Diary Dates for July

Friday July 1st Colchester Farmers’ Market
Sunday July 3rd, 1200hrs, Colchester FMH Area Meeting talk on Drug Policy concern
Sunday July 10th Area Meeting Earls Colne FMH 2.15 pm
Monday July 11th UN World Population Day http://www.unfpa.org/
Wednesday July 13th CND mass lobby of MPs against Trident submarine renewal http://tinyurl.com/ztkju8y

RENSOLY 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: e-mail address: AM Clerk@.essex suffolkquakers.org

Web Address:
www.essexsuffolkquakers.org
**Meetings for Worship**

**CLACTON**
Sunday at 10.30 am
1st Wednesday each month
12 noon-12.30 pm 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)

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**Editorial**

Dear Friends,

It has been a sad week, with the atmosphere about the Referendum becoming every day nastier and more spiteful, culminating in the tragic murder of a much-loved young MP. Let us hope that things may have shocked some people into slightly kinder behaviour, but I don’t depend on it. Only a few days now, anyway.

Our Meeting is, as usual, bursting with activity, and all sorts of things are happening. We have had Yearly Meeting and lots of other things which you will read about elsewhere. Soon it will be holiday time and then a new term.

Our migrants are settling in and it is good to have them, and I think most of them are glad to be here. But far too many of them are still trying to cross dangerous waters and then languishing in dreadful camps. It is difficult to know how ordinary people can help. At least it is warm weather! indeed it is really lovely today.

News, please, to Valerie Graves, by the middle of the month, and enjoy the rest of your holiday. By the time I write again the new school year will be on the horizon.

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**News from Clacton**

Margaret Ahmed

The Meeting House is looking very spruce after its recent external painting, and the red window sills are not only a striking contrast to the gleaming white walls but also a great improvement on the previous flaky paint. The wooden parquet floors of the Meeting Room and foyer have now been sanded down and repolished and it is expected that with proper care this new surface will wear well in the years to come.

In accordance with the aim of Clacton Quakers to use the premises for Quaker activities, an Art Day has been planned for Friday 24th June and anyone in the Meeting who is interested can come along and try their hand at a still life. The timing for the session is 11am-3pm with a break for lunch. Another Art Day is planned for 22nd July.

The first Wednesday Meeting for Worship with shared lunch is proving very successful with average attendance of 13-15 people and including some people who do not come to the Sunday Meeting for Worship.

The Meeting is still considering an activity which could be held at the Meeting House during Quaker Week in the October. However, it has been proposed that this could take the form of a time of silence so that people can come in and experience calm in the midst of the busy world outside. Volunteers will be needed to be on the premises when they are open, and possibly to make hot drinks.

The sign for the Quaker Meeting House, opposite the turning for Granville Road into Skelmersdale Road, had become very dirty, and this was more noticeable after the tree it is under was recently polarded. A volunteer from the Meeting has now cleaned the sign.

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**FIRST CONTACT**

FOR FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS
CLACTON...................Carol Holding
COLCHESTER..................Carol Holding
SUDBURY....................Peter Whiteley

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*Photos: Ann Kurra*
Two weeks in a familiar country

Derrick & Cornelia Russell

We visited New Zealand in May, not to engage in dangerous sports or to see hot springs, but to attend a sixtieth reunion: the class that entered Christchurch Boys’ High School in 1956.

Changes since then were apparent. In Christchurch the ruins from the 2011 earthquakes have largely been taken away. Exceptions are the remains of the Anglican and Catholic cathedrals, which still stand pending decisions on demolition or restoration. Many people left Christchurch after the earthquakes, but some are gradually returning to new housing schemes north of the city. In the city centre, many landmark buildings have been demolished never to be restored. The former olympic-sized Centennial swimming baths is just a grassed-over patch, and importantly for a sports-minded country, the Lancaster Park stadium stands but has been declared unsafe. Local people are still adjusting to the changed appearance of their surroundings. At least the street names and beautiful parks are still there and some buildings survived or will be restored in some measure.

Captain Scott’s statue will definitely be restored. The Terra Nova left the adjacent port of Lyttelton on 26th November 1910. Scott, who had an office in Christchurch, joined the ship at the more southerly Port Chalmers, Dunedin from where they cast off on 29th November at 2.30 pm for Antarctica.

A temporary memorial to the over 200 fatalities of the Christchurch earthquakes exists in the form of an equal array of white painted chairs, no two being the same. A temporary Anglican cathedral of Japanese design made from lightweight materials has been erected away from the ruins of the old cathedral. Eventually this will be kept as a parish church.

