Diary Dates for September

Friday September 5th Colchester Farmers’ Market
Saturday September 13th Colchester Heritage Open Day
Sunday September 14th Area Meeting, Colchester
Monday September 29th International Coffee Day


Thursday October 2nd International Day of Nonviolence Marking Gandhi’s birthday

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@nessexsuffolkquakers.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)

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

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**Meeting for Sufferings**

7th June 2014

I was sad to hear Gerard Benson's name read out in Meeting for Worship as a previous member of sufferings who had died, as he was a great poet had had been encouraging in my efforts when we had been on central Nominations Committee, and it set me thinking of connections and consequences sometimes unforeseen.

There were many topics to consider but the main one was the Long Term Framework 2015 -2020. Julia Gordon(one of 8 Friends in this group) introduced the topic for which feed back from Area Meetings is needed by 31st January 2015.

I remember feeling oppressed by the first appeal in 2009 but Meetings have found the outcomes helpful in the last 5 years. To find out if the preliminary questions would work,

We divided into small groups to discuss them. The first one was “What do Quakers hold in common?” We felt this was a focus question and positive and therefore we needed it.

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**Editorial**

Dear Friends,

I am not going to wail about the awfulness of life, but one does walk on tiptoe, wondering what next? I have a good pension and a wonderful family and nothing particular going wrong, but far too many people are finding their income shrinking and their expenses growing, while everyone says we are doing wonderfully. Did you know that in this country the people who are the richest earn 143 times more than the hardest-up? I don’t know how other countries fare, but I believe we are the worst. You will be comforted to know that Friends House staff have a ratio of just four to one.

The much-vaunted story of free school meals for all is coming to bits, I hear, as so many schools have no kitchen and no money has been provided for this kind of deficit. Also we are not hearing so much about hard-working families, as it seems that they are the worst hit by the present situation.

When I was a student it was wartime, which brought its own hardships, but I believe our college expenses were paid, and though we had rationing, it was fair and nobody starved for lack of money. I know now that there was a woeful lack of keeping up with everyday maintenance work, and that after the war many businesses went to the wall because the owners had not grasped this problem. In Germany, for instance, where whole towns were reduced to rubble and they had nothing, they had to go back to the beginning and rebuild everything, and life was very hard indeed, but they got on top of it and had new efficient factories.

I enjoy reading old books where no-one had phones or cars, you sent messages by telegram, delivered very quickly by smart little boys. You sent a telegram to your aunt, asking if you could come to lunch: no problem, the butcher’s boy called and auntly could get chops for lunch. Of course all these smart little boys are at school nowadays, having to take horrible GCSEs and not being able to find a job at the end of it.

But life has to go on, there were terrible hardships then, no NHS and no real pension or benefits. Old people like me enjoy grumbling about telephone scam calls, but we would find it hard without a phone. I have managed to opt out of the world of internet and computers (but here I am, typing on a son’s lap-top) I hope someone will be able to stop the horrible programmes on the internet that are ruining the lives of far too many young children, but I do have to admit that there is a lot to be said for things like Skype. In the past, when children emigrated to e.g. Australia, Granny had to accept that would probably never see them again, or her grandchildren. She might get the occasional letter, or a photograph. But with Skype you get good coloured moving pictures and you can see children running about and talk to them. At Christmas time I have Christmas dinner at the same time as Christmas dinner with my Slovak family and afterwards we contact Inga’s parents in Slovakia and show them all the presents and the new family cat, and we can go on for ages, it doesn’t cost much but it is worth a fortune.

News, please, by the middle of the month, to Valerie Graves, (for contact details, see AM List of Members and Attenders).
The second “What principles and procedures make us Quaker to us and others?” we felt reflected what we wanted the world to know of us and how the principles lead us to act locally as they are rooted in our history from which processes emerge.

The third question “What (changes) to our National Structures would enable your meeting to flourish?” we felt inappropriate as we need principles not structures. We felt we need a vision. Quaker testimony is a lived experience. All of us have a different experience but we hope to have a core principle.

The fourth question, “What is your 5 year vision for your local Meeting for Quakers in Britain and in the world?” was felt to be 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. You can read Quaker Faith & Practice as if it is a fixed guide but we need it to be a collaborative process. The document should be encouraging local activity and should mention the previous one because it was very helpful. Our practice is central to our theology.

