



New noticeboard at Earls Colne

photo: Jenny Kay

NEWSLETTER

SOUTHERN EAST ANGLIA AREA QUAKER MEETING

March 2017

Diary Dates for March

Friday March 3rd Colchester Farmers' Market at the Arts Centre

Wednesday March 8th International Women's Day

Sunday March 12th Area Meeting, Clacton

Tuesday March 14th No Smoking Day Helping those who want to quit

Saturday March 25 Clocks go forward one hour overnight

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

email address: 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
St Nicholas' Church Hall,
Stour Road, Bathside CO12 3HS
Contact: Ros/Tony Eaton 01255
880500

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

FIRST CONTACT

FOR FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

CLACTON.....Carol Holding

COLCHESTER.....Carol Holding

SUDBURY.....Peter Whiteley

Deputy Warden Duty

Liz Hurley

Quakers in Colchester are fortunate to have a large and welcoming Meeting House and also a resident warden, Mervyn. During the week, we have an open-door policy and all sorts of groups use our building. They include, MIND, Amnesty, Art groups, Dementia Café, AA (several times), Music groups, Bereavement Support and many others.

Of course, Mervyn needs and has a right to time off. Normally, every fortnight he takes Fri-

Editorial,

Welcome, Friends! I am not going to say anything about the weather because it changes every minute and sometimes we have snow (and will again) and the next seems to be spring, but I just keep a variety of cardigans to hand. We seem to be very busy, with curry night one day and our Syrian day the next. They seem to have settled down with us very happily and one is reminded of the Dutch invasion hundreds of years ago, which did so much good to them and even more to us. I get very tired of hearing moans about refugees: of course there will be problems, but one just has to deal with them. I have been very sad about

day and Monday off which gives him a long weekend. When Mervyn takes his time off, in order for the Meeting House to stay open, we need deputy wardens to cover four time slots each day. As the rota organiser for these days, I would like to thank all our helpers. Some people volunteer regularly and some only once or twice a year. You are all valuable and appreciated.

Inevitably circumstances change and helpers drop out through age, ill-health and moving away and I find it difficult to fill the spaces. Do you think you could help?

It is not at all onerous. Usually it means being 'at hand'. The rota is pinned up in the foyer and you can choose your slot, or I can get in touch with you. Even the evenings suit some people. They are usual-

the little children who had been promised help from us which seems to have been snatched away, but I feel sure that there are enough cross people to deal with it.

How fortunate we are to belong to a large Meeting with lots of activities and a fair amount of money, which attracts a lot of visitors and a good deal of what I might call "buzz!"

We are all pleased that Earls Colne has graduated to being a proper Meeting again. Quite a small one, but well worth a visit. I go once a month on third Sundays.

News, please, by the middle of the month.

ly 'quiet' with just 'the regulars' coming in and the phone doesn't ring. It's a chance to catch up on reading, writing or any job you can bring with you.

If you think this is a way you might be able to help or would like more information, please do get in touch with me.



Clerk's Corner March 2017

Alison Parkes

Our Faith in the Future

At Area Meeting in January, we celebrated (quietly, of course!) the reinstatement of Earls Colne as a Local Meeting and the creation of a new Local Meeting at Harwich. These are the green shoots of new growth for our Area Meeting and express Friends' strong sense of belonging as Quakers. Colchester Meeting is exploring the views of its local Friends, thanks to a questionnaire devised by a small working group, and hopes to discover how to nurture a meeting which feels more connected and where all feel valued. The group took as its starting point the document "Our Faith in the Future", a word picture of what Quakers in Britain would like the Society to be like. Copies are available at Meeting Houses or on the Quakers in Britain website.

Britain Yearly Meeting

Many topics relating to "Our Faith in the Future" will come under consideration at Yearly Meeting Gathering, July 29 – August 5 at Warwick University.

