NEWSLETTER

SOUTHERN EAST ANGLIA AREA QUAKER MEETING

February 2017

Diary Dates for February

Friday February 3rd Colchester Farmers’ Market
Saturday February 18th Hot Pot night
Saturday 25th February Regional Gathering, Colchester
Sunday 26th February Cavendish Consort concert at Colchester

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@essexsuffolkquakers.org

Web Address: www.essexsuffolkquakers.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
St Nicholas’ Church Hall,
Stour Road, Bathside CO12 3HS
Contact: Ros/Tony Eaton 01255 880500

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

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**Meeting for Sufferings (MiS)**

Friends House 3rd December 2016
Robert Parkes

At the opening we were joined by a group of Young Friends attending their Young Quakers Participation Day. Their presence, I felt, added to the vibrancy and diversity of our meeting.

MiS was established originally to consider the sufferings of Quakers. Over time, the practice of recording Friends’ names in the ‘Great book of Sufferings’ lapsed but in 1997 MiS agreed to maintain a register of Friends before the courts or imprisoned for matters of conscience. Earlier in the year we heard of five Friends who had participated in the *No Faith in Trident* day of action at Burghfield and were up before the Courts. This time we heard their trial was set for later in the month at Reading Magistrates, charged with aggravated trespass. They were held in the Light. [Update. They were acquitted. No case to answer. However, others from another group come to trial in a couple of weeks time]

BYM Trustees reported a mixture of good and not so good news. Membership continues to age and decline; major disruption around FH caused by HS2 is a real risk; BYM maintains its current level of activity but is drawing on its reserves, legacies and FH Hospitality; there has been a minimal response to date to the Treasurer’s call for higher contributions.

**Editorial**

Dear Friends,

What a difference from last month, when I wrote about how lucky we were in having pleasant weather! Now it is most dreadfully cold, and although I have a warm house I am not enjoying it. More than ever I am trying to be thankful that I have a large and loving family who take great care of me, and of course I repeat what I have so often said, that we must look out for those who are less fortunate, lonely or hard up or in difficulties, perhaps not easy to get on with or not easy to help. The political climate at present does not help.

Personally, I think it is great to see so many people of different origins, sometimes obvious by their dress, e.g. headscarves, or their appearance or colour. I remember the same thing during the last war. Indeed most of us, if we could look far enough back (there is an interesting TV programme about this) have come from somewhere else, some much further than others. Our own Meeting is playing its part in welcoming them. And we do our best to get to know one another with educational happenings and such events as Curry Evenings! Long, long ago I remember being in Edinburgh when numbers of young Polish men arrived, such exciting people in bright blue uniform who had stolen German planes and flown them over.

You will be interested to hear that Earls Colne Meeting is now a full Meeting, small though it is, and a proper part of the Local Meeting.

News, please, by the middle of the month, to Valerie Graves.
of drugs. The full minute can be read within the MiS papers. To paraphrase, this is a very complex issue. Friends are not in unity with the concern. We did agree we need to seek a humane and compassionate response to drug users. There was an appetite from Friends to learn more about the issue and support for Cornwall AM in taking this forward with other AMs that have expressed an interest, working with Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs and other organisations where appropriate.

Secondly, towards a vision of a criminal justice system. Again, the full minute is in the MiS papers. To summarise: we saw the document as a tool to help Friends think about our view of what the system should be and as a resource when raising specific concerns in a local context. We also saw the importance of working with others, in keeping with FiF, in the probation sector, legal aid and other services. The AM minutes will be passed to the Crime, Community and Justice Sub-committee of QPSW to aid its further deliberation.

Towards the close we were re-joined by the Young Friends. They’d been thinking about how to better engage with Quakerism. They told us, candidly, what they saw as barriers: time, travel distance, the high cost of many events, fear of standing out, not being considered good enough, and the overall lack of awareness of many events. Food for thought.

As usual, a full report of the meeting and papers can be found on the dedicated MiS pages of the Quaker.org website.

**Craft People**

John Hall

John Kay with his wife Jenny, has been running an open 2D group at Colchester meeting house for more than 30 years. During many of those years he was an art, craft, design & technology teacher and subsequently a demonstrator for the art materials firm Windsor & Newton. He continues to demonstrate to both professional and amateur art clubs and societies.

