

# Consultancy Brief

## Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre and Library of the Society of Friends

### Invitation to express interest

1. Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) is the national level of organisation for Quakers in Britain. It has its offices, meeting facilities and library at Friends House, Euston Road, London. The Library of the Society of Friends was founded by the Yearly Meeting in 1673 with the expressed purpose of collecting materials published by and in opposition to Quakers. It is the largest collection in the UK and one of that largest in the world relating to Quakers and their activities, providing a resource for understanding peace, prison reform, humanitarian assistance, and the anti-slavery movement as well as Quaker history, faith, thought and practice.

Its current purposes are:

- to collect and preserve Quakers' historic and continuing recorded heritage, including the Society's archives and manuscript collection.
  - to provide access to information about the Society of Friends and promote an understanding of contemporary Quakerism
  - to encourage study of Quaker and related activities for a wide range of researchers.
  - to support Quaker meetings in Britain in their management of Quaker records and the provision of local meeting libraries
  - to manage the records of the Quaker centrally managed work and some other Quaker bodies
2. Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre is a separate registered charity, located in Selly Oak, Birmingham. It was founded in 1903 as a residential college to provide opportunities for Quakers to study and to develop their faith and ministry. It currently provides a year-round programme of adult life-long learning. Short courses are open both to Quakers and the wider community. Face-to-face courses are delivered in Birmingham, at other venues (primarily Quaker meeting houses) around the UK and occasionally elsewhere in Europe. There is a growing programme of online and blended learning, and significant postgraduate programmes are run in collaboration with the University of Birmingham (research Masters and PhD) and the University of Lancaster (online taught Certificate and Masters, due to commence September 2014).

The purposes of its library are:

- To support Woodbrooke's programmes of adult, lifelong learning, both on site and distance/virtual
- To support academic study and research into Quaker history, theology, sociology and practice, both on site and distance/virtual
- To house Woodbrooke's own small archive and records

A recent University of Birmingham review described the Woodbrooke library as "a hidden gem."



Woodbrooke  
Quaker Study Centre



3. BYM and Woodbrooke work closely together as two organisations whose core purposes serve primarily the same constituency, namely Quakers in Britain. Both organisations are currently reviewing their strategic directions. We are asking ourselves how our library and archive services can best be provided so as to support our primary purposes with maximum effectiveness and accessibility to potential users.
4. The libraries are the two largest and most significant holdings of historic and contemporary Quaker and Quaker-related material outside the United States. There are other major collections in several American colleges (e.g. Bryn Mawr; Earlham; George Fox University; Guilford; Haverford; Swarthmore) and British university libraries (e.g. Birmingham; Hull; Lancaster; Leeds; Manchester) as well as local Quaker archives deposited with city/county libraries, records offices, or elsewhere.
5. We are seeking an external consultant to prepare a written report that will help us understand:
  - How well are we doing in our current modes of operation, given the purposes outlined above and the resources available to carry them out?
  - What relevant developments are taking place in the wider world of library and information services which might be applicable to services of our type and scale? How could our services best be developed to meet the changing needs of our constituencies?
  - Could we build synergies, become more effective, make our resources more accessible and ensure our provision is sustainable for the long term (financially and otherwise) if we were to re-organise? Or is the status quo the best we could do?

Whilst not limiting the scope or the content of the final report, the consultant should evaluate our current service provision and provide coherent strategic advice including the following areas:

- developing and resourcing an appropriate service level for the future
- developing a strategic response to impact of the internet
- digitisation and managing digital collections including the implications for records management and visual resources
- unifying our electronic catalogues and other search aids
- sharing specialist staff expertise
- Use of volunteers
- rationalising holdings
- retaining two independent libraries
- operating as a single library on two sites
- merging the two libraries into a single operation in one location, whether one of the existing sites or elsewhere

- developing a 'third site' model, for example retaining access and primary collections in one or both of the current sites and locating other material including archive elsewhere, possibly involving another partner such as the British Library or a university
- implications for staffing and structures in relation to any of the options

6. The purpose of this phase of consultation is to help us articulate a vision towards which we can work, from which financial considerations will then flow. We are open both to the possibility of significant developments and to a model which remains close to the status quo, and we are not necessarily approaching this research in cost-saving mode. Conversely, any future developments will need to be appropriate to the scale of our operations; they should either be affordable within the broad parameters of our current budgets or will require specific fundraising.

Potential consultants need to be aware that Quakers eschew gambling and therefore we are highly unlikely to apply for lottery funding. In considering our way forward, we will welcome some outline scoping such as what might be done within existing resource allocation and what might be feasible by way of grant applications (possibly including examples of recent comparable projects that have gained support from non-lottery trusts and foundations).

