Diary Dates for July

Friday July 3rd Colchester Farmers' Market at the Arts Centre
Sunday July 12th Area Meeting, Earls Colne
Sunday 2 August, 3.00 pm Social Sunday, Julia & Rod Usher’s

Colchester Friends have changed their internet service provider
Their website is now at: http://www.colchesterquakers.org.uk
The new Email address is: warden@colchesterquakers.org.uk

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

**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

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News from Clacton

Ernest Hall

I was once told, and found it very reassuring, that, ‘It is the exception that makes the news’. The fact that ten thousand people slept peacefully in their beds last night is not news. It is the misfortunes of the one person whose sleep was disturbed by a burglar that are reported in the newspapers.

By that criterion there is very little news to report from Clacton Meeting for July’s Area Meeting Newsletter. Throughout May and June we held a Meeting for Worship every Sunday morning. The numbers of those attending varied but we had several visitors, all of whom appreciated the friendly welcome they had received and the ‘gathered’ atmosphere of our Meeting. Among them was a young civilian engineer who is employed on the sea defence work currently taking place on the eastern side of Clacton Pier.

On Wednesday 3rd June we held our second regular ‘First Wednesday Meeting for Worship and Simple Lunch’ at 12.00 noon in the small Meeting Room. Once again, it was well attended and I am sure that we all departed refreshed both in body and spirit. The next ‘first Wednesday’ Meeting will be held at 12.00 noon on Wednesday 1st July. All readers of the Newsletter and their friends and relatives are warmly invited to join us. Our half-hour meeting for worship might be especially appreciated by those who are interested in Quakerism but who are a little daunted by the prospect of an hour of prayerful and expectant silence. They would be made welcome at our friendly gathering. Janet and Rodney Thomas, who make themselves responsible for the practicalities of our ‘First Wednesday Meetings’, are also our ‘Gardening Friends’. They provide the floral display outside the Meeting House and the flowers that always adorn the table in the large Meeting Room on Sunday mornings. These are appreciated both by those who regularly attend Meeting and by visitors.

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Editorial

Dear Friends,

Summer is certainly here, and it is lovely and warm; I am looking into my summer wardrobe to pull out cotton things and getting the fans out too! We have been lucky, I have not worn my winter overcoat once, nor my spiked boots. Gloom merchants say we shall have a dreadful winter. I expect I shall just take what comes.

Our Meeting is as usual running lots of interesting activities and I hope we shall have reports in the newsletter. Now that I am old I don’t take part in many of them, but it is cheering to know that they are flourishing. As I have often said, I am very fortunate on having lots of family near by and a lot of children who come and see me. I had five of them the other day from three years to nine, and it is incredible what a lot of noise they can make! The older ones are very helpful in the garden and kitchen, and they often bring buns that they have made of fruit from their gardens. In return I often have boxes full of scraps of material or cardboard, etc. that come in useful for crafts.

The Meeting was thinking whether we would have our usual Sale this year (it is usually the first Saturday in November). It is very easy to go on and on with habitual occasions when they have outlived their time. What do you think?

I always look forward to the autumn when a new school year starts and you can, as it were, start a nice empty new page. The time has long past when I would personally be entering into new adventures, but I always think it is a much better time than spring for a huge turn-out and thorough clean-through! With any luck one has had a lovely time with doors and windows open, wearing any old clothes, and now you can come indoors and light the fire and eat sticky buns instead of all that lettuce.

News, please, by the middle of the month, to Valerie Graves, (for contact details, see AM List of Members and Attenders).
Meeting for Church Affairs
Our Meetings for Church Affairs are now held on alternate months to coincide with Area Meetings. The next such meeting will be held after worship on Sunday 5th July. One matter to be discussed will be the use of the newly refurbished small Meeting Room, beyond that of ‘First Wednesday’ lunchtime Meetings for Worship.
Hazel, our Clerk, says that more suggestions are coming in and that she would appreciate our thoughts on whether we would like to start up any of the following groups:

Hearts and Minds Prepared
This will start up in the autumn. There will be 12 sessions, probably fortnightly. It is recommended that there should be a maximum of eight in a group so Hazel asks that those interested should let her know as soon as possible if they wish to take part and which days/times might be possible for them. A brief outline of the course is to be found on the Meeting’s internal notice board.

