbrooke.org.uk](mailto:lovingearthproject@woodbrooke.org.uk)

## Music

“Silence and creativity” : Friend and composer Sally Beamish was interviewed in the Friend of 19 Nov 2020 .

See her website <https://www.sallybeamish.com> to sample her work if you haven't heard it already.

Singing about torture: “A Knock on the Door” Jane Laxton writes:

Quaker Concern for the Abolition of Torture (Q-CAT) has commissioned a short musical work “A Knock on the Door” written especially for amateur choirs and small groups. It is about the shadow that torture casts over peoples' lives across the world. It starts when a person is detained and the libretto is formed of the thoughts and words of two people, a detainee and their interrogator. Each voice is sung by a section of the choir. This is a serious subject of course but presented in an engaging way. Sally Beamish, who is a well-known composer and a Quaker, and Peter Thomson, librettist, are between them producing an amazing piece. Our future hope is that small choirs, Quaker local meetings, area meetings and other groups, might come together to rehearse and sing it. It could even become a community effort, with a small concert at the end. It should be enjoyable to do, as well bringing people together and raising awareness of this problem in a way that is not traumatic but memorable. It is a protest about oppression and a witness to the resilience of the human spirit.

The plan is that the premiere will be in 2022, probably in Birmingham during the Commonwealth Games. Information about how groups can access the music will be available in due course, so “watch this space”. In the meanwhile, Q-CAT is fundraising to cover upfront costs. Their Appeal Leaflet has been sent to Quaker local meetings and can be found on the website [www.q-cat.org.uk](http://www.q-cat.org.uk) under the main heading Get Informed. Any queries to [from.qcat@hotmail.com](mailto:from.qcat@hotmail.com).

## Books

### Ways to kiss the earth

## Quaker artists explore sustainability

*Wonder & reverence*   *Spiritual & creative processes*   *Climate emergency*  
*Simple & sustainable*   *Witness & activism*   *The Loving Earth Project*

[This book](#), the first published by Quaker Arts Network, presents art works by 26 contemporary Quaker artists on themes ranging from “reverence for nature” to “climate emergency” and “witness and activism”. 40 colour illustrations, each accompanied by a text, include paintings, ceramics, pyrography, printing and also some of the early textile panels of the continuing [Loving Earth Project](#). It’s not only an art book, though; the texts exploring something of how each artist relates to the environment, their creative process and their spiritual experience.

Some reviewers’ comments:

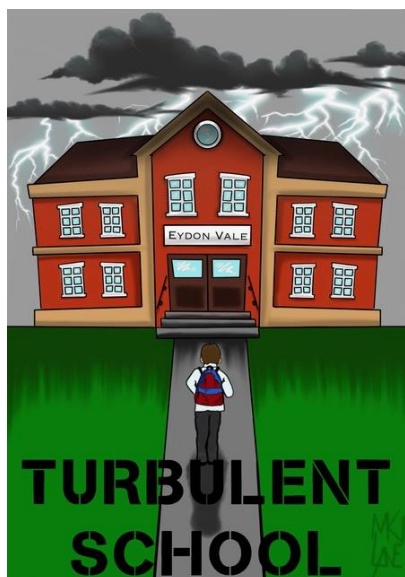
- “There are honest, amusing, thoughtful comments to give the reader something more than images to think about. There is beauty here and tragedy as well”
- “A beautiful little book and an inspiring gift- not just for Quakers!”

Due to COVID, the book is currently only available direct from Quaker Arts Network : £10 plus package and postage - with discounts for orders of 3 or more copies.

Further details [at http://quakerarts.net/resources/](http://quakerarts.net/resources/)

Orders and enquiries to John Lampen at [johnlampen@me.com](mailto:johnlampen@me.com)

### Turbulent School by Jeremy Shaw



Geoff Sewell, a Yorkshire Friend has always believed Friends have something to say about state education. He has written a number of academic books about special needs education and has now written this novel (under a pseudonym) about an experienced English teacher approaching retirement who took up the challenge of teaching English in a “turbulent school”. This is a very honest, personal account of the challenges he faced.

The teaching strategies and techniques he used were developed from his wide-ranging teaching career and were fueled by a strong determination to improve the learning experience and general behaviour of his students. The clarity and sincerity with which he describes his experiences make this book”.

Geoff writes: The fictitious school in question, Eydon Vale, is the polar opposite of existing UK Quaker Schools. However, its pupils' behaviour may be familiar to Friends who've worked in tough comprehensives and some Clerks have copied this correspondence to local members. The calming strategies explored, such as Secret Friends, owe much to Quaker practices and are rooted in Quaker writers like Parker Palmer.

Free copies can be downloaded but Geoff has promised the proceeds to the Friends' School Ramallah. Turbulent School can just be downloaded by clicking on this [link](#).

Amazon reviewers comment:

- “I didn't expect to be 100% gripped by a book about a school and its deep-rooted problems, but this was an astonishing read.”

- “ ... Essential reading for anyone who cares about the education of future generations. I could not stop reading it and cannot recommend it more highly.”

### **Hester and Sophie by John Lampen**

This is a lovely novel for young people with friendship and a mystery at its heart. The central character also faces a number of challenges along the way, including changing school, feeling excluded, bullying, and bereavement, and some of the characters model some great ways to address them.

£7.50 plus P& P.

Reader's comments and purchase information at

<http://quakerarts.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Hester-and-Sophie-1.pdf>

### **Theatre**

#### **Nell Gwynn and the Puritan Poet**

Roger Lauderdale writes:

I have written a one-act play, "Nell Gwynn and the Puritan Poet", about Andrew Marvell meeting Nell at Lauderdale House in Highgate (he lived next door). Marvell is delighted to hear that the Duke of Lauderdale intends to sell the house to the prominent Quaker, William Mead: "The Friends of the Light, here in this house? ... a Meeting House, for the family and household of God, waiting upon his word";. Mead lived in the house for several years and George Fox often visited him there.

Marvell has a life or death debate in the play with the Duke of Lauderdale who was persecuting Covenanters in Scotland to impose the rule of Bishops and the Book of Common Prayer on the Kirk. Much of the play concerns religious and political freedom, tolerance and the individual pursuit of truth. It might be thought that Nell would support the King's great friend, the Duke, but she doesn't.

The play was short-listed for the Kenneth Branagh prize (last ten of 257 scripts).

Lauderdale House want to put the play on next summer - the 400th anniversary of Marvell's birth. It will be an outdoor performance, with the audience seated by the sundial which bears an inscription of the last verse of Marvell's poem, "The Garden".

If you are interested, please email Roger at [rjelliott@live.com](mailto:rjelliott@live.com) and he will send you a copy of the play.


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*PS - Don't forget to keep an eye for news on the website and to put your events up there, and to post and share Quaker arts news via Facebook, if you can.*

To unsubscribe or change your email address on the list, email us at [quakerartsuk@gmail.com](mailto:quakerartsuk@gmail.com).

Contributions to future newsletters, news items for the website, or items that you have difficulty with posting on Facebook can be emailed to us at [quakerartsuk@gmail.com](mailto:quakerartsuk@gmail.com).

This newsletter and past newsletters are available at <https://quakerarts.net/documents/> .

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