*Photo: John Hall*

**Jo and Angela**

in ‘Minute Particulars’

Ernest Hall

Jo, my only granddaughter, is a clinical psychologist (PhD) employed by the NHS in Yorkshire. She is certainly not thoughtlessly impetuous. I was surprised therefore when I learned that she had written to Angela Merkel, Germany’s Chancellor, telling her about the efforts that her granddad was making in the cause of Anglo-German friendship. It’s true that in recent months I have felt that I was pursuing William Blake’s advice about ‘doing good in minute particulars’, by making friends with folk in Zittau where I spent the last eighteen months of World War II as a PoW (Prisoner of War).

The German friendships developed quite accidentally. Years ago, an article of mine appeared in *The Friend*, recording some of my experiences as a PoW in World War II. It mentioned Zittau, a small town with a population of about 40,000, situated on the German side of the point at which the frontiers of Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic coincide. I doubted if any reader of the *Friend* had ever heard of it!

I was wrong! The family of Jasper Kay, a Quaker living in Cottenham near Cambridge, had originated in Zittau and he was currently corresponding with Ingrid Zeibig. She had spent her early years in Zittau, though she now lived in Bavaria. She could read, write and speak English and had translated my article into German for the Kulke family.

I had hoped that the family would find the article interesting. I hadn’t though, expected Ingrid’s mother (Frau Ingrid Kulke) and her brother Andreas, to cycle round Zittau, taking photos for me of buildings and other places that I might find of interest. Nor had I expected Ingrid Zeibig to become my correspondent too. We have now been emailing each other for some fifteen years! Heather and I began to feel that we were members of the Kulke family. When Andreas married Kornelia (Konni) we were told all about it and sent wedding photos. Sadly, Heather’s life came to an end two months before the birth of Andreas and Konni’s first child, Maja.
Maja now has a three years younger brother Tomas (Tom). Maja and Tom are my ‘honorary’ niece and nephew. I try to remember them at Christmas and on their birthdays.

I began to find German friends outside the members of the Kulke family when I mentioned, casually in an email to Ingrid, one of the more unusual jobs I had as a PoW in Zittau. Together with four or five other PoWs I had helped load some very heavy cases from Zittau town Museum onto a lorry and had then gone with the lorry to a ruined monastery near the summit of Mount Oybin, a spectacular mountain a few miles from the town. There we had unloaded the cases into the crypt of the monastery. It had been towards the end of February 1945. The thunder of artillery fire from the eastern front was getting louder every day and we had little doubt that World War II was nearing its end.

To me it had been ‘just another job’ but Ingrid immediately thought that one of those cases must have contained the Zittau ‘Great Lenten Veil’ and had been taken by us to Mount Oybin. This resulted in my corresponding with, and later meeting, the scholarly Dr Volker Dudeck who had been the Curator of Zittau Municipal Museum and had taken a direct personal interest in the Lenten Veil. My explanation of the Veil’s disappearance from the municipal museum and its re-appearance on the slopes of Mount Oybin also caught the interest of the local and regional press in which I was described, quite incorrectly, as a ‘rescuer of Zittau’s Great Lenten Veil’.

I made my latest German friend only a few years ago and as the result of an almost incredible piece of Anglo-German co-operation during World War II. Next door to the building in which we PoWs were housed, was the local office of the ‘Hitler Youth Movement’ all members of which were, so we imagined, fanatical young Nazis. We had a gramophone and a few records, mostly of jazz bands, that had presumably been given us by the International Red Cross. Jazz was forbidden in Nazi Germany as being decadent but the young men of the Hitler Youth Movement heard our jazz with envy. Eventually one or two of them approached our guards and one of our representatives and arranged an exchange two or three records of our jazz for an equal number of German folk music and approved German dance music. The knowledge of this clandestine exchange was kept secret. I knew only that some welcome German records had reached us. I learned the full story from Fritz Michel, then in his late eighties. He had been telephone operator at the Hitler Youth Office and had contacted and told it to me. He and his wife Ute now live in Germany’s Black Forest area and we began a friendly correspondence.

