All of November World Vegan Month
Sunday 1st is World Vegan Day
Friday 6th Colchester Farmers’ Market, Arts Centre
Saturday 7th Colchester Quaker annual sale
Saturday 14th World Diabetes Day [http://www.idf.org/wdd-index](http://www.idf.org/wdd-index)
Sunday 22nd Area Meeting: Colchester  

Please note change of date
**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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**Editorial**

Dear Friends,

I expect I have written the same newsletter every October for many years! Because it is a special time of year to me, a time of new beginnings, wiping the page clean and starting all over again. It is the start of the new year at school, and a time when my husband and I used to go on holiday, usually camping in the mountains somewhere, when the weather is still nice, in fact usually much better than most. (In Wales it is about the only time it doesn’t rain!) But that is all a very long time ago.

Even so, I am sad when people tell me about feeling depressed at this time of year. But at our Meeting there does seem a feeling of excitement: there is the Annual Sale coming up, and other things, and it is nice to see a bit more of our young people, back from school or college or exciting happenings overseas.

Right now we are all anxious about the movements of migrants and the terrible times they are having, and what we can do about it, and also about the activities of our rulers and the likely effects on the very poor and their children. It is good to know that Friends and others are doing quite a lot. More on this topic later in the newsletter.

I hope you have had good holidays and bracing yourselves for whatever may come - I refuse to worry about the chance of a bad winter. I have to remember how much my grandchildren (middle-aged now) used to enjoy sledging down the Hilly Fields.

News, please, by the middle of the month, to Valerie Graves, and enjoy the autumn

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**Clerk’s Corner**

Alison Parkes

I was driving along Head Street, about to turn up Church Street to Colchester Meeting House, when someone in the street flapped his arms at me to let me know I had a flat tyre. Although this was an inconvenient event, how fortunate I was that it happened on a Wednesday! Friends were gathering at the Meeting House for mid week meeting and a simple shared lunch of soup, bread and cheese. I was able to join them while waiting for a mechanic to arrive and change the tyre on the Meeting House forecourt.

“Sweet are the uses of adversity” — perhaps? Suddenly my busy day was interrupted by a half-hour of silent worship and the fellowship of Friends.

During the half-hour of silence, I felt thankful for the safe haven of the Meeting House. Recently Rob and I have been privileged to have a special guest staying with us; she is a refugee from the war in Syria. As I considered the ways in which we all juggle uncertainty in our lives, I reflected on the void which has opened up for our refugee. Although she would love to return to her homeland one day, her family home in Homs is destroyed, and her mother and siblings are living on different continents. It seems very unlikely that she will ever return to the life she once knew, a life sustained by her family, her community and a satisfying career.

It is three months since she applied for asylum; anxiously she awaits the verdict of the Home Office. Until that is granted, she cannot work so she has no income and is using precious savings from her work as a teacher in Syria. Although it is permissible for her to study, she has no money to pay for courses so can only access those available free of charge. She would like to volunteer her time at the local library, but this may not be allowed until her asylum is granted.

As individuals, Local Meetings and as an Area Meeting, we are finding ways to support local
agencies working for the good of refugees. We have initiated dialogue, for example, with the charitable organisation Fresh Beginnings, which offers refugees support as well as lessons in English and IT skills. We, and others, are liaising with Colchester Borough Council and advocating for more to be done to welcome refugees to our area.

At the same time, we must not forget those of our indigenous population who are in need of support, especially housing, which is an important element of our witness. One doesn’t have to be a refugee to experience loneliness, homelessness, hunger and desperation, or to have huge question marks hanging over one’s life. The plight of refugees may seem like a glamorous cause at the moment; one day it will not seem so glamorous and yet the needs will still be there, just as they are for many of our indigenous population.

As we try to be “patterns and examples” of how to respond in this hour of need to refugees in our midst, we will each be guided by what we can do, and trusting that other Friends, locally and nationally, will be taking action too. We are tasked with keeping aware of what is being done, and alert to “the promptings of love and truth” in our hearts.

The next Area Meeting will take place at Colchester Meeting House, Sunday November 22 at 2.15 pm. All are welcome; attenders (i.e. not in membership of Quakers) are requested to ask the clerk for permission to attend. To view previous AM minutes, visit the AM website:

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

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**Summer Junior Gathering**

Amber Kendall Attrill

I shall tell you about when over 50 11-14 year olds met at the end of August at Leighton Park School in Reading.

In Summer School there was a range of activities such as gymnastics, The Meaning of Life, discussion groups, jigsaws, Morris Dancing and so much more. We had a base group which is a group of people that have a conversation about the speaker, someone that comes in to talk to us about the current topic. They always give us some questions to discuss and we play lots of games such as Splat, Hygrade and many other games.

We had special events such as Junior Gathering Fête and an entertainment evening. The food was amazing, every day started off with a full English Breakfast.

I will tell you about the one speaker that hit me.
There was a child soldier called Noah, he was abducted at the age of thirteen and got forced to fight but he managed to not kill a man. However he got injured many times and now has permanent scars all over his body.

