

SHARING THE QUAKER MESSAGE: WORKING TOGETHER ON THE WORD

2015 Quakers Uniting in Publications (QUIP) Conference Report

QUIP met at Woodbrooke Quaker Conference Center in Birmingham, England, on 23-26 April 2015. Some 34 attended some or all of the plenary talks, workshops and business sessions. Attenders this year included authors, poets, bloggers, booksellers, and publishers of books, journals, ebooks, and other media including video.

Sessions opened Thursday evening with a panel discussion about blogging and other social media led by Gil Skidmore, joined by Rhiannon Grant. Discussion featured the Quaker Alphabet Blog, its role, participants, and success. Friday evening featured Zelig Gross and her experiences as a commissioned author writing with a support group. On Saturday evening Harvey Gillman entertained with his experiences using words, both spoken and written.

In the workshops Louisa Wright informed us that the world of ebooks is still constantly changing and advised about the status of converting/creating ebooks, previewing the results (programs), and uploading options (amazon.com and others). "Living with Conflict" workshop was led by Susan Robson and Rhiannon Grant, discussing what to include and how to do it on websites that deal with topics about which Quakers have different opinions.

Blogging as a medium to share and teach was encouraged in the workshop led by Craig Barnett. When using social media, each participant is a producer, an author; blogs today sometimes resemble the pamphlets produced by early Quakers on themes, shared opinions but is more flexible in the typefaces, use of images and video, and immediate response capabilities. All were challenged by Jennifer Kavanagh to continue to write and publish spiritual books for a non-Quaker as well as the Quaker audience.

QUIP was established in 1983. Since that time the publishing industry and the nature of QUIP membership have both changed fundamentally. In the early years of QUIP membership (individuals and institutions) included those in publishing able to make substantial donations to QUIP. However, many of these sources no longer exist and the cost of travel to the annual meetings (along with publishing costs) have risen substantially. While the valuable work QUIP does to promote publishing, help new authors and assist in translations and special projects is still very much needed, the means to pay for it is no longer sufficient. This is the challenge that QUIP now faces.

Much of the QUIP business meeting at Woodbrooke discussed the different options and obstacles of keeping QUIP a viable organization. Consensus was that the face-to-face meetings are essential. European QUIP Friends decided to meet before Britain Yearly Meeting in 2016. The next QUIP annual meeting will be May 12-15, 2016 at Quaker Hill Conference Center, Richmond, Indiana, USA. Go to www.quakerquip.org for more information.

- *Rausie Hobson, North Carolina Yearly Meeting(FUM) & Noël Staples, Britain Yearly Meeting*