Diary Dates for December

Friday December 5th Colchester Farmers’ Market
Wednesday December 10th International Human Rights day
Saturday December 13th Colchester Quakers Children’s party
Sunday December 14th Colchester Quakers Christmas lunch
Thursday December 25th, 10.30 Colchester Christmas Day Meeting
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)

FIRST CONTACT
FOR FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS
CLACTON.........................Ray Attrill
COLCHESTER..................Carol Holding
SUDBURY..................Peter Whiteley

Area Meeting at Colchester

Jacky Hall

Area Meeting was held at Colchester on November 16th. Twenty-six Friends and two attenders were counted as present, although when attenders were asked to leave before we discussed membership, there were three or four of them, so add some latetimers to that total.

We recorded with sadness the tragic events of the previous week, which explained why Friends from Sudbury were not with us. We were with them in Spirit.

As usual in November there were a number of appointments. I will list those appointed for information of our readers, those stepping down were thanked for their service.

Jane Carter was re-appointed to AM Nominations Committee, and we are hoping for a Friend to serve for Clacton although Martha Schwager will continue to serve until a new appointment is made.

Liz Hurley, Norman Myall and Jenny Kay were re-appointed as overseers and Sylvia Jeffcock will continue to watch over the membership database.

A flurry of changes on elders brought in Eliza Jones, Charles Bather and Alison Parkes as elders at Colchester and Antoinette Arnold as elder at Earls Colne.

Sylva Garten-Rogers will serve on the Greenwood Trust. Peter Whiteley and Rob Parkes were re-appointed as Trustees to the AM, and Bob Crowley was appointed as a new Trustee.

Tim Holding was appointed as representative to Friends School Saffron Walden. Les Wood and Sheelagh Ruse were appointed to attend the Inequality conference at Friends House on November 29th.

We then dealt with membership matters. Lucien de Leon was accepted into membership and we have received an application from Jet Grömmel; both attend at Colchester.

Carol Holding then reported on Meeting for Sufferings. The next will be on December 6th. We need another representative on Sufferings. Eliza Jones reported on the Quaker Life rep. council she attended.

We are interested in joining Being Friends Together and this will be taken forward at local level.

We ended the afternoon with consideration of the long-term framework, breaking up into small groups to discuss the questions we are being asked. This led to a few of us older Friends nodding off, but the feelings expressed by those still awake are reported in the AM minutes.

There was only a remnant left to enjoy the usual lovely tea, as many of us had to dash through pouring rain, not to mention enormous puddles, to get back home.

Dear Friends,

I have only just realised that Christmas is dashing towards us like an express train! (if such things still exist). This newsletter will be out by the beginning of December, but there will not be one in January. (There never is, as we should have to be struggling with it over Christmas) Not very Christmasy weather right now, but I am thankful, and hope it lasts.

Our Rulers tell us that things are improving and everybody is rich and happy, but alas, how untrue that is, on the ground. I hear that the need for food banks has increased threefold, and it is good to hear how much the supermarkets are helping. And I do get tired of rude comments about immigrants.

A local firm needing 80 staff to make sandwiches had absolutely no luck locally and had to get 80 staff from Hungary; and no, he was not paying starvation wages. Did you see that MP telling the House that he had had a heart bypass done by a trio of doctors from across the world - not even Europe?

As usual in November there were a number of appointments. I will list those appointed for information of

Oh well, let’s look on the bright side! I am looking forward to Christmas and to seeing all my family, especially all the little ones. (but have to admit that a growing number are taller than me). At Christmas I try to think of all the people who are not so fortunate as I am, and do what I can, especially those who really don’t want to be helped.

I am a great believer in writing letters, though this is getting expensive these days. I love getting letters myself.

There is quite a lot going on at the Meeting House this month and we are having an interesting lot of visitors.

There will be a short Meeting for Worship on Christmas Day, 10.30 - 11 am. I have run this for more than twenty years! Maybe I shall give it up after this one. I hope someone will step forward. (Speak to Elders)

News, please, by the middle of the month, to Valerie Graves, (for contact details, see AM List of Members and Attenders).

Happy Christmas to you all.