A Further Question “Why?” was also suggested.

In the afternoon we had reports from Central Nominations committee by Chlöe Cockrell, among other things explaining how else we could be involved in Central work, from the clerk of trustees Jennifer Barraclough which included a review of our standing committees, Peter Ullerthorne, treasurer, on our investment policy, Sarah Coote, BYM rep on QCEA who enlarged on our Quaker voice in Europe, and Frances Folker on the strategy document of Minute 36 or the Canterbury Commitment to reducing our carbon footprint.

All valuable and interesting work, but I have left out the details so that Friends can focus on the questions of the morning at our Area Meeting today and in the coming months.

Carol Holding

**News from Clacton Meeting**

Ernest Hall

Only a few days ago I thought that there would be very little ‘news from Clacton Meeting’ for the September Area Newsletter. The fact that 2014 was the 70th anniversary of the year in which Quaker Meetings for Worship were first held in Clacton (at Oak Lodge in Jaywick Lane, home of the Jessop family), seemed hardly worth a mention.

Rather more newsworthy was the fact that Ray Attrill and his eleven year old daughter Amber, had been our Meeting’s representatives at Yearly Meeting in Bath. It was, I believe, the very first time that a young person had represented our Meeting at that national Quaker gathering. Amber kept a diary of every day’s events there and both she and her dad have told us something of their wonderful experiences.

Clacton Meeting’s future

That was the good news – the rest of Clacton’s news is – well, challenging!

Hard on the sad news of Roy Prockter’s tragic death, we learned that our new warden, Jane Welfar of whom we had hoped so much, had serious health problems and was having to resign her post with immediate effect. Furthermore, although Martha Schwager had volunteered to take over Roy’s duties as Meeting Treasurer we were unable to find anyone to take over those of Letting Officer.

Now that is something of which I do have a little knowledge and experience as my late wife Heather was the Meeting’s Letting Officer for many years. It involved not only arranging the lettings of the two Meeting Rooms (and making sure that there wasn’t a double booking!) but collecting the rents to be handed over to the treasurer, and chasing those who were late payers or were in default. The Letting Officer was also the hirers’ ‘first contact’ if they had anything to complain about. In short, it was an important and difficult job that took a great deal of time and dedication.

Appreciating the seriousness of the situation our Clerk, Hazel Jones, immediately called a meeting of the Premises Committee who gave the matter serious thought and came to some radical conclusions. Here are their recommendations:

a) That we give notice to all hiring groups that the Meeting House will not be available for hire after 31st October 2014. All advance rentals will be repaid.

b) That we explore the possibility of renting the first-floor flat commercially, with as little work involved for the Meeting as possible. It is expected that this income will be more than enough to cover normal running costs of the Meeting House.

c) That the ground floor of the building be available for use by members of Clacton Meeting (Friends and Attenders) for spiritual discussion and exploration, for education and growth, for friendly sharing and oversight and for social time together. We ask members of the local meeting to bring forward suggestions for how we would like to use our Meeting House.

These recommendations, if not the exact words, were agreed at a
well-attended extraordinary Meeting for Church Affairs held after Meeting for Worship on Sunday 17th August.

It is sad that these successive blows to Clacton Meeting have come at a time when we have had several new attenders and the Meeting is beginning to show signs of growth. Quaker Meetings for Worship have carried on in Clacton week by week for the past seventy years. They will continue to do so. Back-bench Friends like myself can only be grateful that our clerk and premises committee have discovered a possible way out of our present difficulties. We go forward in faith!

**Change of Address**

Grace Ravasio, a long-standing and formerly very active member of Clacton Meeting, has moved from her home in Holland on Sea.

Her present address is:

Grace Ravasio
Room 116
Corner House Care Home
67-69 Wash Lane
Clacton on Sea
Essex
CO15 1DB

Her new telephone number will be published when it is known.

