Diary Dates for March

Monday March 2nd, 1930 hrs Trident campaign group meeting, Colchester
Friday March 6th Colchester Farmer’s Market
Saturday March 7th Fairtrade Day at the Oak Tree Coffee House, Highwoods [http://www.oaktreecoffeehouse.org](http://www.oaktreecoffeehouse.org)
Sunday March 8th Area Meeting, Colchester (not Clacton)
Sunday March 8th International Women’s Day [http://www.internationalwomensday.com](http://www.internationalwomensday.com)
Wednesday March 11th No Smoking Day Helping those who want to quit [https://nosmokingday.org.uk/](https://nosmokingday.org.uk/)
Saturday March 14th 1330hrs Positive Money talk & workshop at Colchester FMH  Susan Holding
Saturday March 28th– Sunday March 29th Clocks go forward 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;
email address: AMClerk@northessequakers
Meetings for Worship

CLACTON
Sunday at 10.30 am

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

SUDSBURY
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
SUDSBURY.......................Peter Whiteley

Editorial

Dear Friends,

Well, I suppose we are now in Lent, not that anyone pays much attention to it these days. I find it a good time to think about my life, where I have been and where I am going. (Perhaps I have been reading old diaries). There certainly does seem to a dreadful urge towards spring cleaning and getting rid of things! Right now it is books which have an innate way of multiplying. I do have a tendency to buy new books, but I do try to get rid of some too.

We have been through a bad time financially and now our leaders are making much of the small shoots of growth that they see is arriving, but I don’t believe in it, far too many people are not really on proper wages (as can be seen by the fourfold or more use of our food bank) while those who are really indecently rich are evading tax. Benefits are quietly cut in all directions, and far too many people are not doing satisfying work. I often feel quite guilty that I am in a comfortable home on a good pension, though I do give a good deal of it away. We all have to keep our eyes open for hidden anxieties and shortfalls around us.

Time passes and my many young children grow up (only two of them can still squeeze into my child’s chair!) and soon many of them will be leaving school and moving to college or apprenticeships. Those who are already there, live in a maze of temporary jobs and homes and relationships. Tiring even to think about!

Soon we’ll be coming to the summer term with all its anxieties and pleasures. I wish you all a happy time. Our Meeting is full of interesting activities and a lot of newcomers.

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

Meeting for Sufferings

6th February 2015
Carol Holding

Due to rail repairs entailing bus detour via Billericay to Liverpool St and all the circle and metropolitan lines being closed, I was late for Meeting for Worship at the beginning of the day. I gather that it had been very deep and sad due to the very sudden death of the son of one our members and the imminent death of the son of another. Both without warning and causing us all to consider this precious but fragile gift of life that we are given.

The business of the day began with the clerk of Yearly Meeting giving a preliminary talk about Yearly Meeting which will take place alongside and there will be more worship time to help with election related stress! There is a Spiritual Preparation Document available and we are encouraged to think and pray about YM even if we are not going.

David Day spoke on Quaker values in Education and Ann Watson spoke of the pressures on Teachers and pupils in the state System which is often driven by opinion rather than truth and in which equality of provision is not ensured and where there is increasing militarisation. Our concern is that schools should create places of cooperation and safety.

We are reminded that these problems however are not universal or insoluble and Friends can take supportive action in their own areas. Michael Phipps felt we should place emphasis on the positive points and that there was a growing sense of shared values and good relationships in some schools, and we can counteract the downgrading of religious education and the growing mantra that becoming an Academy school will solve all problems. The capabilities of the current group working on this are limited geographically and need our support.

Paul Parker on What it means to be a Quaker and reflecting on the minute from YM at Bath as always took his inspiration from QFP. in particular Chaps 10 &11, He said we tend to look at this from one position and asks that, as membership is a commitment in many
News from Clacton

Ernest Hall

Some heartening financial news!