Janet Thomas’s Garden, Photo : Ernest Hall

Southern East Anglia Area Quaker Meeting

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News from Clacton

Ernest Hall

Christmas is coming

Clacton f/Friends wish all readers of the Area Newsletter a Very Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year. Don’t forget our warm invitation to our annual Meeting for Carols on Saturday 20th December (the last Saturday before Christmas) at 3.00 pm at our Meeting House. Silva Garton Rogers and her friend Carolyn Rogers are making good progress with the preparation of a programme of popular Christmas carols, appropriate readings by Clacton f/Friends young and old, periods of Quakerly silence and a friendly chat at the end, with coffee, mince pies and other seasonal delicacies. I’m hoping that it will be as entertaining and as spiritually uplifting an occasion as the one that we enjoyed last year. We all look forward to seeing a full Meeting House!

‘Clearing the decks for action!’

I apologise for the military (or rather naval) headline, though George Fox and his contemporaries didn’t hesitate to use military metaphors in their conduct of what they called ‘The Lamb’s war’. I feel that the phrase best describes the present state of Clacton Meeting. All our hirers have now departed, some of them (having hired our rooms for thirty or more years!) writing very moving (having hired our rooms for thirty or more years!) writing very moving ‘farewell and thank you’ letters. Our Premises Committee has investigated eight local letting agencies and has decided to put the letting in the hands of Tendring Lettings. Some work has to be done on the flat before letting it and, as a result, the work on the driveway has been postponed until the New Year.

Susan Hanson and I are jointly undertaking the task of door keeper. We are both regular attenders at Meeting for Worship. Susan usually arrives early to put out the cups, saucers and other necessaries for after-meeting coffee. I’m early because it’s my nature to be early for everything – something to do with my age I expect! Margaret Ahmed has kindly agreed to act as temporary doorkeeper if neither Susan nor I should be available.

I was particularly pleased that Janet Thomas, our former Clerk, is to be asked if she will be our ‘gardening Friend’ and look after our inside and outside floral displays. She and her husband Rodney are expert amateur gardeners. The illustrations show what they have accomplished at their own home in Jaywick. Since writing the above I have learned that Janet has agreed enthusiastically to be our ‘gardening Friend’. I am delighted because I know that she will carry out her voluntary duties with energy, enthusiasm and skill.

Question and Answer

At our Meeting for Church Affairs on 2nd November (expected to be our last such meeting in 2014) members considered a number of questions put to us by Area Meeting and gave their answers. I don’t think that I can do better than to publish the Minute as it stands.

Q: What do Quakers hold in common? – a focus question.
A: We suggest that a brief answer might be that we believe in ‘that of God’ in everyone, and we have a particular way of holding our business meetings, awaiting the guidance of God.

Q: What principles and procedures make us Quaker to us and others? – what we want the world to know of us and how the principles lead us to act locally.
A: our testimonies.

Q: What is your 5 year vision for your local Meeting, for Quakers in Britain and in the world? – an opportunity to decide where the rest of the world is as well as where we stand. We are on a journey and we do not have a fixed goal but the goal is informed by our experience along that journey.
A: We just hope that Clacton Meeting will still be here in five years time.

Q: The fourth question will either be, simply: “Why?” or will be about the national structures needed to help Local Meetings.
A: No answer is suggested.

Area Meeting Newsletter

Those of us who are able to access the Newsletter ‘on line’ may sometimes forget the plight of other f/Friends who depend upon the arrival of the printed copies to read the Area Meeting’s news. We are most grateful to John Hall (no relation!) for his kind offer to collect and bring Clacton’s printed copies from Colchester every month. It is much appreciated.

At the end of October I feared that I would find myself among those who had to wait for the printed copies to arrive. Although on my laptop I access and use the internet daily, when anything goes wrong I am clumsy, clueless and quick to despair. I found that although I received John Kay’s email that accompanied the November Newsletter, I was quite unable...
A Comment
from Bob Crowley, of Harwich Meeting (slightly rearranged)

I am commenting on an article in October Newsletter, with my brief account of the writer’s position on nuclear weapons, and agree that nuclear war would be indescribable and diabolical. (I am not sure what the Green Party position is).

I agree no-one has the right to use nuclear weapons, but what do you do if threatened? The political function is probably correct and cannot perceive a way of dealing with terrorism but it has to be perceived and worked on. Meantime, and until there is sensible dialogue from both sides, in protecting the human race from protagonists, whether terrorists or other countries, there has to be a deterrent?

Again the last paragraph is absolutely logical and understandable but it is talking to the converted. Any right minded person can include as well as starred children, Ebola, Syria, Darfur, Lebanon, South Sudan, Haiti and you can go on. The world is in a mess.