Wildspot

from Valerie Graves

Such an exciting time! something new and unexpected every day, such as the group of aconites in my front garden. Snowdrops are good, too, of course, but they take ages and ages to come into bloom. Ditto, daffodils are the same, though bluebells are nearly as bad. But it is nice to know that summer is on its way. And I had my grass cut this morning, it had suddenly grown several inches. Don't come and see me just yet! there are some very ragged corners.

Please think about going. Bursary help is available.

All-Age Worship – New Beginnings

On the 5th Sunday in January, Colchester Meeting held All Age Worship on the theme of New Beginnings. It was good to see a number of children and young people, including the family of Madeleine and John Powell, from Sudbury Meeting, several young people from Clacton, and two Colchester families, amongst the 45 or so present. We also welcomed Hannah Leavett – she and Maddie were young Friends together when they were growing up in Colchester, and both hope to bring their families to meeting from time to time, especially to All-Age Worship. The theme of "New Beginnings" inspired ministry from a number of seasoned Friends as well as the young people in our midst. There were readings (e.g. *Advices and Queries* 27), Biblical references, pieces of music, poems, and a story about a young gardener who needed help to cultivate his garden. Everyone was invited to write or draw on paper leaves and butterflies, to hang on a 'tree of life' in the centre of the Meeting Room and share their

personal stories of new beginnings in their lives or in the wider world. As usual at All-Age Worship, there was an industrious hush in the room as Friends young and old participated in whatever ways they wished. It was good to feel part of a meeting alive in the spirit with Friends of all ages. One young person wrote this poem during the meeting:

The Sun

When the sun shines
do you hide in the shadows?
Will you hide in fear,
or do you leap at a chance
for a new start?
Will you let your lord
lead you out of the dark
and into the light?

Elle Richardson

The next All-Age Worship will be at Colchester Meeting on 5th Sunday in April – all are welcome, and the same applies to Area Meeting, which will be held at Clacton Meeting House on Sunday March 12 at 2.15 pm. The agenda is available from LM Clerks and is posted on the Business page of the AM website (the address is on the cover of this newsletter).





Passivhaus eco homes

Cohousing group to build at Cannock Mill on Old Heath Road

Robbie Spence

A cohousing group is building 23 new eco-houses and flats on the site of Cannock Mill on Old Heath Road – just downstream from Bourne Mill National Trust site.

This housing development may be of interest to Friends because its ethos has much in common with the Quaker testimonies of simplicity, sustainability and care of the environment. Additionally and especially it may appeal to Friends of a certain age! The intended residents are people who want to live in cohousing for mutual support as they get older; most are soon to retire or have recently retired from work.

I imagine that Friends may be wondering, what is cohousing and why is this group here in Colchester? Cohousing is a way of living and dwelling that aims to encourage social contact between members to develop a mutually supportive community and share facilities such as garden tools and cars. Cohousing groups are not 'communes'. Cohousing is still relatively new to the UK, having been popular in Europe for over 30 years.

Secondly, the group that has bought the land consists main-

ly of people from London and south-east England who spent years looking at sites within easy reach of London. They chose Colchester because they found it vibrant and energetic, with a history and real sense of place, as well as beautiful countryside. That should be something for all of us here in Colchester to celebrate!

I'd like to digress for a moment to write about trailblazing ventures – of which I think this project is an example. Consider our own Meeting of vibrant and energetic group of Friends here in Colchester and what it owes to our own trailblazer, James Parnell. I have long wondered – and maybe once mentioned in Meeting – how the strength and depth of the Meeting in Colchester, compared to Meetings in other similar-sized towns, is a testament to the 350-year-old firm root planted by James Parnell.

Trailblazers can make a large and lasting impact on a community. Consider also the 'alternative' culture of Stroud in Gloucestershire and how it seems to date back to the pioneering/trailblazing White-way Colony, the cohousing community founded near Stroud in 1898. It was set up by a Quaker journalist, by the way: Samuel Veale Bracher: search Google on “utopia-britannica” for more information. In that light, I find it exciting that the Cannock Mill group has chosen Colchester.

