**Quaker Life Representative Council**

**Milton Hill House, Abingdon**

**13 – 15 October 2023**

An unexpected idea came to my mind during the recent gathering of members of the Quaker Life Representative Council at Milton Hill House, Abingdon. ‘Perhaps I should buy a horse and ride it around the British Isles’.

This thought didn’t come as a rather extreme way of attempting to reduce my carbon footprint, neither is it the case that I have a particular interest in things equestrian. I don’t. I had a donkey ride on Filey beach six decades ago but that is the extent of my riding experience.

It was an engaging presentation by speaker, Tim Gee, that set my mind wandering to horses and travelling. Tim is the General Secretary of Friends World Committee for Consultation, the international organisation of Quakers worldwide. He gave us a fascinating oversight into Quaker life across the globe. Much of what he told us is based on his own experience of visiting Quaker communities in other countries. He outlined the diversity of expressions of Quaker life and worship describing differences between conservative, evangelical and liberal Quakers, and also between programmed and unprogrammed meetings. Singing plays an important part in the worship of many Quaker communities and a new edition of a Quaker song book is due to be published next year.

It was Tim’s speaking about future plans that opened my mind to the possibility of buying and riding a horse. 2024 marks 400 years since the birth of George Fox. Tim suggested that this is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate and undertake new initiatives, raising the profile of Quakers. He invited us to consider ways that we might mark this special anniversary both locally, nationally and internationally. One suggestion made was that a person or group could travel to all the places that George Fox visited. ‘Ah’, I thought, ‘perhaps I should buy a horse and ride it around the British Isles.’

Having cast aside my own thoughts, I was aware that the idea of linking communities, and even travel, between those places George Fox visited, is an idea loaded with potential. It could also have an international dimension mindful of George’s wide-ranging travel to other countries.

*Peter C Robinson (Pickering & Hull Area Meeting) - Oct 2023*