I have visited Zittau four times during the past ten years, always with at least one member of my family and once, for my 90th birthday celebration, with all eight of my immediate family. I have enjoyed a champagne reception from Zittau’s Mayor, and VIP presentations of The Zittau great Lenten Veil. I have welcomed the Mayor and other VIPs, with my other German friends, to a celebration lunch and I have been made a member of the ‘Fellowship of Zittau’s Great Lenten Veil’ (no special privileges but no annual subscription either!) I have invited my German friends to my annual birthday celebration in England. Volker and Julia Dudeck have attended one of these, and Konni with Maja and Tom two of them. They met and made friends with my English family and Friends.

And did Angela Merkel appreciate grand-daughter Jo’s letter? The framed signed photograph that smiles at me from the wall of the spare bedroom I call my office, suggests that she did, though it must be said that on that photograph she looks a good deal less careworn than on some of her recent TV appearances.

*Lenten Veils were used in Medieval times to screen church congregations from the choir and Sanctuary during the season of Lent. Originally they were plain linen sheets but later they were appropriately decorated. Zittau’s 500 year old Lenten Veil was and is unique in Germany in having 90 pictures of Biblical events painted on it, 45 from the Old Testament and 45 from the New.*
Quaker Sale 2016

Carol Holding

This is the report given to Local Meeting with added comments from people on the day which were collected by Freya Sandford.

Main Differences: The new layout and new food arrangements were a result of adhering to new Health and Safety rules as explained to us by Peter Whiteley and Phyll Reid who had attended courses recently.

Friday began frighteningly with few helpers and what seemed to be very little to sell but the upside of this was that less time and energy was spent setting up stalls in the end, and with the new layout there was a better feel of space and more camaraderie. This was also clear in the Parnell room where the lunches and Cakes were sold. Several people said that more cakes could have been sold especially the larger ones.

Several people said how good the lunches were and the atmosphere very sociable. People queued happily before the event entertained by Norman Myall and his band, but there was concern that they could not be heard indoors and it was too cold for them outside. Before lunch sitting at the tables chatting then, and afterwards out of the way of the stalls and passing traffic was good and feeling more relaxed. The foyer was less crowded giving the impression of fewer visitors, but people stayed longer to interact with us and others. The Haberdashery stall was disappointing but that may be because it was away from the other stalls. One person asked if our main purpose was to raise money in which case it was inefficient, and if it is outreach how is it measured. The money is probably down and the comments above may answer the latter question but it is difficult to quantify and the people involved all said it was not one or the other. How much the whole meeting was or should be involved is a perennial question which is difficult to answer.

The very beautiful posters and handbills designed by Moira Shipperd were placed all over. Too much was spent on Newspaper advertising, and too much was spent on food but we can learn from this. The clearing up on Sunday was much easier and could be attributed to the smaller event but we still took over £1,000 and had more time to talk.

New to Quakers?

John Kay

The whole of our personal experience before finding Quakers may depend on a view of ourselves and our place in the world in which we are the lead character. We construct our own story, our own scenario where everything is centred upon ourselves. Much of what we have learnt in life includes many attitudes and values which served us, with various degrees of success, in adapting to social groups. Many of the judgements made may have been critical, destructive and often hurtful to others. We often hear stories of individuals groups who avoid leaving a room for fear of what will be said about them.

The warm and friendly atmosphere usually experienced in meeting groups of Quakers lies in the intrinsic Quaker belief that there is a quality of spiritual goodness (or God) within every human being. This means that Quakers feel that they have no right to form initial judgements upon any other person. I have found that there is a general feeling among Quakers that, unlike in society, or “the world”, we try at all times to preserve and en-
encourage self-esteem in all the people we meet.

It may not be easily understood in society that Quakers accept people at face value, not judging the views and prejudices of others. Quakers could be seen as a soft touch, as gullible, can be lied to and taken advantage of with impunity.

In my experience I have found that qualities most lauded and acceptable in "the world" such as placing people in orders of merit, elevating the status of some people over others, class systems, nationalism, xenophobia and generally placing people into categories or pigeonholes are not shared by Friends.

The general atmosphere of acceptance and respect offered to newcomers should not blind them to the fact that Quakers are not "good company men" who "sing from the same hymn sheet". I have found great comfort in the fact that other Friends proved to be as independent thinkers and doers as I like to think of myself as. With how much success others are free to judge.