Another substantial change to the city is the virtual absence of bicycles. This used to be a bike city to rival its contemporary Copenhagen, Cambridge or Amsterdam.

We travelled west from Christchurch across the Canterbury Plains to the mountains, lakes and rain forest of the South Island. Traffic outside the city was light and mercifully so on the winding mountain roads through the passes to the West Coast. We went through small townships, many of them on the tourist map. In contrast to 1956, over 90 percent of New Zealanders live in cities. The rural townships are distinguished by excellent cafés and public libraries, determined as they are to survive. There is a shortage of housing in the growing cities and also in tourist spots such as Queenstown, where people want to live to enjoy the amenities or find work. One of the interesting places to visit was the goldrush museum in Arrowtown.

We flew from Christchurch to Wellington on a clear day. From 20,000 feet, the view of the snow clad mountain ranges that run almost the whole length of the South Island was breathtaking. Wellington is the seat of government of New Zealand. New Parliament House, the beehive, stands next to the old classical building in park-like surroundings. Wellington itself is delightfully informal. Wooden houses perch on hills surrounding the harbour. The city’s main streets are on a narrow coastal strip at sea level running north from the airport via Hataitai to the railway station. There are tall, but not very tall buildings, since Wellington was hitherto supposed to have been at a higher earthquake risk than Christchurch. Wellington is distinctive. It has an exotic feel to it, like a Pacific rim
city, which of course it is. The layout is at first sight quite impromptu, governed by the lay of the land. Its suburbs are spread through surrounding hills and valleys. The exotic air is accentuated by the sub-tropical vegetation. Ferns, cabbage trees, flax and varieties of evergreens flourish. The number of downtown restaurants is extraordinary, many being economical, Asian and quite small. The contrast with 1956 Wellington is extreme. Then, restaurants were scarce, and outside-hours opening virtually non-existent. Currently, much of New Zealand is open 7 days, and in the case of supermarkets from early until late. The choice of food in shops is wide and eating houses can excel especially with local lamb and wine and it must be admitted, cream chocolate eclairs.

We were struck by the friendliness and helpfulness of people. Even the border police bent over backwards to help us two elderly jetlagged visitors.

Our last call in Wellington was to the birthplace of Kathleen Beauchamp alias Katherine Mansfield, (b.1888, d.1923). It is a solid looking ochre painted two-storey wooden house in Tinakori Road, corner of Hobson Street. The rooms are quite small, and could be dark in dull weather, as Katherine complained. The Beauchamp family later lived at three other houses, each bigger than the last, and all in or close to Tinakori Road. She lived mostly in London and France from her twenties. Her short stories must now be on our reading agenda.

All in all this was a great two-week visit.

Notice on a tree in a Spanish park.

Rosalind Kaye

Ye who pass by and would raise your hand against me - harken ere you harm me.

I am the heat of your hearth on the cold nights

The friendly shade screening you from the summer sun

And my fruits are refreshing draughts that quench your thirst as you journey on.

I am the beam that holds your house, the board of your table,

The bed on which you lie, and the timber with which you build your boat.

I am the handle of your hoe, the door of your homestead,

The wood of your cradle and the shell of your coffin:

I have the sap of kindness and the flower of beauty.

Ye who listen to my prayer harm me not.

Meeting Houses

John Kay

John Hall of Colchester Meeting has an interesting Flikr site which has many excellent photographs of Quaker Meeting Houses in the British Isles and also at many places around the world.

It can be reached at:

Here is one Friends may not be familiar with. The interior of the hall used by Harwich Meeting, together with some Friends who sadly, are no longer with us.
Ernest’s 95th

Ernest Hall

On Saturday 4th June I invited friends and family to join me in a lunch to celebrate my 95th birthday (actually on 18th May) at the ‘Bowling Green’ a licensed restaurant a few miles out of Clacton. There were 28 of us altogether and it was an international event. There were four Germans, all originally from the little town of Zittau where I spent the last two years of World War II as a POW, one Belgian, one Taiwanese and the rest of us were Brits. Thanks to Skype a niece in Australia was able to be with us in spirit.

Two of the Germans were my ‘honorary nephew and niece’ Tom aged six and his sister Maja aged nine. Their mother Kornelia (Korni) was also one of the guests. In the group photo I have Tom on one knee and Maja on the other.

I like to think that I am making a tiny contribution towards Anglo-German friendship and therefore towards world peace.

