

London Quakers report 2015

In 2015 London Quakers organised three dialogues and several education courses.

The Saturday 7 February dialogue asked 'What do we think about God?' where four speakers gave a brief review of their views and participants were invited to discuss their ideas.

On 25 April, Anne Hosking from the Quaker Concern around Dying and Death group and Philippa Stanger, a hospice nurse, talked about Death and Dying based on their experiences. Our dementia day in 2016 came out of wanting to cover areas of this big topic that we were unable to cover on this day.

This was followed in the afternoon by a session organised by the Quaker Universalist Group on 'Vocal ministry' with talks from Rex Ambler, Alec Davison, Janet Scott and Michael Wright. Their thoughts from this day are now available as a book called 'Through us, not from us'.

Our third dialogue was on 26 September, looked at 'Being my enemy – the spiritual aspect of letting go', using the Alternatives to Violence method.

We also facilitated a day run by Children and Young People's team on 'Building relationships in children's meeting – nurture and discipline' to help all those who work with children or young people in a Quaker context.

In June and October, we held two Friday evening opportunities for friends across London to join together to sing. This was successful and much enjoyed so we plan to hold two more in 2016.

We ran several of our courses for newcomers in 2015 called 'Quaker way, Next steps'. These have been found very useful in allowing people to explore what Quakers believe and how they act, and have attracted attenders from outside London. We feel this work – inreach – is very important and will be looking to continue it, perhaps in a revised form in 2016.

Simon Best of Woodbrooke ran a day for those in meetings where there are not enough people to do all the jobs, called 'What can we do with what we've got?' which aroused much interest and led to much animated thinking and discussion.

Finally we invited friends to join with the London Link group at London Gay Pride on 27 June.

London Quakers provide Quaker representation on the Faiths Forum for London, an interfaith body that 'empowers religious communities to work together for a better London.'

We have not yet found a simple, workable way to share Quaker names and contact details across London. There are issues of data protection and getting and maintaining accurate data. Unless we can find someone with the time and willingness to crack these issues, we will not be able to revive the London List.

London Quaker events have been well attended and our finances are healthy, thanks to the support of the seven Area Meetings in London. We look forward to arranging more dialogues and briefings in the future.

We appreciate feedback from you. Please tell us what subjects you would like dialogues on and whether there are gaps in our education offerings you think we could usefully fill. We want to do what you want, and are always open to ideas or people who would like to join us.

Keith Walton
Clerk, London Quakers