**You are invited to send expressions of interest to Helen Rowlands, Head of Education at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre (Helen.Rowlands@woodbrooke.org.uk ) and Richard Summers, General Secretary, Quaker Life (Richards@quaker.org.uk) by 13<sup>th</sup> June 2014.**

**Shortlisted candidates will then be invited to tender formally, with tenders to be received by Monday 7<sup>th</sup> July and the appointment to be confirmed by Monday 14<sup>th</sup> July.**

**We expect the work to commence as soon as possible after the consultancy is confirmed and envisage that the preparation of the report will be an iterative process with the consultant working closely with the commissioners. This will culminate in the presentation of a draft report to the senior staff of both organisations in mid October with a final written report being delivered by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2014.**

**Appendix: Summary information (May 2014)**

	LSF	Woodbrooke Library
<b>Holdings</b>		
Printed books pre 1801	over 17,500 items	7,500 - 10,000 (estimate)
Printed books post 1800	80,000 – 90,000. Excludes serials and individual articles	30,000 – 40,000(estimate) (both Quaker and non-Quaker)
Periodicals	C 254 metres and over 1000 periodical titles	60 current Quaker periodicals plus 100 non-current

	(including current and historic Quaker periodicals, local meeting newsletters, foreign Quaker publications, etc.). About 250 current titles.	
Press cuttings collection	ca. 16.75 metres of press cuttings from early 1920's to 2009	
Archival	1.057 KM (PLUS London & Middlesex local meeting records below. Total for both = 1.17 KM)	90 linear metres [Includes student records]
London & Middlesex local meeting records	0.13 KM (i.e. 113 metres)	-
Manuscripts	925 metres	Included in archives (above)
Special Collections	<p>Whole Library seen as a special collection, but includes a number of historic collections in the fields of Peace, Anti-Slavery, Temperance, etc. (e.g. CBCO records, Peace Committee library, FTMWU library, etc.) as well as named libraries, such as Birkbeck, Braithwaite, Hawkins (donated by Westminster MM) and Richard Richardson Collections.</p> <p>There are a number of particularly important MSS collections including the Swarthmore MSS, Barclay Bury Hill MSS, etc.</p> <p>Dictionary of Quaker biography.</p> <p>Digest registers of births, marriages &amp; burials.</p>	2 special collections: Bevan-Naish (Quaker material) and Powicke (books by/on the 17 <sup>th</sup> century Cambridge Platonists). Included in statistics above.

	<p>Large quantity of lists and indexes, including committee members lists, local meeting records files, indexes of Quaker schools, book indexes, Friend births, marriages &amp; burials, etc.</p> <p>Microfilms.</p>	
Visual Resources	<p>310 framed pictures; estimated 50,000 plus photographic material including slides, negatives, albums and prints;</p> <p>5,000 other unframed artworks including etchings, lithographs, watercolours, drawings, posters, plans and maps)</p> <p>Sculpture – 30 items</p> <p>Audio – 200 recordings</p> <p>Film/video – 125</p>	
Other non-book	<p>740 museum objects including costume</p>	4 linear metres
<b>Staffing</b>		
Qualified	<p>1 f-t Head of Library and Archives</p> <p>1 f-t Archivist</p> <p>1 f-t Records Manager and Deputy Archivist (currently 1 year post)</p> <p>1 p-t Librarian (Printed Materials)</p> <p>1 f-t Visual Resources Development Officer</p> <p>1 f-t Senior Library Assistant</p> <p>1 ft Project Cataloguer (specially funded)</p> <p>1 F-t temp Project Archivist (15 month post, with external project funding 2013-</p>	1 f-t Librarian

	4)	
Unqualified		1 p-t Library Assistant
Volunteer	Approx 9 – about 30 hours a week average	None at present
<b>Finances</b>		
Total Staffing costs	£281,355 of which almost £51,000 is externally funded. Figure for project archivist is only for part of the year.	£43,915
Purchasing – total all categories	£58,556 of which £8,490 is externally funded. Some of the remainder was one-off funding for 2013	£12,800
Binding, repair, conservation	£12,000 of which more than £8,000 is externally funded	£700
IT hardware/software	£7,000 direct costs. Figures for 2013 are not representative. General IT costs included in whole organisation costs (support costs).	£4,600 direct costs; other costs in whole-organisation budget
Other costs		£600 equipment
Income generation	£6,000 excluding funding for posts and Befriend a Book appeal. BfB money can vary considerably from year to year.	£750 (external reader registrations)
<b>Current Users</b>		
	Academic and other researchers, Quaker and others	Short course participants at Woodbrooke
	BYM staff	Short course participants at other locations
	Genealogists and family historians	Online learners
		Woodbrooke staff, in particular teaching staff and associate tutors
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quaker meeting officers (clerks, custodians and librarians);</li> </ul>	Postgraduate students and academics

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Society of Friends committee members</li> <li>• media – journalists;</li> <li>• publishers and picture researchers.</li> </ul>	
		Independent researchers
		Other registered readers (mostly local)
<b>Identified current issues</b>		
	Quantity of uncatalogued material (especially manuscripts and pictures, but also substantial printed backlog). Large proportion of archives and manuscripts only catalogued to top level.	Lack of space for expansion of holdings
	Need for digitisation	Environmental conditions of historic collection
	Lack of space for expansion	A single professional librarian cannot have the full range of skills needed
	Proportion of material in need of conservation measures	Lack of technical support for IT systems
	Library unknown to many potential users – need for greater publicity	Lack of control over access/security given 24-hour opening policy
	Need to develop strategy for dealing with records management and the digital collection – these are 2 separate issues that may have a related solution.	Need to develop library/resource strategy in support of developing education strategy, including moving into online learning provision

Further details are available online at <http://www.quaker.org.uk/library-consultancy> and or from the Librarians at Woodbrooke, Ian Jackson [Ian.Jackson@woodbrooke.org.uk](mailto:Ian.Jackson@woodbrooke.org.uk) 0121 415 6786 or Library of the Society of Friends, David Blake, [davidb@quaker.org.uk](mailto:davidb@quaker.org.uk) 020 7663 1129