From Children’s Meeting

Here are the prayers we wrote and could you put them in the news letter

Amber Attrill
Ellies one is:
God is love
With someone above
With someone who looks after us
And we prey to our father
Who makes laughter
And creates us as his daughters and sons
Who makes hot cross buns

Ellies one is:
God is love
With someone above
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Who makes laughter
And creates us as his daughters and sons
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Wildlife Spot

from Valerie Graves

What an amazing spring and early summer it has been! I don’t know when I have seen such roses (or such amazing weeds) My family are being very helpful, as usual, at clearing huge piles of growth from the back of the garden, and they say they have to be careful as there are hundreds of tiny frogs on the grass. It seems no time since I was worrying about the late arrival of the visiting frogs in the early spring, and how few there were.

In fact, just at the moment there seems to be far too much of everything but I am not grumbling as we have had no frost or snow. Right now I am wallowing in the perfume from a huge display from the Philadelphus and the Rugosa roses.

Not exactly wildlife, but we have had the men from the gas here for weeks and weeks, I hope we are grateful, I am sure what they are doing was necessary, but what a noise and what a disturbance and upset! Happily they are hoping to be gone soon.

Garden Notes

Peggy Lewis

Great news, the large Philadelphus which was cut down to within an inch of its life two years ago has resurrected itself. The first year it sent out long wands carrying very large leaves. It was fed, gently pruned and encouraged to try again. This year, having sorted itself out, it has produced many sturdy canes covered with small bright green leaves. Do go and speak to it.

In the front garden the viburnum (Plicatum I think) against the Parnell Room wall, has beautiful creamy white blooms. We have cleared this bed of old dying shrubs and have plans...

Thanks to Friends for offerings of plants from your gardens. Gratefully received and found a suitable home.
Some Wonderful Quakers From the Past
from Valerie Graves

I am remembering Terence and Grace Lane, who were at Chelmsford Meeting when I joined Friends in the '60s. They must have been quite old by then, but always active and full of activities.

Terence was arrested as a conscientious objector early in the first world war, and sent to Dartmoor Prison. He was treated appalling, as was the usual case, such as being routinely soaked with the hose before going out to do hard labour. I think he was kept there throughout the war. He must have been quite a young man, but he ended up with severe chronic chest trouble. But if I know anything of him, it would not have got him down. He was always good fun and ready for anything. He was probably retired when I knew him and I don’t know what work he did, but somehow he had managed to acquire a formidable amount of knowledge of the classics and of the writings of the early fathers. He and Grace ran lots of classes for our Meeting, and very hard work they were. But always enjoyable.

Their lifestyle was pretty formidable, too. No luxuries of any kind, not many comforts, but they did not seem to notice. Grace eventually had a stroke and died in hospital but he lived on into extreme old age. We all tried to help, for instance with food, but he did not want it, though we all visited him regularly, he was much loved. Eventually I found him in bed, not responding and hypothermic and he slipped away without being pestered with treatment of any kind, as he would have wished. They were both much missed: there cannot be many like them left now.

The Handwriting Era
John Kay

It was hardly noticeable in the mid-1980s that we were definitely entering the digital age, Handwriting ruled and continued to do so until well into the 90s. All the years we grew up in and most of our working life our whole world was encompassed by the requirements of handwriting and at the most technical, by the typewriter.

We can all remember the dip pen when all school desks were provided with a stepped hole to accommodate an inkwell, teachers desks sported two of these, one especially for red ink, the daily register required it.

Writing exercises were a daily requirement during registration and before assembly. Every pupil had a copybook, the first line showed an idealised script that we had to copy on the second line. We had to learn to control the amount of ink we placed on the nib by careful dipping. If we weren’t meticulous blots and spatter were our reward. Where would you buy blotting paper nowadays? Every schoolteacher was equipped with a pair of long nose pliers to ease time expired or rusted nibs from their pen holders. Even the most careful charging of the ink would only last for a few words before the greedy nib required more.

How understandable it was that our greatest ambition for the future depended on the almost unreachable target of a Fountain pen.

Many schools required a certain level of expertise with the dip pen before they were allowed to use a Fountain pen. The end result was that those who needed a fountain pen the most often never got the necessary permission to use one.

Fountain pens were of course extremely expensive, many pupils got their first one only after having achieved a scholarship. We daydreamed about the Conway Stewart, the Waterman and lastly the unachievable Parker Duofold.

Come the 1960s the ball pen revolution began. The ridiculous inflated price of the first biros (over £1 each) kept them well beyond being affordable. Perhaps you can remember the publicity and the advertising which accompanied their introduction. “You can write upside down with them”, “They can write underwater”. I don’t think I ever knew anyone who actually did either of these two things but they were reckoned to be great selling points. The early ones, even the expensive ones, were rather messy.
Hello Everyone,
I thought I would update you all, following the day out in London last Friday 3 June.