What Are You Reading Now?
from Valerie Graves

I don’t watch much television (except Look East) so I do spend a lot of time reading, a very mixed bag! Mostly old favourites, children’s books, old 1930’s novels, a bit of Dickens, a lot of nature writing by people like Richard Mabey, almost anything except modern novels, and even a few of those sometimes. I have just been enjoying Basildon Plotslands, an account of an extraordinary movement in South London in the 1950’s to 70s. This one was in Laindon, where a piece of rough land was set aside for local people to rent. It was quite cheap, you set it up with perhaps a caravan, but most people built some kind of a wooden house. No water or power or drains were provided but there were a few standpipes for water. In a short time there were “dwellings” set up along the rough tracks, and in its hey-day there were dozens, maybe a hundred, arranged like a housing estate. Mostly they were used as holiday homes, people going for weekends or perhaps the school holidays, but a few, mostly old people, lived there all the time. Each had quite a big garden plot, some really beautiful, some quite scruffy, some grew vegetables. There were no shops so all food had to be brought. It was a way of life, greatly enjoyed. The writer, Deanna Walker, lived there regularly from a small child to an adult. Eventually the local Council built proper estate houses there, but by the mid-seventies few of the original huts were in use and it all died out.

Happily one of the huts was preserved as a museum by Essex Wildlife Trust and you can visit it. I suppose this is the first of the “holiday home” culture. It must have been a very hard and strenuous holiday.

Feedback to Boots Ltd

I had my eyes tested today and nowadays, as a matter of form I was asked if I would complete a ‘feedback’ form on line.

As I expected, I was asked to put in order of merit and tick the appropriate box for various grades of someone else’s questions which contained the someone else’s usual assumptions. I ticked everything as excellent until I reached the part where I could add my own comments. I then included this:

“I had my eyes examined today by Keith and as I have always received and expect from Dolland and Acheson and now Boots. I experienced good, qualified and efficient service. This is the reason that I have remained as a satisfied customer for many years.

Witnessing the huge increase in paperwork now required from the staff both from the NHS and from Boots I despair at the extent that the distrust seems to be growing of the overworked staff in large conglomerates. How this generates anything but insecurity in employees I cannot understand. The growth of belief in league tables and the reliability of statistics is a blossoming. Fear prevails that those in responsible and sometimes very skilful jobs cannot be trusted without them having to justify their very existence by filling in forms.

I am happy to supply feedback but only in my own words therefore I do not like ticking boxes, they can so easily be end up by being assessed by computer. If this continues with this branch I may be forced to change my optician to a much smaller firm.

As a Quaker I have trust in the basic goodness of people, I find that most of them have a natural pride in what they do for a living. Being placed under the stress of constant monitoring does nothing to improve their health, perform-
ance, or in fact the convenience of the customers they serve.

If I have a complaint I will make it and if I do not, I hope that dealing with that and my continual patronage will be taken as proof of my satisfaction.

I feel that this sentiment is shared by many of your clients and I urge you to reconsider the trend I sense towards growing pressure upon your staff.

In love and Friendship
John Kay"

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**Amendment to Contact List**

Moira Shippard Col. Meeting, has changed her mobile number. (for contact details, see AM List of Members and Attenders)

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**AM Contact List**

Members and Attenders 2015
Jenny Kay
These are now available at your Local Meeting. Please notify any changes/amendments to Sylvia Jeffcock and to John Kay for a change of address notice in the Newsletter.

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**Clerk’s Corner**

Alison Parkes

At Area Meeting in November, Friends played with rainbow-coloured modelling clay, creating patterns and small sculptures while discussing the Long Term Framework consultation questions put to us by the appointed working group. There was a lot of talk about “joining up the dots”, in other words, ensuring effective communication between Friends at local, area and national level, as well as between Area Meetings. We heard of the desire for those joined-up dots to actually lead somewhere, to have a sense of direction, rather than creating a beautiful but ineffectual array of coloured pathways. Our Friend Tim Holding pointed out that if we mixed together all the colours of the modelling clay, it would turn into Quaker grey. What could we do if we were all acting as one?

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**War Stories, Peace Stories**

Quaker Memories of World War One
Joan Taylor

I am collecting together stories told about people affected by World War 1, and will be putting them together in a book to be published by Colchester Meeting.