He had to wait nine years to be trusted enough to be left to it. Him and his friend managed to escape. Once they escaped they saw some policemen and asked for help, they didn’t help him and instead sent him to the police station. He got arrested for ten years and finally got released when the war was over.

He moved to the UK and has been waiting to be accepted into the UK as a citizen. He can’t plan his life and is still waiting and has been waiting for 15 years.

So far he has spent all his money on education but he managed to get an A Star in English and a B in Maths.

He managed to get in contact with his Mum and now speaks to her every month.

Any questions?

**Quakers and Politics**

John Hall

Last month’s edition of the Newsletter carried a photograph of a member of Parliament (among others including Friends). It gave rise to some critical comments as “Quaker don’t do party politics”.

While it is true that Meetings have not and would not endorse any political party, Friends as individuals have long involved themselves in politics. For example, Emily Hobhouse identified the inhumane treatment of Boer women and children in General Kitchener’s concentration camps, with the result that Alfred Harmsworth, the proprietor of the Daily Mail, excoriated her. Then, in November 1895, the national Quaker conference in Manchester pointed out that there was a relationship between theology and politics. So, it is unsurprising that many Friends have become politicians. Here are just three Quaker MPs from different political persuasions:

John Bright Liberal

Richard Body Conservative

Ruth Cadbury Labour
The Jungle’ Helping Refugees

Jenny Kay

John and I had the pleasure to be at Colchester when after Meeting for worship when Pauline Roles, of the St John’s Church Community Colchester came to speak of her visit to the refugee camp in Calais now known as ‘The Jungle’. She had successfully delivered donated goods and bibles, together with over £500 worth of food purchased in France with the money donated by Colchester Meeting. The system for supporting the camp is well-organised by volunteers. Pauline was given a list of foods needed and she made three trips to the supermarket to purchase them. She then had the opportunity to enter the camp to distribute food and bibles to the two Christian churches within the camp. She was accompanied by two volunteer workers, one a Quaker from Seattle who has since found employment with the Red Cross.

There are now 6000 refugees in the camp which has been open for at least 13 years. Most of these people are hoping to stay in France but the process takes up to a year. The jungle is muddy and water logged but efforts are being made to provide shelter, showers and toilet facilities. The inhabitants take care to look after themselves as best they can and are most grateful and appreciative of the help that is given. There will be a continuing need at this camp, especially as winter draws on, such as warm clothes and wooden platforms constructed to keep people off the cold ground.

Pauline wrote on her Facebook report:

... it was a privilege to share what we could with these wonderful misplaced and homeless people, may God Bless them and find them a new country to call home again soon.’

She thanked everyone who had donated and helped with the trip.

The organisation Pauline Roles is with is called The Action Circle, on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/groups/theactioncircle/

There’s more about what’s going on around the town at https://www.facebook.com/Welcome-refugees-Colchester961866117213580/ and https://www.facebook.com/Refugee-Action-Colchester134156616932904/

Our Area Meeting has set up a Refugee group, Robert Parkes will be reporting to Colchester at LM on 1 November and AM on 15 November.

A march for refugee support will take place in Colchester on Saturday 14 November at 2.00 pm.

Exploring the early Quaker story

at Swarthmoor Hall

Di Naylor

I have been hoping to run some study sessions on early Quaker history at Colchester next spring and I was lucky enough to gain a place on this Woodbrooke course. The train journey itself was lovely, a two carriage locomotive which goes from Lancaster to Carlisle past Morecombe Bay in all its splendour and on to Carlisle through the Lake District. The hall itself looks grey and forbidding but once inside it is lovely: the original building still stands and has amongst other original rooms a beautiful 17th Century oak panelled hall where we held our meetings for worship. The hall,
Last time I wrote about birds vanishing from my garden, and other people told me the same, so I don’t think it was just noisy builders. There are always hoodlum birds like magpies and fat greedy wood pigeons, but I have missed the little birds and things like blackbirds. Some of them do seem to have come back, and yesterday I actually saw a goldfinch on the niger seeds, an all-time first for me, which Quakers endured during the early years of Charles 2nd’s reign and it was shocking to read what happened in Colchester; most of us know what happened to James Parnell but few realise the cruelties enacted by the militia on the orders of the magistrates against Friends in the town and surrounding area. Hopefully we will have a chance to study these accounts with Friends in a study group. In addition to Betty, our other tutor was Stuart Masters who is a theologian. He helped us gain a deeper understanding of the circumstances surrounding the development of early Quakerism and how Friends managed to survive and establish themselves in such dangerous times. It was a real privilege to be a course participant with a very friendly group and I have benefited greatly from this experience.