As to the impact on the local environment, the dwellings are going up within existing town boundaries rather than outside in the greenbelt. Here, the natural environment, which is along the Bourne valley green oasis within a mile of the town Colchester, will be preserved and enhanced by keeping the millpond and planting a vegetable garden and fruit trees within the two-acre site. The existing Cannock Mill itself, a Grade 2 listed wooden building in traditional ship-lap style will be preserved, along with the miller's house, which is Victorian.

On the energy and sustainability side of things, the 'Passivhaus' design of a 'super-insulated building envelope' reduces home-heating costs by up to 75%. Clever ventilation means the heat in the outgoing air is used to warm the incoming air without it feeling stuffy or airless.

There are still some unallocated dwellings. To find out more, search Google on “cannock-mill cohousing”, where you can also sign up for a newsletter, or email them. My wife, Clare, and I have joined as 'associates' with a view to perhaps moving there when our children have all left school. Please ask us if you have any questions.

How many Quakers are there in the world?

John Hall

In a video, available online at: <http://quakerspeak.com/how-many-quakers-are-there-in-world/>

Gretchen Castle, the General Secretary of Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) puts the total number at about 400,000. What is surprising is where these Friends are. Here is a list of the countries with the most Quakers:

Kenya 146,300

Bolivia 22,300

Nepal 6,000

USA 76,360

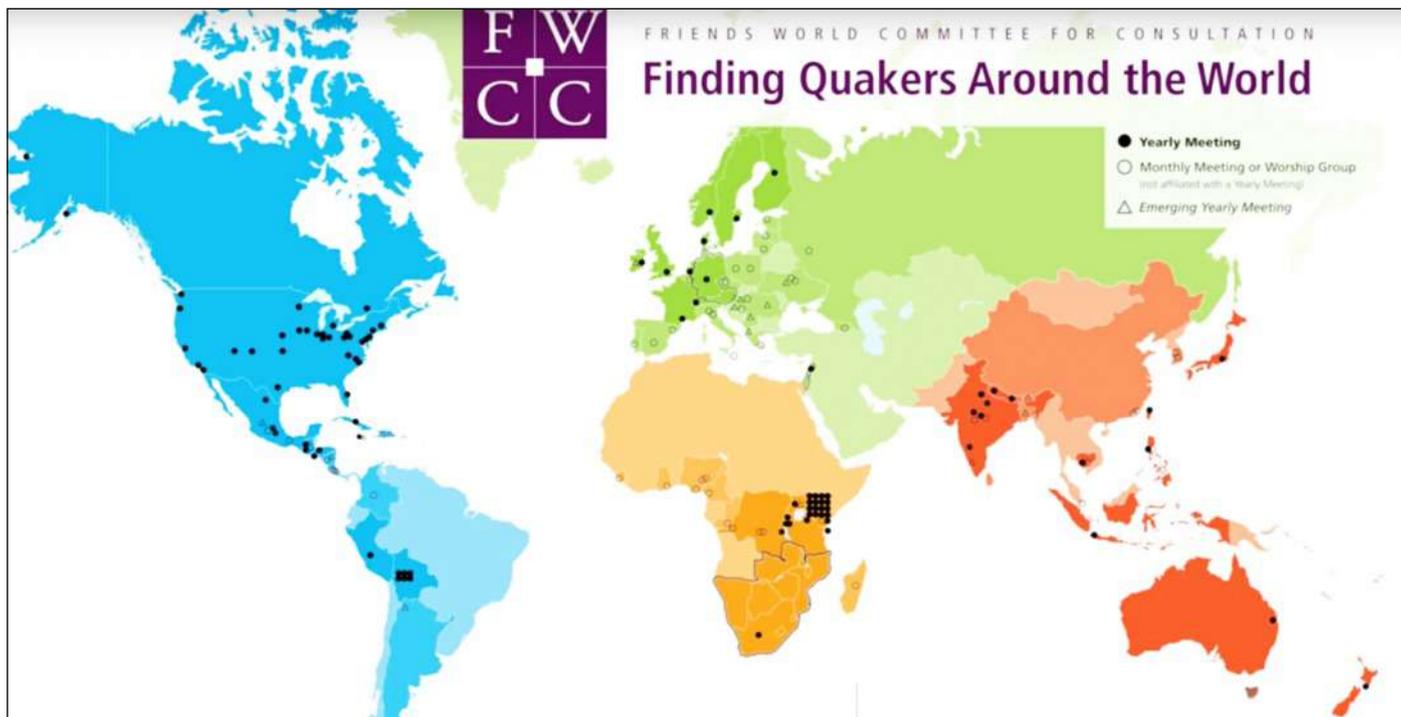
Guatemala 19,620

Taiwan 5,000

Burundi 35,000

UK 15,800

And this is where their Meetings are:



Don't Forget The Children!

Valerie Graves

I have mentioned this before, but I hope that we shall all do all we can to nag the government about the children, without parents or anyone who cares for them. Another programme last night told about a group of girls (In another country, but still just little girls, some not even teenaged, sold into prostitution, with horrible details about what their experiences were, day by day.) The ones we saw had been rescued, but they could not stop crying and it was not going to be easy to fit them for any kind of real life. There is no doubt at all in my mind that this is what will happen to the little girls stuck at Calais.

Get a drum and bang it! and a trumpet, too.

Quakers stand alongside victims of racist policies

From the statement from Meeting for Sufferings held at Friends House, 04 February 2017

“There can be no peace without justice; no love without trust; and no unity without equality. Our faith urges us to welcome the stranger as our equal and friend, feed those who are hungry and shelter those who are homeless, needy and frightened.