The aim would be to have Quaker (members and attenders) recollections, telling stories about real people in real situations. These can be used for reflection.

The stories can be about anyone that you know about. They can concern Quaker men and women, and involve our peace testimony and the consequences of this at the time, but they can also be stories of anyone else that you know about. The important thing is that these stories have impacted on how you feel about the war. It is a chance for you to mull over the memories you have of people you have encountered or learnt about. These stories may be from people who have told you about their experiences, but also may be stories told about them that you would like to pass on. I am particularly interested in experiences of women and children, and different national experiences (not just British but German, French, Italian etc). Do not be afraid of recounting details that are disturbing.

If you know of people in other areas (members or attenders) who might like to contribute they would be very welcome.

These stories should be around 500 words. Please type them double spaced and send them to me by email or post them to me. (for contact details, see AM List of Members and Attenders).

The book will go to press when there are sufficient stories. Please also send pictures if possible.

Thank you.

The wish was expressed for more effective communication amongst Friends of different AMs who share a concern. Our own Area Meeting has a group of Friends focusing on Alternatives to Trident. Evidently, there are other AMs around the country who are confronting the issues of Trident in a range of ways, yet there is no system in place to communicate about it. In answer to the question, “How could Quaker structures and networks help Quakers in Britain to flourish?” perhaps Friends House could create options for more communication between Friends across AMs who share concerns, rather than only connecting to Friends House staff. There is one such network, the Quakernomics Blog

http://www.quaker.org.uk/quakernomics-blog and we would appreciate more. Perhaps there are ways in which online facilities could serve this communication better, such as by using Dropbox for sharing AM initiatives or creating files of useful shared material on the Quakers in Britain website.

We already recognise the need for Quakers to become more visible in the wider community. At AM in November we restated this discernment: our testimonies to simplicity, equality, peace, truth and the environment need to be more visible as ways in which we “let our lives speak.” Our testimonies could appeal to a broader demographic, if people in our local communities only knew about them. Could Quaker structures and networks help us in this endeavour? We are becoming open to the value of websites, and social media, such as Facebook and Twitter. Might these be channels to further our visibility beyond the narrow confines of our usual demographic?

Our minute expressed our wish to connect and collaborate with others, in order to further tolerance in the world as well as collaborating in spirit-led work. One of the four central Quaker committees, the Quaker Committee for Christian and Inter-
faith Relations (QCCIR), focuses on finding common ground with other churches and faiths. I recently learned about Mitzvah Day from the QCCIR website: Mitzvah day http://www.mitzvahday.org.uk/ was founded as a day on which members of the Jewish community undertook social action, but now people from all faiths and none participate across the globe. This would seem to have the potential for future cooperation with local faith groups. QCCIR have asked Friends to report back to them about interfaith and Mitzvah Day events, which might inspire others to do something similar in the future. Is there a Friend in our AM who would like to follow this up further, and take forward our desire to connect with other faiths in practical as well as spiritual ways?

We come back to the question posed by Paul Parker: What is our ministry as individuals and as a Meeting? It’s a question that challenges and inspires and could lead to rainbows as well as, perhaps, some Quaker grey. We will continue our process of discerning our purposes as an Area Meeting in the New Year.

Next Area Meeting: Sunday 11 January, 2015, at Colchester Meeting House, 2.15 pm.

Details of the Long-Term Framework Consultation.

2014/71 Long-term Framework consultation

We then considered the four questions put to all meetings by the Meeting for Sufferings working group as part of the national consultation towards a Long Term Framework:

1. What is distinctive about Quaker work and witness, to us and to others?

2. What is your vision of the ministry that your local meeting and Quakers in Britain are called to, now and in the future?

3. What are we led to do together?

4. How could Quaker structures and networks help Quakers in Britain to flourish?

We divided into small groups and made use of coloured paper, felt tips and other art materials to help us think creatively, to draw as well as write in response to the questions. We then gathered together to share, in worship-sharing, what we had explored. We seek a spiritual basis to our witness in all that we do. Quakerism is a mix of mysticism and practicality; it is deeply spiritually rooted, leading to practical action. We cannot claim exclusivity in being guided by the spirit; we should seek to connect and collaborate with others. We seek openness to others; we are not dogmatic. We accept the challenge of difficult issues that are not popular. We are part of an extraordinary network of Quakers, which goes back to the days of Margaret Fell. Do we really join the dots up enough? Meetings which share similar concerns, such as about Trident, should be communicating better together. We should take the lead from young Friends and look to see how they are communicating with one another and how they are taking action together.

