Diary Dates for September

Wednesday September 8th International Literacy Day http://www.literacyworldwide.org
Saturday September 12th Heritage Open Day at Colchester FMH
Sunday September 13th Area Meeting, Colchester Thursday
September 24th, talk starting at 19.30hrs “The World is my Country”
Exhibition of posters and speakers from Peace News, highlighting the history of conscientious objectors to the first world war.
   http://roadlesstraveller.blogspot.co.uk/2015/05/the-world-is-my-country-public-meeting.html
Saturday September 26th, starting at 11.30hrs Regional Gathering at Colchester FMH
Saturday September 26th International Day for the Elimination of nuclear weapons

Statue of Prayer in Hiroshima Peace Park
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

FIRST CONTACT
FOR FUNERAL
ARRANGEMENTS
Carol Holding, Helen Lewis,
Peter Whiteley

Editorial

Dear Friends,

This is always an interesting time of year for our Meeting, as it often gives us the chance to meet our youngsters and hear about their holidays, and perhaps meet the far-flung ones who have been digging toilets in Africa or planning a gap-year helping people all over the world. They do have more opportunities than we did, during the last years of the war, or the years of austerity that followed (well, it’s pretty austere now, too, I suppose) But all this on-line stuff has made the world a bit smaller.

We have had some newcomers and a lot of visitors, and there had been a bit of doubt about the Sale (though at the moment it seems a bit more likely) The Heritage Day is always fun as a lot of visitors drop in and are gratifyingly interested to hear about Quakers.

Something you can very usefully do is to visit one or more of our outlying meetings, perhaps Sudbury, where you would be very welcome as they are getting old and few of them have cars these days. Long ago, when I was Clerk to General Meeting (we don’t have such a person now) I used to make a point of visiting all the outlying Meetings in turn and it was most enjoyable. I remember with delight a General Meeting at Dunmow: we always had a visiting speaker and this time it was a magnificently dressed pair of black girls from Quaker Social Action, who had come to show us how to make our own hats.

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

Wildlife Spot: Climate Change

from Valerie Graves

In a way, this follows on after nuclear deterrents, because it is tarred with the same brush. The two are not really related, but the refusal to believe in climate change or to do anything about it, is really the same as the blind belief in something so irrational. We are persuaded that the pursuit of huge amounts of money is not only rational but possible and indeed the only sensible thing to do.

I believe I may have mentioned a book I have been reading called Nature in Towns and Cities, a most cheering (though large and heavy!) which tells of the great progress that has been made recently in “greening” built-up areas which were derelict and unused, using every last bit to plant a fruit tree or a small group of allotments, not forgetting the tops of large buildings.

Most delightfully, he tells of so many green spaces being used by refugees and migrants to grow vegetables and fruit from their own lands, healing their sore hearts and bringing new exciting ideas to drab bits of our cities.

I have to say that I think this a better way to spend money, than to build factories to produce nuclear bombs to frighten them with. But I am old and perhaps prejudiced, and am delighted to see turbanned or veiled bright coloured people hobnobbing with serious elderly and very hidebound ones, and perhaps discussing the best way to cook chillis.

John Hall has acquired a new macro lens and has supplied these excellent photos of the encouraging signs of healthy industry in our bumble...
News from Clacton Meeting

Ernest Hall

July and August, the ‘summer holiday months’, tend to take their toll on attendance at Meetings for Worship. Some f/Friends are likely to be away on holiday, perhaps attending a Quaker Meeting elsewhere. Others have visitors who make it impossible for them to attend. It is very satisfying therefore to be able to record that at our August ‘First Wednesday in the month mid-day Meeting’ we had eleven attenders, our largest attendance so far, despite the unavoidable absence of one of our ‘regulars’.

We were particularly pleased to welcome our Clerk Hazel Jones. We know that she has quite a distance to come and that she has a very busy life in which Quaker work plays a large part. We very much hope though that she will be able to join us on the ‘first Wednesday of the month’ on many future occasions.

Another ‘first’ was Christina Fletcher, a one-time regular Sunday morning attender who now lives in London and visits Clacton only occasionally. She is a close friend of Mary Smith who is, of course, among our ‘first Wednesday regulars’.

Also with us were Mary Douglas and Ian Layzell, who were to be married just three days later at Christ Church URC Church, about half a mile away. We had all come to know Mary and Ian very well. They had the Meeting’s very best wishes and prayers for a happy day and for many years of married happiness ahead.

Our next ‘First Wednesday Meeting for Worship with simple lunch’ will be on Wednesday 2nd September at 12.00 noon. We’d be delighted to have you join us.

Weddings!

I had thought that there would probably be at least two from that ‘first Wednesday’ Meeting who would be present at the wedding of Mary and Ian. There were, in fact, four of us. It was a very joyful occasion. The church was comfortably full. There were a couple of well-known hymns and appropriate prayers. Both bride and groom were clearly very happy indeed as they took their solemn vows and exchanged rings.