Art – this would be in the small Meeting Room where we can work together at drawing, painting, craftwork, mosaics or anything else of interest.

Books – discussion on a very broad range of subjects.

Singing – in the main Meeting Room if a piano is needed.

Experiment with Light.

Other Frail Friends
A month or two ago I mentioned Mary Smith and Jacqui Wilson as having spent a spell in hospital and having been sadly missed at our Meetings for Worship. I am glad to be able to record that they have both recently attended Meeting and their presence was welcomed by us all. I am glad to be no longer the only Clacton Friend who needs a zimmer frame to assist mobility!

Our tenant
We had hoped that our tenant in the flat above the Meeting House would make his home there for many months, perhaps years. Sadly his employment has taken him to Scotland.

We now have a new tenant to take his place. Hazel, our Clerk, tells us that the flat looks very nice and is ready for his occupation. He will move in on 31st July and we shall once again have an assured source of income.

Other News
Two valued Friends have recently been absent from our Meeting for Worship and have been greatly missed. They have both been on visits to Italy – Hazel Jones, our Clerk, to a family wedding in Turin, and Silva Gar- ton-Rogers, who played a major role in the production of our annual Meeting for Carols for the past two years, to Assisi for ever associated with St Francis, surely one of the best known and popular of the Medieval saints.

We have been glad to welcome them both back to Clacton Meeting.

Oh yes; and on 18th May I celebrated, if celebration is the appropriate word, my ninety-fourth birthday. I very much appreciated F/Friends’ congratulations and kind wishes on that occasion.

An Apology
Readers of ‘The Friend’ as well as the Area Meeting Newsletter may have been surprised to see ‘King Canute’s Daughter’ in the issue of ‘The Friend’ dated 12th June. It is very similar to that published in the Newsletter in April this year except that the age of Canute’s daughter is recorded as eight, not twelve. Eight is correct. In the Newsletter article I was relying on my memory of a visit to Bosham perhaps twenty years ago, and there are few things less reliable than a nonagenarian’s memory! It is perhaps a sign of my age that it didn’t even occur to me that I could check my facts with Google. The ‘The Friend’ did – and also obtained a picture of the memorial. If anything, I think that the fact that the child was only eight, makes it all the more remarkable that the memory of her death and burial was passed on, by word of mouth, for eight centuries.

Ernest Hall
Regional Gathering

27th June 201

Almost 30 Friends were at Stansted Meeting House for this Regional Gathering. The theme this year is “Quakers 2015”, and on Saturday we heard from six non-Theist Quakers who each spoke of what they believe. To open, we heard of Harold Loukes’ thoughts on prayer from Quaker Faith & Practice 2:23, and Advices & Queries 17 was also read, a favourite of mine, which ends “think it possible that you may be mistaken”. Two of the speakers were known to us as members of our former Monthly Meeting in London. They all described a wide range of experience in coming to Friends, and over lunch which followed, the rest of us had the chance to speak to them in person. The afternoon was devoted to forming groups of six for further chatting, and more formal questions in a plenary session.

The next Regional Gathering will be on Saturday September 26th at Colchester, so if you want to sample one, there will be less far to travel.

Jacky Hall

The Bible

“We cannot look upon the Bible as an infallible teacher on points of history, or geology, or astronomy, for it is not. But it remains true that it contains a record of God’s dealings with men, and that here we have, under the illumination of the same spirit as was in the people who wrote, the needed teaching and safe guidance.” Richard H. Thomas, of Baltimore, in Life and Letters 1905

From John Hall
**Wildlife Spot: My Ram-pant Garden**
from Valerie Graves

My garden at the moment deserves adjectives such as Flamboyant, Overgrown, rather than Pretty or Elegant, but I must admit that I like it! My front garden was planted up with large strong-growing shrubs such as potentilla when I moved in nearly thirty years ago, and they have either prospered or died since then, but they have been joined by lots of enormous things like verbascum and hollyhocks, which this year are much taller than me and covered in bright coloured flowers. I think they look wonderful, but there are lots of people who would rather see neat rows of annuals, things like petunias, shall we say. But my kind of flowers cost nothing and look wonderful. I do pull up things like dandelions.