“Alongside Quakers in the USA, and their American Friends Service Committee, we stand with those whose lives are blighted by racist, discriminatory policies and those whose faith is denigrated by association with a tiny violent minority. We pray for the courage and steadfastness that will be needed as we uphold our testimony of equality, justice, peace, sustainability and truth. For us, prayer is inseparable from action.

Protest

Joan Rew

I am very sad and also angry reading about the HS2 railway. Spending billions of pounds to save an hour on a journey by removing some ancient forests is criminal. The money could be well spent on improving the existing railways. The Woodland Trust has compiled a 28 page petition to the Govern-

ment, appealing for some alterations to their plans, 36 ancient woods and a further 28 at risk which can never be replaced in the time it has taken for them to grow. Not only the woods but all the life contained in them.

I am reminded of Joni Mitchell's protest song again:-

“They took all the trees
And put them in a tree museum

And they charged the people
A dollar and a half to see'em
No no no
Don't it always seem to go,
That you don't know what
you've got
Till it's gone.
They paved Paradise
And put up a parking lot.”

In mourning -Joan Rew



Both photographs by Joan Rew

An Extraordinary Experience

Valerie Graves

This happened a long time ago, perhaps in the early eighties, when I was living near Chelmsford, where there are two quite small rivers running parallel, one almost on the edge of the town in an ornamental park, the other through the middle of the town. I lived in a village about two miles away.

Southern East Anglia Area Quaker Meeting

A summer afternoon, about 4 o'clock, desperately hot and breathless. I had come in a hurry, to buy something I had forgotten, and I stopped to look at the river. I had never seen anything like it. It was absolutely packed with fish, jostling to get to the surface. Some huge fish, several feet long, some quite small, all gulping and shoving to get to the air, with their mouths open. I watched for a few minutes, but suddenly I realised that something was about to hap-

pen. Then it started to rain, becoming a torrent. I took to my heels and fled! None too soon. Before I got home it was a down-pour and I got soaked.

I heard later that the rain had poured down some steps into Marks and Spencers and drowned all the freezers under several feet of water. But what I shall always remember is the sight of all those fish, struggling to reach the air.

News from Earls Colne

Jenny Kay

Looking ahead to 2017 we made plans for Creative Listening sessions after Meeting for Worship on fifth Sundays. We are taking it in turns to choose the topics, January provided an opportunity but on the fifth Sunday we were very few in number so we postponed it to the first in February. We have the freedom to do this as we only hold a Meeting for Church Affairs once a year or when the need arises.