Mary and Ian’s wedding reminded me of the Quaker weddings that I had attended in Clacton. They too were joyful occasions (though in quite a different way) as the bridegroom and bride rose in the Meeting when they felt it right to do so, and made their solemn promises to each other in the presence of their f/Friends.

I think I have attended every Quaker wedding that has taken place in Clacton. The first (and I think it was Clacton’s very first Quaker wedding) took place in the ‘old meeting house’, now the small meeting room, in the autumn of 1955. The bride was Julie Buckman, a trainee teacher at what was then the St. Osyth Teachers’ Training College. I don’t recall the bridegroom’s name but I do recall that many years later (the 1980s, 1990s?) Julie and her husband, by then grandparents, visited Clacton and joined us for Meeting for Worship, to which they were warmly welcomed.

The first wedding in our ‘new’ Meeting house, to which I referred a few months ago, was between Judith Musgrave and John Howarth. Now also grandparents, John has fairly recently retired and they have moved to Ipswich from where they visit Judith’s mother, our member Mary Musgrave, regularly. The latest Quaker wedding in Clacton was several years ago and was of Joyce White’s son Stephen. And that, sadly, is all I can remember about it!

I wonder when we shall have the next one.
A Sad Farewell To Camila
from Valerie Graves,

Many of you must have heard of Kids Company and the work it did for appallingly deprived children in London and (recently) in some other big cities. Nothing was too difficult, too dangerous, too impossible for Camila Batmanghelidjh, an astonishingly colourful and determined person who helped the un-helpable, saved youngsters from drugs, encouraged the hopeless to pass exams, nagged Authority to provide school dinners for all children, gave huge noisy Christmas parties for crowds of families, undaunted by threats from gangsters … and of course eventually was tripped up and got rid of. We are all immensely sad and can only hope that eventually someone else will pick up the baton and run with it.

Someone like Camila is like a huge bright comet that whizzes past overhead and leaves you feeling stunned. But it was good to have known her.

Poem
in the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Rye, Sussex, sent in by Rosalind Kaye

NIL DESPERANDUM
Upon the wreckage of thy yesterday design
the structure of tomorrow.
Lay strong corner stones of purpose, and prepare
Great blocks of wisdom, cut from past despair.
Shape mighty pillars of resolve to set
Deep in the tear-wet mortar of regret.
Work on with patience, though thy toil be slow,
Yet day by day thy edifice shall grow.
Believe in God - in thine own self believe.
All that thou desired thou shalt achieve.

Author unknown

Thoughts Poetic
from reading the Swarthmore Lecture

If you are involved in something, You tend to know it backwards.
If you know something it can be involving, but does it make you think outside the box.
From back to front gives new insight.
To study war by means of raw
Jolts you towards a painful view.
To study peace backwards sounds like Agape or Love. (giving emphasis anew)
Carol Holding

On (Direct) Taxation
John Kay

Carol, Tim, Jenny and I spent a relaxing lunch hosted by Di and Ron Naylor on Tuesday 25th. During a lively discussion on taxation, Di found this interesting piece to read us.

We can inform Jonathan what are the inevitable consequences of being too fond of glory; — Taxes upon every article which enters the mouth, or covers the back, or is placed under the foot — taxes upon everything which is pleasant to see, hear, feel, smell, or taste — taxes upon warmth, light, and locomotion — taxes on everything on earth and the waters under the earth — on everything that comes from abroad, or is grown at home — taxes on the raw material — taxes on every fresh value that is added to it by the industry of man — taxes on the sauce which pampers man’s appetite, and the drug that restores him to health — on the ermine which decorates the judge, and the rope that hangs the criminal — on the poor man’s salt, and the rich man’s spice — on the brass nails of the coffin, and the ribands of the bride — at bed or board, couchant or levant, we must pay — The schoolboy whips his taxed top — the beardless youth manages his taxed horse, with a taxed bridle on a taxed road: — and the dying Englishman, pouring his medicine, which has paid 7 per cent., into a spoon that has paid 15 per cent., — flings himself upon his chintz bed, which has paid 22 per cent., — and expires in the arms of an apothecary who has paid a license of a hundred pounds for the privilege of putting him to death. His whole property is then immediately taxed from 2 to 10 per cent. Besides the probate, large fees are demanded for burying him in the chancel; his virtues are handed down to posterity on taxed marble; and he is then gathered to his fathers, to be taxed no more. (Sydney Smith, EDINBURGH REVIEW, January, 1820.)
The Anniversary of Hiroshima
from Valerie Graves

We have been seeing a number of pictures in the press this last week showing the devastation caused by the first nuclear bomb dropped on Hiroshima, followed later by another on Nagasaki, in 1945. Indeed it is impossible to imagine the horror that was suffered by the people of those cities.