Our demographic is that we are aged over 60, compared with the younger demographic of, for instance, Buddhists in Colchester. We don’t have a creed. Yet we have testimonies to simplicity, equality, peace, and truth, which are intertwined. They inform us now and how we leave our planet to future generations. We need to find creative ways to put across our Quaker testimonies as the basis of our lives, our witness and our Quaker action.

We are a Society that accepts differences and seeks to understand and respect others, including those of other faiths. Tolerance is fundamental. We see a lack of tolerance as contributing to what is wrong with the world at the moment. There is fear instead of respect for others.

Quakers speak out and speak Truth to power, but we don’t do it enough! Our vision includes being called to do something to increase economic justice in the world. Peace education is a vital way of getting across the Quaker testimony for non-violent conflict resolution. This is something Quakers are called to do.

As well as being a tolerant Society, let us not forget our radical edge. We must not get bogged down in our processes and risk losing that radical edge. Yet we value the strength of commitment that comes from a lengthy discernment and leads to unity. Our testimonies are based on the premise that love is vitally important in the way we minister in the world and respect humanity. We have a strong sense of community. We can act on our own because of the strength we draw from belonging to a Quaker community.

Following the minute the clerk noted:
Our discernment today may contribute to our Area Meeting process of discerning our purposes as an Area Meeting, which will continue in the New Year. We were reminded that Local Meetings and other Quaker groups and individuals can also continue the process and respond to the Long Term Framework consultation questions as they wish.

**Area Meetings in 2015**

Southern East Anglia Quaker Meeting  
- all begin at 2.15 pm -

11 January - Colchester Meeting House
8 March - Clacton Meeting House
10 May - Sudbury Meeting House
12 July - Earls Colne Meeting House
13 September - Colchester Meeting House
15 November - Colchester Meeting House

All are welcome. Refreshments are provided after the meeting.

Non-members are requested to ask permission to attend from the Clerk, Alison Parkes.

**Wildlife Spot:**

Hard Work Putting the Garden to Bed  
from Valerie Graves

At the end of summer my garden looked very overgrown, gone-to-seed and scruffy so a valiant effort was needed. A jobbing gardener cut a much overgrown hedge down to size but didn’t have time to cut up the prunings, so I filled several bags with much effort, and then filled several more bags with cuttings from a forsythia. Dozens of plants had to be cut down to size, turning a blind eye to the fact that many of them, such as hollyhocks, had decided that it was spring and were in full flower. (You have to be tough sometimes!) This morning I looked out of the window and found that my flowering cherry was in full bloom, but I refuse to be daunted. I had to cut the grass last week, too.

The rabbits are enjoying life, you can always see half a dozen of them enjoying the grass on the verges, and things like wallflowers. They come up from the Hilly Fields and are gradually spreading up towards the main road, and seem to be completely unafraid of that endangered species, humans. We do have foxes, but mostly only at night.

**Spiritual Review**

Thoughts of a young Quaker  
Ella Myall

As a young friend I feel it isn’t necessary to have a spiritual review on behalf of the whole meeting. For me Quakerism means something different to each person who considers themselves to be a Quaker. As the term ‘Quaker’ is not owned by anybody, I believe it is a fluid term, perhaps perceived differently by everybody who uses it. Despite this I understand we are a collective as Quakers, united in our key beliefs of Pacifism and equality. I feel this acceptance of diversity, within the parameters of our overall values, is what makes Quakers who they are.

I understand I am speaking from a Non-Theist point of view and there will be Quakers who feel a stronger connection with our Christian Roots. However, a Spiritual review is for each individual person to have, if and when they chose to, rather than having this with regards to the meeting as a whole.

My view is that there is no right or wrong way to be a Quaker, this being one of the key things I have understood from growing up in a Quaker household. If I was to speak on what it means to be a Quaker now, my thoughts are that it would be wrong to not include the many different beliefs this entails, even if these were not my own.

My version of Quakerism comes through in my way of life; therefore what Quakerism means should not be decided by anyone but myself. I feel this freedom in the definition of Quakerism should be allowed to any Quaker, who will make their own decision on what it means to be a Quaker today.

To find out about spiritual reviews see BYM publication "Spiritual Reviews, reviewing the spiritual life of the meeting and its expression in caring." A practical guide to planning and carrying out a spiritual review. Ed.