Unlike the Vicar of Bray who changes with the wind, The Quaker way is something that affects my own personal behaviour and is not necessarily something that I have a right to impose on or insist upon inflicting on others. Proselytising is not necessarily something that Quakers want to do.

Some New Year Thoughts

Carol Holding

As we are contemplating simplifying the duties we have perceived in the past to be important for the life of the Meeting because of the difficulties of finding Friends to take them on and the pressures some office holders are feeling, (and having personally, thankfully, recovered from some life threatening conditions, possibly due, in part to some of those pressures) a new perspective is needed.

Clerking a Quaker business meeting if you could write good minutes (legibly) always was quite a responsibility but one shared by the whole meeting.

Now, however, it seems to have been more burdened than lightened by Information Technology.

The temporary nature of service in our democratic Society has been a blessing and two small aspects of this in our previous practice seem to have been dropped for no good reason that I can see.

In Local meeting we have a standing committee to nominate Friends to Nominations Committee. I don’t know when the earlier practice of appointing three Friends from Local Meeting to do this job as it occurred, bring the name to the next LM and then stand down, was laid down. That practice seemed to me to be fairer, fresher, more democratic and basically one less committee, In Area Meeting we have experienced Tabular Statement checkers who have done/are doing a grand job, and maybe a previous muddle made this necessary. However when all is sorted can we revert to previous practice of having a rolling programme where the experienced Friend is joined by a novice for a year before standing down thus ensuring that more Friends get to understand the mysterious working of Friends or perhaps one less job for the Assistant Clerk. These are tiny probably not very effective ideas but perhaps you have other suggestions to help the committee looking into The Way

Forward, and if so please pass them on via Anne Watkinson (local meeting Clerk)

Falcon Webcam

Joan Rew

I have been following the lives of some peregrine falcons nesting on the spire of Norwich Cathedral webcam this year. Perhaps Friends would be interested to have the address of the site and hear about them from me, with pictures.


If anyone is interested please contact Joan Rew directly.
Editor
**Colchester News**

Anne Watkinson

January 2017 has been a busy time.

We have had another two sessions of our study group reading chapters from Quaker Faith and Practice. How many of us, I wonder have ever read it all through before? It has been an inspiration to us to read the thoughts of Quakers though the centuries. We have found them speaking to us even in this troubled time.

We have made a real effort over the last few months to support things going on outside our meeting apart from the usual collections for good causes. We have agreed again to support Fresh Beginnings, a Colchester based organisation which has coordinated local churches to support now 11 Syrian refugee families which the council has also helped to settle in the town. We supported the Russ Foundation last year which helps children with special needs of various kinds in India. The students of the VIth form College in Colchester go out to India each Christmas and two of their students came after meeting for Worship one Sunday this month to tell us what they did and saw there. We are now investigating the needs of a hospital in Malawi known to one of our members.

Not forgetting the financial needs of our members and attenders, the Governance group of the Jack Fields legacy met this month. Jack and his wife Phyllis were Wardens of our Meeting House after retiring to the UK from America. When Jack died in 2007 he left a considerable sum of money to us in memory of Phyllis, to be used for education purposes for Colchester Friends. Over the years, the definition of educational purposes has been refined and expanded, and while only members of Colchester meeting can be helped from the legacy funds, links have been made with Area Meeting funds and both members and attenders of all our area’s local meetings can apply for bursary support.

*Please note this well!* If you wish experience any sort of educational or social activity, something to revive you or challenge you, or a younger member of your family. (Recurrent fees are not considered).

This is a particularly timely reminder as the details for booking Yearly Meeting Gathering have appeared this month. No one should be prevented from going to Warwick because they cannot afford it. Check out the guidance on the area meeting website, the application forms are there too. You will need to get the form signed by elders, overseers or clerks before submitting it to our AM treasurer.

Our task and finish group, looking into ‘Cracks and rumblings’ about what goes on at Colchester meeting, or doesn’t, have met again this month and will be announcing their ideas soon. Many, if not most, organisations, whether religious or not, find it difficult to find people to do the background tasks which keep the organisation going. Like others, we are an aging and busy group of people. We hope to involve as many people as possible in Colchester Meeting, to think about our purposes and discern how we can best work together in simplicity and cooperation.