On 1st February our Clerk was able to give our Meeting for Church Affairs some heartening news about the Meeting’s finances. I don’t think that I can do better than to quote the actual minute:

Hazel Jones reported that income in January totalled £891.82 against expenditure of £449.47 which had increased our balance from £3,336.64 to £3,778.99. In addition we have received a cheque for contributions from last year’s Schedule totalling £1,392.67 which has not yet been banked. This will increase our bank balance to £5,171.66. The initial set-up costs for letting the flat were paid in December and the monthly rent in January gave us a net amount of £478.60. We expect income to continue at about this level, which will easily cover our regular monthly outgoings of about £250. We will continue to keep our finances under careful review.

We are grateful to Hazel who has been acting, very effectively, as Treasurer as well as Clerk since Roy Prockter’s sad death.

Dealing with a disaster

At the Meeting for Church Affairs on 1st February our Premises Committee reported that a leaking radiator in the flat above had brought down the ceiling and done other damage to the small Meeting Room. NFU, the Meeting’s insurers, had been very helpful and would pay most of the cost of repair except for a £250 excess. Costs and compensation will be for Area Meeting, holders of the insurance policy. Much of the necessary work of repair and restoration had already been done. The Premises Committee were authorised to continue with the work needed in the small Meeting Room, including the provision of new medium quality floor covering for that room and, if possible, also for the corridor and kitchen. This might be a good opportunity to replace the dirty and damaged kitchen flooring.

The outside resurfacing and erection of the Meeting’s new notice board had been delayed but it is hoped that it will be completed during the first week of March.

An Outreach Opportunity

Margaret Purrett and Silva Gar- ton-Rogers have responded to an invitation to address an ‘enrichment assembly’ of the 250 children at Engaines Primary School in Little Clacton on Wednesday 25th February, on the faith and practice of the Religious Society of Friends. It has been thought that an account of the Society’s role in the Kindertransport that saved many Jewish children from the Nazi gas chambers in World War II may be of particular interest. We look forward to hearing Margaret and Silva’s report.

We regret that circumstances made it impossible for Donald Hind to present to us on 1st February the DVD on the subject of conscientious objection made by Watford Friends. We hope that he will be able to do so at some time in the future. We were also sorry to learn that Jacqui Wilson, a very regular and loyal attender, had been taken ill while staying with her daughter in Norfolk and was now in hospital in Norwich. She is in our prayers and we wish her a full recovery.
Our ‘First Wednesday’ Meeting for Worship (with frugal lunch)

In last month’s newsletter I reported that, thanks to our former Clerk Janet Thomas, there was a possibility that the ‘Half-hour Meetings for Worship’ followed by a basic lunch at 1.00 pm on the first Wednesday of every month, would be resumed. A ‘pilot meeting’ would be arranged for the 4th February to see if such a meeting might be possible on a regular basis, despite the fact that we do not now have either a Warden or a Resident Caretaker. Nor have we a cooker for heating soup.

In the event nine of us (rather more than we sometimes have for Sunday Meetings for Worship) turned up. We centred down in Quakerly silence at 1.00 pm. I have had over sixty years experience of Quaker Meetings and have no hesitation in saying that our meeting on 4th February was as truly gathered as any I have attended. A brief introduction and reading from ‘Advises and Queries’ from Janet Thomas was followed by prayerful and expectant Quaker silence, and brief but clearly heartfelt spoken ministry from two of those present.

After the closure of the Meeting for Worship, Janet and Rodney brought round bread rolls and cheese and other delicacies together with very welcome and warming cups of coffee. We discussed our Meeting and decided as one, that we hoped that it would be continued. We thought though that it would be better if the Meeting were to be held from 12.00 noon till 1.00 pm rather than as has been the case, from 1.00 pm till 2.00 pm. We also thought that we would like to have a collection box so that those who wish to do so could contribute to the cost of the frugal meal, thus avoiding imposing any financial burden on the Local Meeting. We realized that there could not be a Meeting on the first Wednesday of March because the driveway is to be re-laid during that week. We very much hoped though that Meeting for Church Affairs would approve a resumption of the ‘1st Wednesday’ Meetings-with-frugal-lunch at 12.00 noon, from April 2015.

