



*Children's Meeting from a while ago.*

*Photo: from Valerie Graves*

# **NEWSLETTER**

**SOUTHERN EAST ANGLIA AREA QUAKER MEETING**

**September 2016**

## ***Diary Dates for September***

Friday September 2<sup>nd</sup> Farmers' Market, Colchester

Saturday September 10<sup>th</sup> Heritage Open Day

Sunday September 11<sup>th</sup> Area Meeting, Colchester

**RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)**

**Clerk to Southern East Anglia Quaker Meeting: Alison Parkes  
c/o Colchester Quaker Meeting House**

**6 Church Street, Colchester CO1 1NF;**

Web Address:

[www.essexsuffolkquakers.org](http://www.essexsuffolkquakers.org)

**email address: [email address:AMClerk@.essexsuffolkquakers.org](mailto:AMClerk@essexsuffolkquakers.org)**

## Meetings for Worship

### CLACTON

Sunday at 10.30 am  
1st Wednesday each month  
1pm-2pm with Soup & Cheese

### Harwich

2nd and 4th Sundays 10.30 am  
Nicholas' Church Hall,  
Stour Road, Bathside  
Contact , Audrey Hind

### COLCHESTER

Sunday 10.30 am  
Wednesday 12.30 pm

(Soup and Cheese Lunch)

### EARLS COLNE

1st, 3rd & 5th Sundays 10.30 am

### SUDBURY

Sunday 10.30 am  
Friars Street, Sudbury  
Thursday 12.30 pm  
(Bring Picnic,  
Tea/Coffee provided)

## Dear Friends,

This is the time of year when we say “where has the time gone?” and start doing all the things we meant to do with the holiday: but I could do with a little less heat, I must say. The garden is looking a bit parched. The Meeting has lots of strangers and lots of visitors, which is nice. If you are able to come and help on Heritage Day, it would be appreciated and it is usually interesting, though of

course the usual chores of washing up are always there!

I am putting in a bit about a long ago Children's Class - much bigger than it is now but activities for children are much better nowadays than they were then.

I expect lots of children will be starting in a new school soon.

News, please, by the middle of the month, to Valerie Graves.



*Our Friend Julia Gordon at Kendal*

### FIRST CONTACT

FOR FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

CLACTON.....Carol Holding

COLCHESTER.....Carol Holding

SUDBURY.....Peter Whiteley

## Clerk's Report

Alison Parkes

During Meeting for Worship recently, I found myself giving thanks for the service of our older Friends. Some find it physically difficult to get to Meeting, yet they make every effort to do so. Whatever our age and state of health, we are evidently drawn by an almost tangible need to reconnect with Friends and with the Spirit, and will go to considerable lengths to do so. The contribution older Friends have made to the world has been through every one of our testimonies: peace, truth, sim-

plicity, equality, and the environment. Think faith in action through peace marches and vigils, Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp, Friends of the Earth, Colchester Quaker Housing Trust - and many more. As I looked around the Meeting Room at Colchester this morning, I acknowledged the profound service of these Friends to our Meeting, whether through serving on LM committees such as the Premises Committee, or on AM committees, such as Elders or Overseers, or simply by organising the coffee rota or being a deputy warden for a couple of hours

each month. These are the warp and weft of our meetings, creating something strong, functional and fit for purpose: our own Quaker tapestry. It is through the service of us all that our meetings continue to be there for that vital opportunity to reconnect with one another and with God.

Yet I am aware that the process of appointment to serve a Quaker meeting can sometimes be seen as mysterious, possibly even secret. Attenders may sometimes feel as though they are being overlooked for a role they would happily fulfil. As in

so many areas of Quaker practice, methods have been tried and tested, yet perhaps not communicated to newcomers, who can be mystified by them and even feel excluded. There are procedures that Quakers regard as good practice, procedures which may seem far removed from modern business practices and confusing to the uninitiated. As in any organisation, Quakers run the risk of appearing to have institutionalised methods, which are not as well communicated as they might be. Seasoned Friends may in turn be 'mystified' that newcomers do not understand the reasons things happen the way they do. Accepting the need for greater communication, discovering what most needs to be communicated and finding the best ways to do so, are a challenge for everyone in the Meeting. So it is important that we keep open the channels for communicating with one another.

We have "Nominations Committees", whose task it is to meet and discern which Friends might have the qualities and experience, as well as the time and energy, to give to a particular task (Quaker faith and practice 3.22-25). Discernment is such a core term for Quakers. The Meeting doesn't usually ask for volunteers, though there are some occasions when we do. On the other hand, the Nominations Committee may be glad to learn of a Friend/Attender's interest in books, their experience in finance or organising events - which could guide them in considering nominations for the Library Committee, as a Treasurer or organiser of an outreach event. We actually have

two Nominations Committees: one seeks those who can serve on Local Meeting committees, while the other seeks those who might serve on Area Meeting committees (such as elders and overseers). Certain roles are regarded as appropriate for Friends who are in membership. This is because it is regarded as important that the person appointed should feel a sense of belonging to the Society and a sense of commitment to it, before asking him/her to take on a role that requires considerable commitment, whether of time or energy - or both.

