

## STEPS INTO REDLAND MEETING

### - finding your way further into your local Quaker meeting

If you have been coming to Meeting for Worship at Redland a few times, you will have formed an idea about what Quaker worship is like, and heard the kind of things we are interested in from conversations over tea and coffee, in afterword, or from the notices. You may have learned more about Quakers from leaflets, or from your own wider reading. You may be wondering how you can get to know the meeting better, and become more a part of it. There are plenty of ways, and you can take your time.

#### **Getting to know the meeting**

You can always find out more by speaking to people, including any of the Elders with Oversight, who exercise general care of our meeting and community. Two of their number sit in the middle of meeting for worship and stand to welcome everyone at the end. By listening to the notices at the end of meeting (given by the Clerk), or reading the monthly newsletter, you will get a picture of what's going on. If you bring children to meeting, you may find friendships forming with the helpers and parents who get involved in the weekly children's activities. Or you might try the small additional Meeting for Worship that is held at 8.30 am on the first and third Sundays of each month, with breakfast afterwards.

On the second Sunday of each month, we have sharing lunch, where you can get to know people better in informal conversation while eating together. Another opportunity for socialising is provided by Film Club, held on the third Saturday of each month at Redland, with a shared supper following. You can learn more about Redland Friends' interests and activities in Meetings for Learning, generally held on the third Sunday of each month before worship, or from occasional talks held at the Meeting House.

Every couple of years, Redland Meeting has a residential weekend in the country, and many people find that a time of deepening friendship, restoration and learning.

#### **Sharing circles, study groups, meetings for business**

After you've been attending Meeting for a few months, you might want to be included in our contact list, published once or twice a year. There's a form to fill in for this, called *Keeping in Touch*, which you can find online or in the pigeonholes. You can also sign up to receive electronic versions of notices, the newsletter, and minutes from Meeting for Business.

You'll be invited at around this time to join one of the *sharing circles*. We have six of these, and they're our way of distributing our care for one another around the meeting. Redland is a large meeting with a shifting pattern of attendance, so the sharing circles help us to associate with and look out for one another within manageable portions of the whole meeting. The sharing circles take turns to make tea and coffee after Meeting for Worship, and meet from time to time in one another's houses, often eating together, or go on outings.

Another way to get to know a few people more closely is to join a *study group*: a few of these generally run through autumn and winter each year, on diverse topics that anyone can put forward. One particular study group, *Becoming Friends*, which runs once or twice most years, is a course designed by Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre and Quaker Life to help newcomers develop their understanding of Quakerism through online and local group study.

In Meeting for Business (MfB), held nine times a year, we plan and organise our practical affairs, using the distinctive Quaker business method, that draws from the same inspiration we find in worship. MfB draws the meeting's work together and drives it forward, so needs the participation of as many of us as possible – we don't have priests or staff to do it for us! You are welcome to take part.

As a regular attender, you will be invited to make a financial contribution towards the upkeep of our meeting. There are different ways you can do this, including making a regular scheduled commitment through the year. The Treasurer of our meeting can advise you.

### ***Serving the meeting, living as a Quaker, and membership***

The meeting's work is currently organised under four large groupings called Hubs: Faith Community, Learning & Action, Resources, and Administration. Core roles in the meeting include the Coordinators of the Hubs, Elders with Oversight, Children's Convenor, Clerk, and Treasurer. You might one day take on one of these roles, or join one of the Hubs as a regular participant. We have a form called *Getting Involved* for collecting information about the kind of work people might like to do for the meeting. We invite you to fill one in when you are ready – just to give an indication of where you might be able to help. You can get the form online or from the pigeonholes.

Belonging to a Quaker meeting gives you opportunities to develop your spiritual life, and deepen your understanding of Quaker testimonies to love, truth, peace and justice. Quakerism is an active and experimental form of religion in which we try to put our testimonies into practice. If you want to see how you might live out your faith in the world, you will find support here.

You may eventually feel that you want to confirm your commitment to Quakerism by becoming a member of the Religious Society of Friends. Elders with Oversight can advise you on how to go about this. Some of the key roles in our meeting, including Clerk, Treasurer, and Elders with Oversight, are usually only open to members of the Society. You become a member not of your Local Meeting (Redland) but of your Area Meeting (Bristol): you will be a member of Bristol AM attached to Redland LM, and able to take part in Area Meeting for Business and other activities at the area level.

### ***Beyond Redland LM***

Whether or not you're a member (yet), you can try any of the other six local meetings in Bristol, and indeed meetings anywhere else in Britain and all over the world. Bristol AM is part of Britain Yearly Meeting (YM), which has offices at Friends House, London. You could go to YM's annual session, join one of the many YM committees, apply for a job at Friends House, or go to courses or events at Friends House, Woodbrooke and many other Quaker venues across the country.

Whether Redland Local Meeting proves to be your permanent spiritual home or only a stop on a longer journey, we hope your time here will be enriching, fulfilling and enjoyable.