I believe that after our lunch had been cleared away we left the Meeting House as we had found it.

Change of Area Meeting Venue

Alison Parkes

Clacton Friends have requested that the next AM be held at a different Meeting House, since their building repair work has revealed more problems and one of their two rooms is likely to be out of commission in March.

We particularly needed a venue with WiFi, in order to demonstrate the AM website. Having discussed the options with a few Friends, we will hold AM at Colchester Meeting House on Sunday, March 8, 2.15 pm. We hope Clacton Friends will then host AM on September 13.

In Praise of Diaries

from Valerie Graves

Do you keep a diary? In this computer age you probably don’t need to, but I would be lost without mine! Of course, I keep engagements and dates made ahead, etc., in it and I would be lost without this as my memory is so bad, but there is usually a note about the weather and small domestic happenings, letters sent and received, people who ring up, or those I ring and callers at the house, and perhaps a mention of something happening in the world.

Very small stuff, but the interest comes at the end of the year when I write a summary. This is not just what has happened but a general survey of the year as a whole; a paraphrase of my anxieties at the time of writing, and my hopes for the coming year. I record births and deaths, and there is a long list of Happenings during the year, those happening to me and those happening to other people, mostly those close to me but sometimes public characters.

I always read last year’s summary before I write the current one. Often I have completely forgotten most of it. It is always funny to see what I was anxious about: nearly always my worries have come to nothing, but the Hopes are often unfulfilled, especially when they involved improvements.

There are always things that seemed momentous but in fact were not, but it was interesting to read about disasters like the floods in Somerset. How wonderful to remember the incredible way in which young farmers dropped everything and drove down there with tractors and trucks loaded with hay and lent a hand with getting stock to safety. Not politicians but just Tom, Dick and Harry with little spare money and less spare time. We should be proud of them. But it is sad to realise that, months later, very little has been done by those in authority to help people who lost so much.

It only takes a few minutes a day to write a few lines in your diary, but it becomes a fascinating record of your life. Mine goes back twenty or thirty years and I often have a random look at it. Especially the anxieties and hopes, which almost never led to what I had feared or expected.

The Quaker Star Rose

The rose was developed in 1991 in Northern Ireland and named in recognition of the work of QPSW & AFSC.
Daniel Wheeler

John Hall
To get into Quaker Faith & Practice is quite an achievement. With almost no formal education, ex-sailor, ex-soldier, farmer and convinced (at the age of 26) Friend, Daniel Wheeler (27.11.1771-12.6.1840) makes it just once. There he describes a truly gathered Meeting for Worship (QF&P 2.04). It gives no hint of the fascinating life he led.

When Alexander I, Tsar of All Russia, visited England in 1814, he was very impressed with Friends, as his relative Peter the Great one hundred years before, had been. So, when Alexander decided to drain the marshes around St Petersburg, he insisted that a Quaker do the job. Daniel applied and was given the post. What his wife Jane thought about emigrating is not recorded.

The family was given a house of 24 rooms on the river Neva. One was set aside as a meeting room. Daniel employed 300 soldiers of the imperial army to clear away the fallen trees and dig the channels. They were fed black bread and onions and slept on shelves six-feet wide in a wooden hut. In fourteen years, he organised the draining of 5,700 acres of marshland and established farms on 4,000 of them. Fifteen of the farms were let out to freed serfs. He hoped that this largesse would be an object-lesson to Russian land-owners.

After fourteen years, Daniel felt the call to be a Quaker missionary overseas. Alexander’s grandson Tsar Nicholas I, released Daniel from his contract which was taken over by his eldest son, William. On 20.7.1832, Daniel left his wife and family in Russia, after thirty-two years of marriage, and sailed for London. The Second Day Morning Meeting of recorded ministers united with Daniel’s concern and Meeting for Sufferings purchased the hundred-ton Henry Freeling for his travels.