Wildspot from Valerie Graves

which was built around 1500, was the home of Mr Justice Fell and his wife Margaret in the early 17th century; indeed Margaret’s oak chair by the inglenook fireplace is still there. On one occasion Justice Fell was away on his circuit business and on his return he found his home full of Quakers! Margaret had given hospitality to a group of itinerant Friends and over the years she was to continue to give refuge to these people. Her husband gave her protection though he never became a Friend himself. The great panelled bedrooms which you can see in the house were big enough to accommodate many groups of Friends although it was a precarious situation and Margaret was subsequently to be imprisoned three times for her adherence to Quaker beliefs and practices. She later married George Fox after she was widowed and Swarthmoor Hall became a centre for Quaker activity in the North and from there it spread through the country. It was here that George Fox made his base and where he probably wrote most of his voluminous journal. We had the opportunity to study extracts from this with one of our tutors Betty Hagglund who is an expert on 17th Century Quaker literature. We were very struck by the wealth of biblical references contained within the text which demonstrated the depth of knowledge of the Bible in those times. We looked too at the Book of Sufferings B

The memorial to James Parnell in Colchester Castle

Below: The Plaque in Colchester Friends Meeting House and an imaginative conception of the appearance of James Fox.

Southern East Anglia Area Quaker Meeting
so I must stop moaning and be more optimistic. There is always the robin: I know they have some very unattractive habits, but he is very endearing, usually waiting for me to come out of the back door, when he follows me all round the garden, waiting for the bits of bread I usually give him. It is not just me, my next door neighbour gets the same treatment. I expect I just have to take what comes.

Plants have peculiar habits too. Some things suddenly die and come back without warning years later. I was delighted to discover a flourishing rose (a moss rose, William Lobb) which I planted years ago and never flourished, suddenly reappeared in a different place and now several feet high. As I said, you have to take what comes.

**Quaker Faith and Practice 24.08**

Issued by London Yearly Meeting 1915, during the First World War:

Meeting at a time when the nations of Europe are engaged in a war of unparalleled magnitude, we have been led to recall the basis of the peace testimony of our religious Society. It is not enough to be satisfied with a barren negative witness, a mere proclamation of non-resistance. We must search for a positive, vital, constructive message. Such a message, a message of supreme love, we find in the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. We find it in the doctrine of the indwelling Christ, that re-discovery of the early Friends, leading as it does to a recognition of the brotherhood of all men. Of this doctrine our testimony as to war and peace is a necessary outcome, and if we understand the doctrine aright, and follow it in its wide implications, we shall find that it calls to the peaceable spirit and the rule of love in all the broad and manifold relations of life.

Thus while love, joy, peace, gentleness and holiness are the teaching of the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is to these that we are also impelled by the indwelling of the Divine in men. As this spirit grows within us, we shall realise increasingly what it is to live in the virtue of that life and power which takes away the occasion of all wars.

**Using Quaker Faith & Practice**

The letter “B” from Jenny Kay’s ABC at Colchester Meeting House. A collection of Saturday morning paintings and drawings with quotes from Quaker Faith and Practice.

*There is a daily round for beauty as well as goodness.*

Caroline Graveson 1937

Q.F. & P 21.28
Thoughts About Migrants
from Valerie Graves

One advantage about being old is that you have probably lived through all sorts of events and seen them come and go. I would like to tell you about two lots of migrants have I have seen come and go, both in this country.

The first began in the late twenties, when there was a bad slump, and among other things, farming went through a very bad patch, perhaps worst in Southwest Scotland. A great many farmers gave up and moved to East Anglia, where things were not quite so bad, many farms had just been abandoned. The Scots were used to difficulties and problems but they were a hardworking lot and eventually did very well. After a while, of course, everybody got used to them and to the fact that all the children in the schools talked broad Glasgow! By the time my family came to live there everybody accepted the farming families, who were still marginally Scottish.

Then came the war, and two prison camps were set up in our area for captured German soldiers. After a while they were set to work on the local farms and people got used to seeing them about. When the war ended they mostly didn’t make any effort to go home as that home had disappeared and things in Germany were terrible, no homes and no sort of jobs. So they stayed, and by that time they had been working on the farms anyway and nobody wanted to lose them. They were much liked anyway and they married local girls and brought their parents over to live here. The schoolchildren spoke with a German sort of accent! The interesting thing is that it just happened all by itself.

Another example I found in a very good book I bought, about wildlife in towns and cities. It mentioned the taking over odd patches of earth and grass, in cities which had seen a good deal of rebuilding in run-down areas, for growing fruit and vegetables. The author spoke of his delight in seeing gardeners in turbans and head scarves, growing exotic crops that nobody would have expected to thrive so far away from home but they did. Recipes were exchanged, and friendships made. Again, it just happened by itself.

Assimilation is perfectly possible and likely, if it is not bossed and bullied but simply encouraged, if aggressive attitudes can be avoided. You only have to look round towns, say, in East Anglia, right now and you will see Polish food shops or a Czech hairdresser!

AREA MEETING
CHANGE OF DATE
Sunday 22 November 2015
The new date for Area Meeting at Colchester FMH.
This is due to unforeseen circumstances and the weight of essential business to be considered.

Faith Widdicombe

John Kay
Since last month I have heard from Adrian Widdicombe who confirmed that there were very few photographs of his mother. He sent me this much earlier one which was shown at her funeral. I was keen to show Friends what she looked like so I am happy to include it here.