There is also an additional problem: rabbits. Since my little dog grew old and frail and eventually died, my garden is infested with them and they eat almost everything. I try to protect them but it is a losing battle. People who don’t have this problem think they look rather sweet! I believe people who suffer from deer are in the same situation.

**Statement from faith leaders in the UK**

March 2015

Nuclear weapons are by their nature indiscriminate in their effect. Any use of nuclear weapons would have devastating humanitarian consequences, be incompatible with International Humanitarian Law and violate the principle of dignity for every human being that is common to each of our faith traditions. Our world faces many challenges including oppressive poverty, climate change, violent extremism and emerging national rivalry. Addressing these challenges requires strong relationships across nations, founded on mutual co-operation, trust and shared prosperity. Security policies based on the threat of the use of nuclear weapons are immoral and ultimately self-defeating.

We must move beyond the division of our world into nuclear and non-nuclear weapons states and ensure that all states make good their commitment to negotiations on the universal, legally verifiable and enforceable elimination of nuclear weapons. We call on all nuclear weapon states to join in this endeavour. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty review conference begins next month, and we urge nuclear weapons states, and the international community, to develop a robust plan of action that will lead us to a world free of nuclear weapons.

From Alison Parkes

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*The Cavendish Consort at Colchester*  
*Photos: John Hall*
How Can We Help Migrants?
from Valerie Graves

I run the risk of being controversial, I know, but I feel I must speak out. When you see pictures in the press or on the news of huge crowds of aggressive looking black men you can't help feeling threatened, but look again. These people are almost all like you and me, doctors, teachers, electricians, wives, babies, grandmothers, and they have come through absolutely terrifying experiences, spending all their savings and risked starvation and very likely death. Nobody wants them or is prepared to help them at all.

I remember the late thirties when hordes of Jewish people came to England to escape persecution. Lots of comfortable middle-class people thought it was disgusting. Then, much later, lots of people were invited to come from the West Indies to do unpleasant jobs for us that we didn’t want to do, like brick-making, but most of us were not very welcoming. Land-ladies put out notices “No Blacks”.

Wind the clock back much further and you will find migrants going back centuries: your grandparents and great-great grandparents, back to Norman times and further still. Very few of us have none. (Marie Curie, who I wrote about recently, fled to France.) And for instance, so many of our hospital staff, doctors, nurses and so forth, have been actively sought to fill impossible vacancies.

We ourselves may not be able to do much but we can at least be welcoming and not sit idly by when others are fulminating about these dreadful people pushing into our country where they aren't wanted.

Quaker Peace and Social Witness cordially invite you to an interfaith service of commemoration and commitment for a nuclear-free world on the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki
Thursday 6 August 2015 - 2.30–3.30pm
Followed by refreshments and exhibitions
Large Meeting House, Friends House
173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ
To reserve a place, please complete the online form at https://forms.quaker.org.uk/hiroshima or contact Kristin Skarsholt: kristins@quaker.org.uk; 020 7663 1121

Seeking Truth

“We are living through a period when all forms of authority are being questioned. Wherever we look, the ever-insistent child spirit of the human race comes from its awkward questions, determined to examine things to their foundation and to know the truth. Inward guidance does not mean unchecked individualism, for the follower of the light will be continually correcting his first perception of it by a fuller experience, and by that of others who have followed it more faithfully. A religion based on truth must be progressive. Truth being so much greater than our conception of it, we should ever be making fresh discoveries. Far as we fall short even of our own ideal, it is for this we stand as a religious Society of Friends, seeking to show, by friendliness to enemy as well as friend, by simplicity of life, by freedom from class or race or sex prejudice and dominance, that the spirit of Christ still has power in the world.”

Excerpts from A Word to all who seek Truth issued by London Yearly Meeting 1920.

I came across it in volume one of the 1921 book of discipline Christian Life, Faith and Thought in the Society of Friends which Ann Dowden gave away after last Sunday’s Meeting at Colchester.