At once point on their voyage, they encountered very high seas which threatened to capsize their ship. A school of 200 whales, each twelve feet long, surrounded the ship and prevented it from keeling over. Daniel recorded, “If any should view it as a thing of chance I do not, for I believe it to be one of the great and marvellous works of the Lord God Almighty.”

Joined by James Backhouse and George Washington Wheeler, over four years Daniel and his younger son Charles, visited French Polynesia, the Hawaiian Islands, the Hervey Islands off the coast of Queensland, the Tonga Islands, New Zealand, Australia and Tasmania. He then returned to what was left of his family in Russia, his wife and eldest son having died, but shortly after set off for the USA where he visited Yearly Meetings in Philadelphia, Virginia, New England, Ohio and New York. After an initial reticence, he told the Meetings of his missionary work among all the peoples he had met. He died from a cold after only three weeks in America.

The Henry Freeling which was wrecked off Dominica 3 June 1834.

Just in Case

John Kay
If you are expecting the newsletter as an email attachment and it does not seem to have arrived, do not despair, it may well be sitting in your Junk mailbox. So please check that it does not contain any emails that you thought you had not received. Many email programs use a filter to stop anything it decides are spam, they are not always the best to judges. In all cases you yourself know what you want to receive, so it’s always best to look for yourself.
Non-Judgemental Acceptance

Ellen Cohen

I missed the newsletter deadline for February so would like to say that I support the non judgemental acceptance of Friends spiritual life. Also ensuring Equality in Meeting allows us to examine and reinvigorate tired processes and freshen our overall values whilst safeguarding individuals.

I take refuge in Isaac Pennington’s moving words:–

“Our life is love and peace and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and not laying accusations one against another, but praying one for another and helping one another with a tender heart.”

Two Garden Poems

Julia Usher

SQUIRREL
1. Nuts about round hard fruit, stashed away; Never lost location.
2. Splayed, motionless; On trunk, Upside down, Waiting for some axion to fire; Claws clenching back.
3. A squirrel fell; Side-Lay as if asleep, Tail curled unstirring.

ROBIN
Grey ghost, flicks faster than sight, Appears from nowhere Like magician’s sleight of hand. Head aslant, seeks permission to check my turnover of dirt, of leaves, of moss. Picks at the invisible worm, ant, flea, seed; Then stands on perch to overlook again.

News from QUNO

Alison Bush

Jordan Street, great nephew of Honor Chamberlain sent this letter explaining the work of QUNO (Quaker United Nations) where he works in New York. Subject of a Sunday collection in Colchester.

The Quaker United Nations work on the assumption that whilst the UN is far from perfect, it is the best tool or institution that exists, that will be able to promote a peaceful and nonviolent world. The way we approach our work is through this vision statement:

Grounded in the Quaker belief that there is that of the divine in every person, we seek a United Nations that addresses key drivers of violence including the structures and systems that produce exclusion and injustice, facilitates and supports change through peaceful means, and whose policies and practices reflect a diversity of voices, such that people around the world can safely and peacefully achieve their potential.

Here in New York we work on the following programs — Peacebuilding, Peace and Development, and Prevention of Violent Conflict. Geneva focus more on Climate Change, Human Rights and Refugees, Economic Issues, Justice and Prisons, and Food and Sustainability.

Lots of our work in New York is focused on engaging in policy with high level UN employees — Ambassadors and members of the secretariat. We work closely with the American friends Service Committee (AFSC) to bring evidence and findings from their worldwide programs, and to ensure that local voices are heard and amplified in UN-NY Policy conversations.