**Oak Lodge, Jaywick Lane, Clacton-on-Sea - the home of the Jessop family where Quaker Meetings for Worship were held on Sundays from some time in 1944 (towards the end of World War II) until the early 1950s when Monthly Meeting purchased No 26 Granville Road to be used as a Meeting House for Quaker worship and other activities.**

**Sudbury Meeting News**

Jill Lagdon

I am belatedly but nonetheless delighted to tell F/friends that my son, James Dyer (a member of Sudbury Meeting) and Debbie Sidgwick were married at Leez Priory nr. Chelmsford on 15 March 2014.

It was a wonderfully loving ceremony in an idyllic setting with all the friends and relatives emanating their joy for Debbie and James, making it a very special day, as indeed it was.

We are all happy to see them both in enjoying each other’s company and all our prayers are with them for a long and happy marriage.

**A Book I Have Enjoyed**

Valerie Graves

This is quite an old book, printed in 1934, To Kill A Mockingbird, by Harper Lee. I have read it lots of times, a sad book but satisfying. It is about a small Deep South American town in the 1920’s, where there is unmoving anti-black prejudice. The hero, Atticus Finch, is a lawyer who tries, hopelessly, to get rid of this. The story is told by his young daughter, who, with her brother, does not really understand what it is about.

A young black man is accused by a ne’er-do-well white man of raping of an embryo by James Le Fanu, who writes every month about the miracles of nature. He talks about the astonishing rate of growth of the embryo - a 3,000 fold increase in size that by analogy, would see an adult human finger become an 800 foot skyscraper. Scientists are still looking for the answer as to how the cells “know” which part of the body they will become. It is still a natural miracle.

Joan Rew

I spoke to Eliza the other day and she told me that Magano had got all the grades she wanted in her ‘A’ levels and this has meant that she will be able to take up her place at Nottingham University this autumn.

Liz Hurley

My great granddaughter Sophia, starts school in September — a big step in her small life. Also, I am expecting a new great grandchild in February. I read an article is my Oldie magazine about the progress.
is how life is. The question for us is, of course, how much we have moved on, if at all, when you think of the recent happenings in Ferguson. But it needs only one determined person to start to move things. (Think of Nelson Mandela).

**More Clacton News**

Examination Success.

Our valued teenage attender, 18 year old Belinda Smith has achieved a triple distinction star at ‘A’ Level in Media Studies and is to go to Bournemouth University to study product design. All Clacton f/Friends wish Belinda every success in University and in her future career. We hope she’ll keep in touch with us. The picture, taken three, or possibly four, years ago is of Belinda at the controls of my ‘iron horse’ in the Meeting House driveway!

In friendship, Ernest

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**Letter from Gaza**

John Lewis

Dear John and Helen,

It is not a problem that you shared my message. Thank you very much for your note. This time it comes at a time with a cease fire that seems to hold for longer. As you said, we know better, and we know that this was one battle seemingly over. But not a conflict over. For that to happen, the causes must be removed: colonial-occupation and oppression.

The past few days were really difficult. An hour felt like a day; a week like a month. the psychological impact of the huge bombing of high-rise buildings was a new introduction to inflict deep fear. I saw it working on the children. Rahaf, giving herself the liberty to express her fears more directly, asked whether our building; also a high-rise one, would be bombed, and questioned my answer of ‘no’. They have bombed several buildings, so why not ours. That was a difficult moment. If the Israelis had a genuinely good reason for attacking other buildings, I would have had a better answer for Rahaf; that they had no reason to attacks ours. But they did not have such reasons.

Those days were quite abnormally anxious, even for wartime, for the children. And we grew very exhausted. I feel I grew up a decade or two in less than two months. Our society will now have more time to look at what happened more carefully. There are too many people to mourn, too much to re-build an too many to care for. Our most important task is to do this. Our equally important task is to try to prevent this from happening again. We are not naive; we know the Israelis want the land and want to keep us under control. We cannot end the conflict without international support willing to end it genuinely; not just through the shiest statements. However, we can seek to document what happened and insist that wrongdoers are punished and victims can seek redress. This is too difficult without Europe’s backing, but there is no other way.

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**Different Faces of Islam**

from Valerie Graves

We have been hearing nothing but horror stories about Moslems lately, so it is difficult to see them as ordinary people and not monsters!

I have known a lot of them in my time and there are as many varieties as there are of other people. When I was a GP we used to have students to stay for a couple of weeks, all sorts of nationalities, some shy, some bumptious, some Catholic, some awful, some very nice, some Islamic, including a very nice girl from Malaysia who gave me a most attractive picture of Moslem family life.