No amount of talk and argument can begin to be acceptable. Some said that there were few civilians there, that there was no hope of expecting peace otherwise, etc. etc. Even had they been true (which none of them were) this kind of destruction was, and still is, not acceptable. At Hiroshima 80,000 people died at once and about 60,000 more suffered lingering deaths later. Many people were totally destroyed, only their clothes or some trivial thing like a school dinner box remaining. The stories go on and on and we have to say "This was my fault - I authorised it." There is no way of getting away from it.

People are still alive who can show you their scars. The extraordinary thing, to me, is the number of people who have taken enormous trouble to find out their "opposite number", as it were, to make their own apology and, indeed, to make friends.

The next thing, surely, must be to make sure that this can never happen again, to bury the whole thing fathoms deep. Are we doing this? we are not. We talk foolishly about the "nuclear deterrent." I will not waste your time on this. Far from doing this, we are burdening ourselves with a huge expense which, if stopped, would pay for all the crippling financial mess that we are in, and the misery in which thousands of people have to live.

Our grandchildren, in years to come, will laugh in total misunderstanding of how on earth we could have gone on, year after year, like rabbits, digging holes that we were not able to get out of.

Heritage Open Day
Robbie Spence

On Heritage Open Day visitors to Colchester Quaker Meeting House will be able to
- Explore the Meeting House
- Ask us about our faith and practice
- View the exhibition of posters
- Watch a video about Quakerism in Colchester
- Watch a recent Quaker film that questions militarisation of education.

Refreshments will be available. All welcome. Admission free.

Alison Parkes of Colchester Quakers said, "Quakers have been active in Colchester since the seventeenth century. We’d like to welcome people to our Meeting House on Heritage Open Day to find out more about our worship. As it is the ongoing centenary of the start of the First World War, we have put on an exhibition arising from the Quaker Peace Testimony, which encourages us to consider that war and the preparation for war are inconsistent with the spirit of Christ.”
Interfaith Peace Evening:

A selection of the readings that were given at the Interfaith Peace Evening on Hiroshima Day, August 6, 2015

Sankichi Toge: Hibakusha (A-bomb survivor)

Sankichi Toge was born in Japan in 1917. He started writing poems at the age of eighteen. He was twenty-four when the A-bomb was dropped. He died at age thirty-six, a victim of leukemia resulting from the A-bomb. His first hand experience of the bomb, his passion for peace and his realistic insight into the event made him the leading Hiroshima poet in Japan.

An extract of one of his poems:

Little ones,
Do not be silent, speak up
To fight against the adults all over the world
Who are trying to bring about war
Spring out shouting "Hey!"
With loud clear voices
Your round eyes shining
And open your arms
Free to hug everyone
Give an embrace that will bring back
Tears of good to everyone's heart
Then spring at them all over the world
Shouting, "We are the boys and girls,
The Children of Hiroshima!"

O brother man!
fold to thy heart thy brother;
Where pity dwells,
the peace of God is there.
~ John Greenleaf Whittier, 1807-1892

John Lewis and Reg Webb prepared the following reading, which was read by Reg:

The Russell-Einstein Manifesto

In 1955, a group of scientists, including those who had been involved in developing the atomic bomb, became united in their regret that an atomic bomb had been used at the end of the Second World War. Led by Albert Einstein and the philosopher Bertrand Russell, they drafted a public statement, known as the Russell-Einstein Manifesto, and this is an extract:

We are speaking, not as members of this or that nation, continent, or creed, but as human beings, members of the species Man, whose continued existence is in doubt. We want you, if you can, to set aside feelings and consider yourselves only as members of a biological species which has had a remarkable history, and whose disappearance none of us can desire.

We shall try to say no single word which should appeal to one group rather than to another. All, equally, are in peril, and, if the peril is understood, there is hope that they may collectively avert it.

We have to learn to think in a new way.

The question we have to ask ourselves is: what steps can be taken to prevent a military contest of which the issue must be disastrous to all parties?

The general public still thinks in terms of the obliteration of cities.

No doubt in an H-bomb war great cities would be obliterated. But this is one of the minor disasters that would have to be faced. If everybody in London, New York, and Moscow were exterminated, the world might, in the course of a few centuries, recover from the blow. But we now know, that nuclear bombs can gradually spread destruction over a very much wider area than had been supposed.

No one knows how widely lethal radio-active particles might be diffused, but the best authorities are unanimous in saying that a war with H-bombs might possibly put an end to the human race. It is feared that if many H-bombs are used there will be universal death, sudden or slow and painful.

Here, then, is the problem which we present to you, stark and dreadful and inescapable: Shall we put an end to the human race; or shall mankind renounce war? People will not face this alternative because it is so difficult to abolish war.