One of the big thrusts of the office right now is working on replacing the Millennium Development Goals, with a new framework called the Sustainable Development Goals. The Millennium Development Goals, whilst bringing great progress to some areas of the world, failed to contribute positively to conflict affected and fragile states. Out of the 7 countries that are on course to achieve ZERO of the 8 development goals, each one is either in conflict or has recently been embroiled in a conflict. So our office has been a big advocate of ensuring that the new agenda accurately represents the fact that Peace is vital for development, by pushing for a standalone goal on Peaceful Societies. QUNO has been working with delegates, UN officials and other NGOs to ensure that the final agreed framework directly addresses the needs of the most vulnerable and those affected by violence. 2015 promises to be one

Conchies in WW1

Saturday 9th May 15.00 to 17.00 at Colchester FMH.

A Theatrical presentation by Martin Pennock (of Bury St Edmunds Meeting.) and friends.

This has already been performed at Wellingborough FMH and was well received. The performance will be followed by discussion and refreshments.

Two Garden Poems

Julia Usher

SQUIRREL
1. Nuts about round hard fruit, stashed away; Never lost location.
2. Splayed, motionless; On trunk, Upside down, Waiting for some axion to fire; Claws clenching back.
3. A squirrel fell; Side-Lay as if asleep, Tail curled unstirring.

ROBIN
Grey ghost, flicks faster than sight, Appears from nowhere Like magician’s sleight of hand. Head aslant, seeks permission to check my turnover of dirt, of leaves, of moss. Picks at the invisible worm, ant, flea, seed; Then stands on perch to overlook again.

News from QUNO

Alison Bush

Jordan Street, great nephew of Honor Chamberlain sent this letter explaining the work of QUNO (Quaker United Nations) where he works in New York. Subject of a Sunday collection in Colchester.

The Quaker United Nations work on the assumption that whilst the UN is far from perfect, it is the best tool or institution that exists, that will be able to promote a peaceful and nonviolent world. The way we approach our work is through this vision statement:

Grounded in the Quaker belief that there is that of the divine in every person, we seek a United Nations that addresses key drivers of violence including the structures and systems that produce exclusion and injustice, facilitates and supports change through peaceful means, and whose policies and practices reflect a diversity of voices, such that people around the world can safely and peacefully achieve their potential.

Here in New York we work on the following programs — Peacebuilding, Peace and Development, and Prevention of Violent Conflict. Geneva focus more on Climate Change, Human Rights and Refugees, Economic Issues, Justice and Prisons, and Food and Sustainability.

Lots of our work in New York is focused on engaging in policy with high level UN employees — Ambassadors and members of the secretariat. We work closely with the American friends Service Committee (AFSC) to bring evidence and findings from their worldwide programs, and to ensure that local voices are heard and amplified in UN-NY Policy conversations.

One of the big thrusts of the office right now is working on replacing the Millennium Development Goals, with a new framework called the Sustainable Development Goals. The Millennium Development Goals, whilst bringing great progress to some areas of the world, failed to contribute positively to conflict affected and fragile states. Out of the 7 countries that are on course to achieve ZERO of the 8 development goals, each one is either in conflict or has recently been embroiled in a conflict. So our office has been a big advocate of ensuring that the new agenda accurately represents the fact that Peace is vital for development, by pushing for a standalone goal on Peaceful Societies. QUNO has been working with delegates, UN officials and other NGOs to ensure that the final agreed framework directly addresses the needs of the most vulnerable and those affected by violence. 2015 promises to be one
of the most important years for the development world, as the final intergovernmental negotiations to produce a comprehensive framework to replace the Millennium Development Goals take place at the United Nations in New York.

Activities in 2014 have gone a long way to address these concerns. In addition to contributing to many high level side events and meetings, QUNO was asked to deliver a formal statement to the Eighth Session of the Open Working Group on behalf of civil society. This statement, in the context of the sustained work of many partners, was rewarded by the decision of the Open Working Group to specifically recommend, in its Outcome Document, a goal focused on peace and security. Goal 16, entitled ‘Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels,’ thus becomes part of the proposed list of 17 Sustainable Development Goals to replace the former 8 MDGs. The inclusion of Goal 16 can be viewed as a major success for the many long standing advocates for these issues, since the inclusion of peace issues at one point seemed like a distant hope. Nevertheless, nothing is final until the end of the 2015 negotiations.