Then when I came to Colchester I spent some years as Quaker chaplain at the University, where there was a very cosmopolitan mix of students: a lot of Orientals such as Japanese and a small group of Moslems, mostly from Arabian countries. We had a sort of Council which met regularly and tried to get the various groups to meet one another, with little success. On the whole they all had their own activities and little spare time. The Moslems were not aggressive or uncooperative, exactly, but they were very possessive about their bit of the department and just weren’t interested in getting together, though as individuals they were pleasant enough.

But now I want to tell you about a very typical (of his kind) Moslem who has been getting into the news. He is Moeen Ali, British and a member of the England cricket team, an off-spin bowler, dark in his whites, wearing a Taliban beard with an unstoppable smile, managing to get through Ramadan without letting it spoil his cricketing skills. For him jihad is his own weaknesses and temptations, which he fights with courage. A true hero!
I do not know how the experiences of the past eight weeks changed my children. Another task will be a damage control one. They have been scared, shocked, traumatized, and angered. You cannot avoid the seeds of hate being watered from this. Our task is to try to give them the vision and hope that hate would be self-destructive and self-consuming; they, I hope, will find other ways than violence. What Israel will keep doing - I fear - will not help us very much. But it is our task and we will pursue it.

I am not sure if you heard about Issam’s loss. His father, step-mother and niece were killed in an attack next to their house. It is similar to Salah Shehadeh’s attack: three Hamas members bombed with nine heavy bombs and missiles dropped on the house when people were sleeping, devastating the whole neighborhood. So many of my colleagues took hits like this this time.

Thanks to you for your concern and care. We really appreciate it, and it was very helpful during the most difficult times. And thank you for spreading the word about what is happening.

Have our best regards. And please do have the image of Samar and the three children with big smiles and loving looks on their faces during a dire time; just for hearing your names and hearing your kind words.

Best,
Mahmoud

Mahmoud AbuRahma
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URL: www.mezan.org

Sudbury News

Jane Carter

Friends who either didn’t notice or were prevented from taking up the invitation from Robin Hart in the July Newsletter to visit her section of the Essex Wildlife Trust at Nosh House Farm at Great Henney on July 27, missed a rare opportunity to explore this Nature Reserve on a warm Sunday afternoon.

This area of SSI (Special Scientific Interest) has been Robin’s home for many years and her knowledge of this very ancient terrain is remarkable. There is a large badger community and Robin mentioned that “there will be culling in the autumn”. I didn’t get a chance to ask “Why?” There are no dairy herds or manicured lawns anywhere in the vicinity which could be threatened by Bovine TB. Badgers are not popular, while muntjac deer, also TB carriers, are allowed to roam free and multiply. After a long walk through the trees, we came back to Robin’s barn-conversion house for tea and cake and as we left I thought, not for the first time, how lucky we are to have access to this beautiful area so close to Sudbury.
**Louisa’s Exhibition**

John Kay

Frances and Tom Tebbutt’s daughter will be holding an exhibition of her drawings at the Digby Gallery, The Mercury Theatre from the 15th September to the 12 October.

If you are near Colchester meeting House on Saturday 15th September between 11.30 am and 1.30 pm remember that all Friends are invited to the Private View.

Do go along and support Louisa if you can.

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**Wildspot: Miffs and Mimps**

from Valerie Graves

No, I didn’t make up those words: they come from a respectable gardening book and refer to some of the more infuriating habits of plants. A Mimp is a plant which just never thrives, it is always ailing but never actually ill, just sits there and looks miserable. You should have the courage to pull the wretched thing up. (Actually I know some human plants who are very much the same). Nothing will ever do it any good. (But of course you have to go on putting up with humans).

A Miff, on the other hand, suddenly dies on you without any reason. There it is, doing quite nicely, producing flowers or beans or whatever, and you come down one morning and there it is, stone dead. Nothing will revive it. Pull it up and get rid of it!