John Hall
Forthcoming Events

“The World is My Country”
at Colchester Meeting House
Exhibition on Heritage Open Day, Saturday 12 September 10.00 - 4.00 pm
and a Public event Thursday 24 September 7.30 pm with speakers from Peace News including Emily Johns, the artist who designed the posters.
The posters highlight the untold history of people who opposed the First World War at the time.
For more information see www.theworldismycountry.info

Bursary funding opportunities

For members and attenders
Alison Parkes
Would you appreciate funds (for specific purposes) to help you get through a challenging time?
Would you like to attend a course or learn a new skill?
Would you be glad of funding to attend a Quaker event?
As a member or attender of Southern East Anglia Area Quaker Meeting, you may be eligible to apply for financial support from the Meeting. The Richard Waynforth Trust, which has its origins in a bequest from 1726, has recently been extended to members and attenders of Southern East Anglia (SEA) Area Quaker Meeting: this includes Clacton, Sudbury, Earls Colne, Harwich and Colchester Meetings. The Trust uses income from its ethically managed endowment fund to award grants that can alleviate hardship, distress and need. We are grateful to Ipswich & Diss Area Quaker Meeting for enabling our AM members and attenders to benefit from the Trust. For more details about what you can apply for, speak to an Elder or Overseer or the clerk of your Meeting.

Quakers have been fortunate through the years to receive legacies enabling them to encourage education and spiritual development within the Meeting. Francis Freshfield in 1808, John Ken-
Clerk’s Corner

Alison Parkes
Southern East Anglia Quaker Meeting Clerk

This year’s Swarthmore Lecture by Diana Francis (delivered at Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM), Friends House, London in May) was entitled “Faith, Power and Peace”. Each one of those words is in itself worthy of deep reflection; when we take them all together, they make a very strong brew. The book Quaker Faith and Practice (QFP) devotes an entire chapter to “our peace testimony”, while making the point that early Friends did not draw a hard and fast distinction between the various Quaker testimonies. Instead, they saw them as “a seamless expression of the universal spirit of Christ that dwells in the hearts of all”. George Fox, 1651, described how he “lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars... I was come into the covenant of peace which was before wars and strife were.” (Qfp 24.01)

Quakers have a profound appreciation of how the care of our planet is an integral part of “faith, power and peace”. BYM (2011) addressed this in what is known as “Minute 36: The Canterbury Commitment”: “We have long been aware that our behaviour impoverishes the earth and that it is our responsibility both to conserve the earth’s resources and to share them more equitably. Our long-standing commitment to peace and justice arises in part from our understanding of the detrimental effect of war and conflicts, in damaging communities and squandering the earth’s resources.” Recently the Pope published an encyclical on the impact of climate change on the planet. He raises huge issues that are the responsibility of every one of us on the planet. Can we use this opportunity to engage with other faith groups to find ways to live sustainably and justly on this Earth?

In the wake of the recent General Election, I have taken some time to reflect on what we might be led to do next with regard to “Alternatives to Trident”, the Area Meeting group which was active in the lead-up to the election. At BYM, I attended a session in which Friends from around the country were considering their next steps. I learned about an interfaith initiative which has put together a statement calling upon all states “to develop a robust plan of action that will lead us to a world free of nuclear weapons”. The full statement is elsewhere in this newsletter, along with an invitation to an interfaith event hosted by Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) to be held at Friends House, Euston, on Hiroshima Day, Thursday August 6. Some of you may be interested in attending that event, or we may choose to hold a local interfaith event ourselves, in remembrance of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. If that proves to be of interest to AM Friends, we will advertise it through Local Meetings.

Diana Francis described her experience in conflict-torn parts of the world, where conciliation is taking place, even when violence is happening. In our personal lives, as well as through the work we support, we can help to build a “peace constituency”, where dialogue, non-violence and restorative justice are respected and expected. Diana urged us to get behind our peace testimony. She said “If we lack anything, it is faith.” We need to put our trust in the life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars.

The next meeting of Southern East Anglia Area Quaker Meeting will take place on Sunday, July 12 at Earls Colne Meeting House, 2.15 pm. At this meeting, we expect to receive the Annual Report and Accounts. Further details, including the accounts (when available), will be uploaded at the earliest opportunity to the Business page of our Area Meeting website: www.essexsuffolkquakers.org All are welcome to attend; non-members (attenders) are asked to please request permission of the clerk.

“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”
Matt. 6 vs 28 - 29
From Joan Rew