As you will recall it was organised by Fresh Beginnings, the local group who are helping the refugees settle in. All the Syrian families came along with some volunteers from FB and representatives from the faith groups who are befriending the families. The day included shopping in Spitalfields Market, lunch in Brick Lane and then down to The Tower and Embankment. However it seemed to me the day was less about sightseeing and more about us all relaxing together and getting to know each other a little better. My abiding memory of the day will be the journey there and back on the coach.

Not like any journey I have experienced before. Soon after leaving Colchester the Syrian music began on the coaches sound system, at full volume. By Kelvedon the clapping and singing had started, by Witham they were up and dancing in the aisles - and they danced all the way to London! Coming back I thought everyone would be tired and snooze - but no, it all started again. This time all the Brits being pulled to their feet and joining in. Best day out I have had for a very long time.

We forget how buttoned up and restrained we are and how much of the rest of the world isn’t.

I’m afraid that so many people in this country, when they think of immigrants, focus on what they will take from us - our jobs, our houses and benefits and forget the gifts they bring to us. They have walked out of their country with only what they can carry, but it has not broken their spirits. They can still dance and be joyful and embrace another culture. They put us to shame.

Jayne

PS Hana is anxious to start planning for the next arrivals and would like a reply by end of this week if possible.
Clerk's Corner

Alison Parkes
Southern East Anglia Quaker Meeting Clerk

I am writing this on the eve of the EU referendum; by the time you read this, the result will be known. The referendum has stirred deeply held views and revealed apparently irreconcilable differences of opinion. The result will determine those who win, and those who lose, with the prospect of a stark reality which will delight and relieve some while devastating others. Even before the vote has been taken, the consequences of the referendum have become evident, with the tragic death of an MP and an increasingly divided society. There is also the growing realisation that we have not really been educated adequately (and neither has the next generation of citizens) to make informed decisions about the future of the country. Instead of cool consideration of the options before us, we have had to try to sift the wheat from the chaff of contested statistics and unsupported rhetoric.

How can our society begin to heal the rifts that have been revealed? How can we trust others to listen to our deepest worries and concerns if we are not willing or able to do that for them? Whatever the outcome of the referendum we are challenged to find a path that will enable trust, listening, and respect to emerge from what feels very raw and unstable. I’m not sure how to even begin doing that. Within our Meetings we may find that we hold opposing views. The Kindlers workshop at Regional Gathering on June 26 asks, “What does love require of us?” This referendum challenges us to answer that question. Perhaps, in small and modest ways, we can seek to support the space, respect and love which will enable listening, trust and healing to take place.

We often quote this passage from Quaker faith and practice, and it seems particularly apt today:

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

~ Isaac Penington, 1667

What Next?

Valerie Graves

It is an anxious time. It is hard not to expect all kind of privations and difficulties, as businesses get into difficulties and household-name shops close down and disappear, and everything gets more expensive and complicated. But probably our Quaker outlook will help.

1st Wednesday MfW at Clacton

Janet Thomas

Here is an important short item about the 1st Wednesday MfW at Clacton:

1st Wednesday Meeting for Worship at Clacton 12 noon prompt

The worship lasts for half an hour from 12 until half past. It is followed by light lunch and Friendly fellowship. As it is primarily a Quaker Meeting, not a drop-in, of necessity we need to start promptly.

Apologies for any confusion about the time. This is no doubt caused by the original time being from 1pm - 2pm.

Social / Creative Saturdays

9th July at the home of Tim & Carol Holding in Lexden.

CO3 4AN
10 - 17.00

Join with Friends in expressing yourself on a largish scale in clay. There will be a theme to get you going...

Play croquet; read poetry; make music; paint or draw; etc...

30th July at the home of Peter Whiteley in Sudbury.

CO10 1JT
10 - 17.00

Again join Friends and be creative...

Complete the clay project you started on the 9th; make a coptic stitched sketch or note book; play petanque; paint or draw; walk on the meadows; etc.

Bring and share lunch at both venues, and some tea and cake before we disperse.

We look forward to a couple of memorable days together...

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The next Area Meeting will be held on Sunday July 10, 2.15 pm at Earls Colne Quaker Meeting House, 4 Burrows Road, Earls Colne, CO6. For more details, please see the AM website Business page www.essexsuffolkquakers.org. All are welcome, though if you are an Attender (i.e. not in membership), please ask the Clerk for permission to attend.