In addition, Nominations Committee will try to avoid calling upon someone newly in membership, as we want them to enjoy being a part of the life of the Meeting, before asking them to share in the responsibility for it. This also gives us time to consider the skills and experience of the new Friend and how these might best be used in the service of the Meeting. Once the Nominations Committee has identified a Friend or Attender for a role, a member of the committee will speak to them about it and sound them out for their willingness to serve. If they are willing and able to do so, their name will be brought before either LM or AM, as a nomination. When the business meeting accepts the name for the given role, the

appointment is made, usually for a triennium (i.e. 3 years).

While reflecting on the value of each person's service in our Meeting, a Friend's ministry perfectly captured the essence of my thoughts. He concluded: Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!" (Isaiah 6:8)

The next Area Meeting will be held on Sunday September 11, 2.15 pm at Colchester Quaker Meeting House, 6 Church Street, Colchester CO1 1NF. For more details, please see the AM website Business page [www.essexsuffolkquakers.org](http://www.essexsuffolkquakers.org). All are welcome, though if you are an Attender (i.e. not in membership), please ask the Clerk for permission to attend.

*Photograph by John Lewis*



## **The Miracle of Children's Class?**

from Valerie Graves

Looking through some old photos, I came across this one of myself taking our middle age children's class. We also had a class for babies and crawlers, and another for the teenagers. I am reading a story by Rudyard Kipling: I know he is not exactly approved of by most Quakers, but he does write some very good stories.

This one, which the children loved and were always asking for, was "The Miracle of Purun Bhagat". I don't know what the attraction was, as it was not eventful or exciting. Purun Bhagat was a very old man, in India, who had been rich and

powerful but on retirement had decided to give everything up and become a pilgrim, which was not unusual. He found a little nook in a Himalayan area and settled down to a life of prayer. The local villagers fed him and wild animals, including a bear and a big deer, settled round him, liking the quiet and bits of food.

But one night the animals were uneasy and restless, and pestered him to move. He took

a burning stick as a torch, and, leaning on the two big animals, he struggled down the valley, calling to the villagers "Go! Go! The mountain is moving!" and they did. They had time to move their belongings and stock to a place of safety before a colossal landslide obliterated the village. But the old man was exhausted and he died. That is all.



## **Wildspot**

from Valerie Graves

As I have said before, this has been a most extraordinary time in the garden. I have never seen such roses and other flowers, and lots of what one might call weeds are putting on an amazing display. And lots of little plants like cyclamen have popped up where I certainly didn't put them. (I have never seen such vast tough bindweed, either, but that's another story). The garden is full of birds, including the beautiful spotted woodpeckers, are back, so I suppose they have finished bringing up their family. And my dear little baby robin, who is almost a pet, still follows me round the garden with happy cries, though he is suspiciously orange in the chest. He has big problems getting nuts out of the feeder, so I admit I do put some on the ground for him.



## **Crafts People**

John Hall

Here is the second in the series of craft men and women in the Area Meeting.

This shows Peter Whiteley of Colchester Meeting woodcarving. In the picture he is carving one of two panels he made for a park celebrating the diamond jubilee of the Queen.

He also is a bookbinder, creating many different and original styles which he also teaches.

I am interested in knowing of other craftsmen and women in the AM and would welcome Friends getting in touch with me if they would be willing to have their picture appear in the Newsletter with a sample of their craft.



## **Eco-House**

From Robbie Spence

Unfortunately this clashes with our Heritage Day on 10 Sept, but anyway here is news from Chris Southall (Green MP candidate for Clacton in 2015) about his and Rosie's event over the Heritage weekend of 10 to 11 September, 10.30am to 4.30pm each day. See [www.ecodiy.org](http://www.ecodiy.org) and below for more details below. Please tell your friends.

Chris Southall writes:

Non-commercial opening of our home to show people cheaper ways to use less energy and grow their own food

Sharing our experience of urban self-reliance

Growing our own food

'Bee friendly' bee keeping, free range chickens

Solar hot water and electricity

Waste wood fired central heating and cooking

Rainwater harvesting

Grey water filtering – bath water etc. (reed bed)

Eco-House Open Weekend: 10-11 Sept 10.30 to 4.30

Contact Chris or Rosie on 01255 254548

193 Burrs Road, Clacton-on-Sea CO15 4LN

## **Jack Burfoot**

John Kay

Sadly we learned of the death of our dear Friend Jack Burfoot on 26 August his funeral was held on Friday 2 September.

This Photograph was taken on a painting holiday in Devon some years ago.



## Quaker Tapestry

Robert Parkes

If you haven't yet been to see the Quaker Tapestry exhibition at Chelmsford Cathedral, then do try to make it in the next few days - it's an inspiring and affirming collection of tapestries telling the story of so many aspects of Quaker life, history and faith in action. Alison and I went this afternoon and were so glad we did. Over 1000 visitors have been to see the Tapestry so far. Details are on our AM website: <http://essexsuffolkquakers.org/events/quaker-tapestry/>

There are also Radio Essex interviews with Paul Parker and Sheila Hancock, here is the link: >

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0443sy1>

Recording Clerk Paul Parker and actress Sheila Hancock discuss Quaker faith and work from Chelmsford Cathedral where the Quaker Tapestry is currently on display at 00:13:28. Then at 01:12:08 Sheila discusses how she came to Quakers, finding 'that of God in everyone', the testimonies and more. You might be surprised to hear Paul Parker refer specifically to

Colchester Quakers and the work we've been doing in support of Syrian refugees.

I found the radio broadcast on the Facebook page of The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain: <https://www.facebook.com/QuakersinBritain/?fref=nf>

*Photograph by John Lewis*