We have a ‘Meeting for Eating’ this month with a curry night on a Saturday evening. This social event brings us together, enabling us to find time to talk and share in a way we don’t often have time for on a Sunday. Next one is February 18th, a hotpot night.

In addition to hosting Area meeting on the third Sunday of this month, January has a fifth Sunday where we will be having All Age Worship. This innovation is not to everybody’s taste, but maybe it more resembles Quaker practice in other parts of the world.

**Hold on to Hope**

from Valerie Graves

The news has been very depressing lately, especially from across the Atlantic, and every day seems to bring more horrors. But we had some cheering ministry last Sunday, which I will tell you about. It was a large meeting and we had all felt rather gloomy, wondering whatever was going to happen next.

The Ministry was about the old Quaker phrase “I hope so”, commonly used to convey agreement with something affirmative instead of a straight "yes", and the speaker went on to talk about "hope". When Pandora’s box was opened, she reminded us, Hope was left at the bottom, and we should seize it and make the best of it. It was followed by a lot of interesting and helpful ministry. We are going to need hope, indeed, as dreadful news follows more dreadful news, and we are all going to hang on to our seats.
**Earls Colne News**

Jenny Kay

Now that Earls Colne has been reinstated as a Local Meeting with a clerk and is no longer only a Meeting for Worship, we thought it was time to send something to the Newsletter.

Very little changes for us. Meetings for Church Affairs will be held regularly once a year and when we need one. We will continue with the same arrangements for the care of our finances and premises as agreed by the AM in 2008 when Earls Colne was laid down.

Well, it didn’t go to sleep. Initially meetings for worship were advertised for third Sundays only but John Derring continued to open up every Sunday for anyone who came and Friends continued to be present. Friends felt able to extend the public meetings for Worship to first, third and fifth Sundays. After welcoming Jayne Meleschko into membership, we have 7 members and 2 regular attenders on our list. We continue to welcome visitors on third Sundays, swelling the numbers gathered. The gift of cakes by Una Lawrence encourages us to stay after meeting and talk to each other.

We enjoy a social gathering once a month, quite often for lunch at a local inn. Last summer we spent a relaxing afternoon having tea in Jayne’s garden in Earls Colne. Now as an established local meeting we look forward to finding ways of increasing our contribution to the community life of Earls Colne.

**AM List of Members and Attenders 2017**

By now most of us who use this booklet have one full of amendments, additions and sadly deletions. With a new Local Meeting in Harwich and changes to Earls Colne Area Meeting agreed that it is time to print a new list.

The A5 folded booklet is a confidential document, only to be used for the purposes of the Religious Society of Friends; many of us find it invaluable. The publication includes contact details for the Area Meeting, Local Meetings and individuals. Names, addresses, emails and telephone numbers can be listed for each person. A single means of contact is sufficient for an entry.

Partners are listed separately unless they are neither members or attenders when the name can be printed in bracketed italics after yours. Young people are not included under the age of sixteen are not included.

If you are a member or a regular attender whose details were included in the 2015 list you will need to confirm the details or notify any changes. For Colchester entries, these will passed by overseers to Jenny Kay, in Clacton; Hazel Jones, in Sudbury; Robin Hart and in Earls Colne; Jenny Kay.

Members and attenders who wish to be included for the first time need to record their details on a signed form. To be included as an ‘attender’ you would need to attend a Meeting for Worship on a reasonably regular basis. An ‘a’ in the margin by your name will denote this. Copies of the form are available at Sudbury and Clacton and can be found in the Overseers folder on the Library shelves in Colchester Meeting House.

The final date for inclusion is 3 March. It is hoped that the booklet will be available in before the year gets too old,

Jenny Kay, Overseer
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jjk@millrind.co.uk 01206 240929

**Wildlife Spot**

from Valerie Graves

Well, of course it is all frozen hard and I have to keep thawing out the bird bath and putting food out, but the birds and squirrels don’t seem to mind all that much. It is cheering to see lots of bulbs coming up: lots of snowdrops in full bloom, and my amazing winter cherry tree (prunus subhirtella autumnalis) absolutely covered in pink blossom. A big tree and a real eye-full. We often get unusual birds visiting. (But I am not enjoying it!)