We appeal as human beings to human beings: Remember your humanity, and forget the rest. If you can do so, the way lies open to a new Paradise; if you cannot, there lies before you the risk of universal death.

We invite the scientists of the world and the general public, to subscribe to the following resolution:

In view of the fact that in any future war nuclear weapons may be employed, and that such weapons threaten the continued existence of mankind, we urge the governments of the world to realize, and to acknowledge publicly, that their purpose cannot be furthered by war, and we urge them, consequently, to find peaceful means for the settlement of all matters of dispute between them.”
On Another's Sorrow
from Songs of Innocence by William Blake

Can I see another's woe,
And not be in sorrow too?
Can I see another's grief,
And not seek for kind relief?
Can I see a falling tear,
And not feel my sorrow's share?
Can a father see his child
Weep, nor be with sorrow filled?
Can a mother sit and hear
An infant groan, an infant fear?
No, no! never can it be!
Never, never can it be!

And can He who smiles on all
Hear the wren with sorrows small,
Hear the small bird's grief and care,
Hear the woes that infants bear -
And not sit beside the nest,
Pouring pity in their breast,
And not sit the cradle near,
Weeping tear on infant's tear?
And not sit both night and day,
Wiping all our tears away?
O no! never can it be!
Never, never can it be!

He doth give His joy to all:
He becomes an infant small,
He becomes a man of woe,
He doth feel the sorrow too.

Think not thou canst sigh a sigh,
And thy Maker is not by:
Think not thou canst weep a tear,
And thy Maker is not near.
O He gives to us His joy,
That our grief He may destroy:
Till our grief is fled and gone
He doth sit by us and moan.

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This Current Month

“The World is My Country”
at Colchester Meeting House

Exhibition of posters on Heritage Open Day, Saturday 12 September 10.00 - 4.00 pm
Also there is 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 – of feminist peace initiatives, clandestine printing presses, striking German munitions workers and communities of resistance from Huddersfield to Hackney. For more information see www.theworldismycountry.info

Southern East Anglia Area Quaker Meeting
**Clerk’s Corner**

Alison Parkes  
Southern East Anglia Quaker Meeting Clerk

**The Sound of Silence**

A recent article in *the Friend* (“All life is sacred”, by John Myhill: 14 August 2015) considers the question, why do we worship in silence? John Myhill, from Norfolk and Waveney Area Meeting, reminds us that “We do not worship in silence because silence is sacred and speech secular. We worship in silence because it enables us to listen to one another and to speak what seems most important to us, to get to know each other in the things that are eternal.” John sees Meeting for Worship as a practice run, a preparation for the rest of our sacred living, because we are called upon to “listen for that of God in everything that is said to us (amongst Quakers and in the world) and answer that of God, with our own depth of understanding, not distracted by lightweight secular chatter”.

I have to admit to feeling somewhat chastened by John’s words, knowing how easy it is to be distracted by that “lightweight secular chatter”. We do not want to set ourselves apart from the mainstream of life, yet we do have a contribution to make as Quakers, and it can help to regard Meeting for Worship as a training ground for our lives outside Meeting.

To truly experience ‘the sound of silence’ in the shared and active silence of a Quaker meeting asks a lot of us. It requires discipline that takes practice, and I think there are times for most of us when we are better disciplined than others, more open to silent waiting and listening. This is an essential element of our Meetings for Worship for Business, the willingness to listen deeply before offering a spoken contribution. Thankfully I think it is something we have a deep desire to practise at our business meetings, and we can help one another with this and learn from one another too.

John Myhill’s article reminds Friends that we do not worship silence itself; it is by spiritual speaking and listening that we experience the shared joy of Light and moments of inspiration, and which foster the aspiration of Quakers “to live and have their being within the sacred”. Let us find the strength, with help from our Meetings for Worship, to reveal our Quaker colours with confidence in the fullness of our lives.

Many Friends sustain their connection with Meeting for Worship by reading *Quaker faith and practice* or Quaker journals and magazines (and sometimes *the Friend* falls into this category!). The courses available at Woodbrooke [https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/] and other Quaker centres can be another source of spiritual connection and refreshment. As the autumn term approaches, you might want to see if there is a course that interests you. AM bursary help is available for training for Quaker roles and for some educational and pastoral courses – speak to an Elder, Overseer or Clerk if you’d like more information.

The next Area Meeting will take place at Clacton Meeting House, Sunday September 13 at 2.15 pm. All are welcome; attenders are requested to ask the clerk for permission to attend. To view previous AM minutes, visit the AM website: [www.essexsuffolkquakers.org](http://www.essexsuffolkquakers.org)

Please note: Advance agenda information and matters to be considered at the next Area Meeting are on the AM website: Business page: Next meeting – Advance agenda information