However, a Miff may suddenly come back to life on its own. The books abound in stories of this, and I have known several. One was a very fine lilac tree, dug up by the people brought in to redesign my garden. I planted something else in the exact spot, and about fifteen years later the lilac suddenly reappeared and in a day or two was covered in flowers as if nothing had happened. The other was ceanothus thirsiflorus, a known frost-sensitive, a large evergreen, died suddenly one frosty morning, and I put another in behind it, simply cutting the first one back to the ground, as it was large and tough. This too came back to life some five or six years later, surviving the recent very hard frost. I don’t offer any explanation, I just accept things these days.

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On Wednesday 27 August a Remembrance Meeting was held for Roy Prockter, all these Friends attended. Photographs by John Hall.
Notes from YMG Bath

Amber Kendall
Saturday 2 August 2014

“Eek!” The car stopped, after seven hours of driving we were at Bath. The first place we went was Fountain Cafe. It was curry night, I didn’t like the spicy sauce so I had a delicious spaghetti Bolognese. Daddy and Tony had beef stew. Then we finally got to see our rooms, mine had a dryer but my dad’s didn’t. There was a gigantic tent we had to get to, we sang a couple of songs, then came out. We got the badge and a balloon that had this symbol.

Sunday third of August

“Yawn,” I looked at my clock and realised it was 4 AM, I close my eyes and try to get back to sleep but I just couldn’t! I lay there for hours tossing and turning, then my dad heard a knock at his door. I told him I couldn’t sleep, he said read a book, so I did. For breakfast I had all-day breakfast, it was scrumptious.

I went to my group “Special Adventurers”.

We did some games to get to know each other. At the end we sat in a circle and Barbara Allen unwrapped a layer of a parcel then she told us to hear the sounds of the meeting. Then she unwrapped the final layer and told us to hear inside our body.

After lunch I hiked around the woods, we found baby conkers and a stick with pine cones on. After that we rolled down a hill really fast.

Later that evening we did a (Treasure Hunt), not so much treasure though. I had the question sheet, we managed to find all of the questions (I can’t remember how many questions there were).

Monday 4 August 2014

I slept amazingly last night. When I got to breakfast I had all-day breakfast again but this time I ate every last bit. Then I went to Spiritual Adventurers (the children’s group). Ben Pink Dandelion came to talk to us. He said that if you draw a picture on your own it will be completely different to when you draw a picture with your base groups. We had a session about how you write in your journals.

Then we had an opinion game. If you went to the park and your mum said you have to stay with your friends in the park and your friends went in the out of bounds forest would you go with them, stay on the bridge or stay in the park?

I chose to go with them and persuade them to come back. Then we sang some songs.

For dinner I had children’s fish and chips. I played in the park and fed the ducks there was a baby duck which was so cute. I loved him so much I wish I could keep him.

Tuesday 5 August 2014

I slept all night again, I got up and looked in the mirror. I realise I has spots on my left cheek and on my forehead. Daddy said it was an allergic reaction to the grass. I had some breakfast and took some toast to feed the ducks. I got on the children’s group and there was a Reflection Book. You had some cards and had to make that pattern using the mirrors. Then a lady called Rhiannon came in to talk to us about Quaker words. She told us to pick up a postcard and say why you picked that card. I said that each colour reminds me of a different person.

After lunch I had to sit in a tent and wait for a lecture to be over. After that we had a meeting with the other children’s group The Pen Friends. I forgot to say that while I was waiting for Daddy an artist lady came up to me and said “this man here wants photos of people looking at the artwork for a magazine.” I volunteered I pointed at a dead dried up frog with a shocked face.

Friday, 8 August 2014

Beep, beep, beep, my alarm went off again, I was so tired that I decided to go back to sleep for 10 minutes. Finally I got up I had my breakfast and went to the children’s group. First of all we had to nominate someone who will write the big minute and someone to read out the minute to the whole of the gathering. Luckily I didn’t get picked. When they sorted the minute out we made gifts for our new friends, mainly made out of paper. I made a box that is, you blow in it, it will turn into a cube. Then it was time to go out to play. The second time we came back it was time to go home. We forgot to have our fruit and juice. Some had it as we were going home. After lunch we went back to the children’s group, we had a quiz to see what we thought of the children’s programme. Then I made an origami orange box to put the presents in. Then we went in the big top tent. First of all the smallest people read their minute then the oldest people of the children’s group, which is my group, the Spiritual Adventurers.