QUNO’s resources are small - we are only an office of 6 program staff - and some missions here have up to 100 staff! However, we make best with what we have. We like to see ourselves as conveners, and try our utmost to foster relationships across the whole UN system, so that when the time comes, we are trusted as reliable partners. In our work on the Sustainable Development Goals, we have played the role of the catalyst, by bringing partners together - experts, local perspectives, and concerned parties - in order to accurately represent the realities around the world.

We know we are just a small office in a wide sea of actors and concerns, but we do what we can to bring something different to the world. To sum up QUNO’s work, I’ll quote Rufus Jones: “I pin my hopes to quiet processes and small circles in which vital and transforming events take place”.

Wildlife: the Excitements of Spring
from Valerie Graves

Winter comes upon us gradually: we find ourselves hunting out a scarf or some gloves, or we realise that we ought to think about our thermal vest, and as the time goes on it is hard to remember wide-open windows, or taking the dog out last thing and it is not yet dark. (I have relatives in Eastern Europe who change to winter tyres and chains, as indeed we used to do when I was a child in Yorkshire. But now, at the end of February, it is worth looking for the earliest signs of spring. By now, of course, there are lots of spring flowers, which come out very suddenly indeed, things like aconites and crocuses, often in the wrong order or quite unexpectedly. you come across little daffodils in an unexpected corner, or a bud or two on a shrub. Some plants will keep you waiting for ages with tiny little buds. But you can enjoy hunting for the signs of spring in unexpected places: minute specks of green on a black twig or poking through the earth, which may be in full bloom tomorrow. You may be driving round the corner and see a whole border blazing with yellow aconites, where there were none yesterday. Magnolias are very good at this game.

I’d like to tell you about a bit from a book by Richard Mabey (The Flowering of Britain). He is writing about how spring comes first to the southwestern corner of Britain and gradually moves northeast across the country, ending perhaps a couple of months later in the northeastern corner of Scotland. So, bizarrely, if you could walk slowly enough, you could follow opening daffodils all the way from Lands End to John O’Groats. A happy thought!
Alison Parkes

To receive a grant, a child or young person must be under 25 and wish to receive a grant for educational purposes. It is a condition of the Trust that the child must be in need, or more practically, that the parents must feel they are in need. The application is informal and no form-filling is necessary. The fund is not big, so grants are small, usually in the range £100 - £300 for each child.

If you feel you are eligible, or if you know of someone who is, please contact one of the overseers of your Meeting or alternatively contact John Lewis, a Greenwood trustee, (details in AM List of Members and attenders).

Thank you. It will also be spoken to at one of the next AMs but we are trying to get the publicity out.

The Greenwood Educational Trust

John Lewis

The Greenwood Educational Trust is a fund administered by Friends which gives small grants to the children of Friends and attenders in the meetings of Essex and Suffolk.

To receive a grant, a child or young person must be under 25 and wish to receive a grant for educational purposes. It is a condition of the Trust that the child must be in need, or more practically, that the parents must feel they are in need. The application is informal and no form-filling is necessary. The fund is not big, so grants are small, usually in the range £100 - £300 for each child.

If you feel you are eligible, or if you know of someone who is, please contact one of the overseers of your Meeting or alternatively contact John Lewis, a Greenwood trustee, (details in AM List of Members and attenders).

Thank you. It will also be spoken to at one of the next AMs but we are trying to get the publicity out.

Good Economy

Saturday 14th March 13.30 to 17.00 at Colchester FMH

A presentation and workshops on the ‘Good Economy’ lead by Susan Holden, a Friend from the north of England. This promises to be a stimulating and thought provoking afternoon. If you have time, please look at the materials on the website for “Positive Money” in preparation.

Refreshments provided.

All Friends are welcome.