**FWCC needs Volunteers**

An opportunity to Volunteer for Friends World Committee for Consultation World Office (FWCC) in Friends House

In the run up to the next International Representatives Meeting (IRM) in Arequipa, Peru in January 2016.

The need is for people with experience in organising gatherings, Spanish language skills with IT and Social Media experience. A financial background is also useful. If you have any of these skills (or any other skill you feel might be useful) we would love to hear from you.

Transport costs to London are paid. Lunch is provided in the Friends House restaurant.

Gretchen Castle, Email: gretchen@friendsworldoffice.org or ring 0207 663 1199.
**WW1 War Poetry**

Carol Holding

Most people have heard of Rupert Brooke’s “If I should die think only this of me”, or John McCrae’s “In Flanders fields the poppies blow” or Edward Thomas’s “In memoriarm, Easter 1915” or especially Wilfred Owen’s “Dulce et decorum est” or “Anthem for a doomed youth” and “Futility” which Benjamin Britten used in his War Requiem. We dared not call them unpatriotic, — because they died?

But what about about Ivor Gurney’s “Strange Hells” or Edmund Blunden’s “Come on my Lucky lads” These poets and the war artists like Stanley Spencer and Paul Nash really knew what war was like and maybe found solace or personal redemption by recording it in their own inimitable ways, but many of all ranks and classes went mad because the politicians and their friends and families, could not imagine what they went through, and they had no way of telling it.

Ivor Gurney who was a painter as well as a poet spent much of his later life in an asylum and few have heard much of him. This phrase “Lest we forget” is as much for those whose minds were lost as for those whose bodies were lost in battle.

The bitterness of Rudyard Kipling’s “Epitaphs of War 1914-1918” “If any question why we died. Tell them, because our fathers lied” is considered too disrespectful, by the official chroniclers (the Victors) and Robert Graves’s “Recalling war” or Siegfried Sassoon’s “Glory of women” “You love us when we’re Heroes” were considered too gory or cynical descriptions.

Hardy wrote a poem parodying the good will of Christmas and how it evaporated during that war with the introduction of the latest and finest of Man’s inventions Mustard Gas! He was good at pathos in a story so that we could identify with the good people but he also showed how our ugliest side could be exposed by the slide of circumstances.

If we fail to learn from those who are experienced and articulate and listen only to those from our generation who, not understanding history, pontificate and polarise such as Bush and Blair and now Max Hastings, who says that such thoughtful though funny pieces of theatre such as “Oh what a lovely War” and “Blackadder” are not poigniant commentary on war but merely subversive and disrespectful, we really are doomed.

This Little England (not Great Britain) has a very bad international record historically and if we value the temperate climate and character we feel is our best side we would do well to make the most of it wholeheartedly and not rush to impose it on others. One of our best characteristics is to be able (at times) to step back and make fun of our self righteous pomposity especially in Literature, and long may it remain so.

**Thomas Chalkney**

John Hall

In 1741, Philadelphia Monthly Meeting sent Thomas Chalkley to the small and very new meeting of Friends in Tortola, British Virgin Islands, to teach them the Quaker business method.

Perhaps he was chosen because, in 1716, when he was on his way home in the sloop Dora, an incident occurred which was described by Abigail Whittier thus:

Of Chalkley’s Journal, old and quaint, Gentlest of skippers, rare sea-saint! Who, when the dreary calms prevailed, And water-butt and bread-cask failed, And cruel and hungry eyes pursued His portly presence, mad for food, With dark hints muttered under breath Of casting lots for life or death, Offered, if Heaven withheld supplies, To be himself the sacrifice.

Then, suddenly, as if to save The good man from his living grave, A ripple on the water grew, A school of porpoise flashed in view. “Take eat,” he said, “and be content; These fishes in my stead are sent By Him who gave the tangled ram To spare the child of Abraham”.

**Sort of Wildlife:**

Happy Destruction, the Wonderful Mattock from Valerie Graves

Few gardeners nowadays, wedded to power tools of all kinds (you can even get a thing like a reverse vacuum cleaner, which actually blows dead leaves away!) use old-fashioned things like a mattock. I have had one for very many years, and though it looks heavy and is very powerful, it is easy for even an oldie like me to use if you know how. I have acquired quite a reputation locally as I removed a very obstinate (quite small) stump from someone’s front garden with only a few strokes.