After refreshments of a sustaining nature we settled back into the circle to reflect on silence in Meeting for Worship and how this

might be different for us than sitting quietly on our own. We gave our different experiences of silence and how we value it. It was an opportunity to get to know each other in 'matters 'eternal', appreciated by all present.

In the following week's Friend the item 'Communion in Meeting' by Terry Oakley included

this paragraph which chimed with our reflections:

Although many in Meeting sit with eyes closed, some have found it vital to look around at others present, - to allow inspiration to come from knowing who else is present, pondering on their circumstances, listening to their thoughts and words, feeling with them the joys and sorrows they carry. ... also... saints past and future, situations near and far, sensing the smallest and cosmic tremors can all be encompassed in the silent stillness.

The next session will be at the end of April.



Notice from Congenies

Artist Retreats

Still some spaces for Friday 28 April to Monday 8 May!

Friday 22 September to Monday 2 October *is full*

We invite artists (professional or amateur) to join us for 6-10 days of creating and camaraderie in the south of France.

Cost: €695 (€560 for shared occupancy) includes accommodation, most meals and transportation. Additional days are €90 (€65 shared) per day.

Come Make a Joyful Noise

Music Week

Saturday 20 to Sunday 28 May 2017

Lift your spirits with 5 - 8 days of musical adventure at Maison Quaker. Experience or talent not necessary--just a willingness to sing, play, learn or listen.

€465 for shared occupancy (€595 private room) includes 5 nights' accommodation, meals, everything but one lunch

See attached for more information.

Couples Enrichment Program

First Weekend in June, 2017 (*new!*)

only €265 per couple

Focus on your relationship, enhance communication skills, and deepen your appreciation of each other. Not therapy, but a way to make good relation-

ships even better. Open to any couple in a committed relationship, regardless of sexual orientation, marital status, or religious affiliation.

Coming from a Distance? Enhance the weekend with singing and sightseeing by extending your visit to 1-5 June. Email for more information on dates & program options.

In Friendship,

Judy and Dave Kashoff

Amis-residents

Maison Quaker

11, Avenue des Quakers

30111 Congenies, France

Phone +33 (0)4 66 71 46 41

<http://www.maison-quaker-congenies.org/>

Woodbrooke Retreat

John Kay

Last weekend but one, Jenny and I spent a few days at this wonderful Quaker study centre and met up again with Sandra and Vicky. Jenny was attending two very important Trustees occasions, the details of which escape me but the second of which entailed a keynote speech by Sandra Berry. My visit was that of a sojourning but one that I found very restful and I was able to talk to many other Friends who were there on a similar basis.

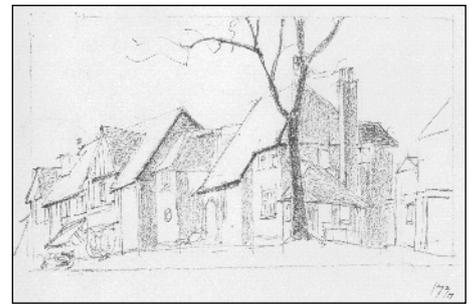
As I was due to give a painting demonstration the next Tuesday

in Burnham on Crouch I welcomed the time in order to prepare for this. I was able to take several photographs and prepare sketches which I thought you might be interested in.

Woodbrooke 2017

www.woodbrooke.org.uk.

Look out for the new brochure with its variety of courses or visit the website Bursaries are available from area meeting through overseers. Those of us attending courses relevant to AM appointments that we hold are fully financially supported.



Photos by Jenny Kay



I took several photographs and did several sketches. I spent a little time on this sketch of the bookshop corner, developing a line sketch into a tonal study. However the best view for a painting was Holland House, built in wonderful arts and crafts style. I re-sketched the view directly from the photograph and that was the one I chose. The largest picture is that of the painting but it is not completely finished at present but you'll probably see that I haven't finished the detail around the main entrance.