Diary Dates for April

Friday April 7th Colchester Farmers’ Market at the Arts Centre
Tuesday April 25th World Malaria Day http://www.rollbackmalaria.org/calendar-of-events/world-malaria-day
Wednesday April 26th Chernobyl day http://www.chernobyl-day.org/?lang=en
Thursday May 4th County Council Elections
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

SUDSBURY
Sunday 10.30 am
Friars Street, Sudbury
Thursday 12.30 pm
(Bring Picnic,
Tea/Coffee provided)

Editorial,
Greetings Friends, and we are really into Spring now, with little dashes from time to time into frost and fog, though in our nice moderate climate we don’t do as badly as some other places. We had a big but rather emotional meeting with everyone worrying about things like migrants, refugees, Trump and all the rest of it, and I spoke of a difficult time I had had with a student long ago, when she could not accept what I was trying to tell her about atomic theory (see later). How fortunate we are to live in a quiet and prosperous place. And my family is having a happy time welcoming a new baby (my eleventh greatgrandchild!)

We have a lot of activities, ranging from Meeting for Curry to more learning-based things, and there is no lack of different gatherings to take hold of. You will find reports in the pages of this newsletter.

News, please, by the middle of the month, to Valerie Graves, and enjoy your Easter holiday!

Protect and Survive
Joan Rew
I wondered if there are still people around who remembered these times, when the government issued instructions on how the public could protect themselves from an atomic attack. I think it all started during the Cuban Crisis and there was a thriving business for the sale of Atomic shelters.

In the Times (March 16) was an article about the pamphlet Protect and Survive issued by the government in 1980. This provoked a reply from CND and another booklet was produced by E. P. Thomson – Protest and Survive. When this came out we decided at the Meeting House to show the public what we were advised to do. With the help of the Wardens, Jack and Phyllis Fields, we put together a “body” of a man by stuffing a suit and providing him with shoes and gloves. With a black sack over his head and labelled “Everyman”. A shelter was made according to the government’s booklet, with two old doors propped against the kitchen wall in the lobby filled with bedding and a bucket, and the “body” nearby. He looked very real. The public came and looked and were appalled, some very cross – with the Quakers.

There were five strands of recommendation for action 1) Elder-ship 2) Oversight 3)Living Faithfully, 4) Right Ordering 5) Witness working for change where we include support for things like Fair Trade and for Meetings where isolation in this is felt by some members. Friends pointed out the difficulty of entrenched lifestyles and the time needed for this. Abolishing slavery took a long time even among Friends, but we are enslaving the planet and time is running out. Much effort and resources are needed at local, AM and National levels.

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

Meeting for Sufferings
February 3, 2016 at Friends House
Carol Holding
The feeling for our theme was set, as QFP 25.07, which was written by Norfolk Cambs and Hunts Quarterly Meeting in 1957 was read in Meeting for Worship. In re-reading I also turned to 25.02 which begins “our planet is seriously ill and we can feel the pain…” which was written by London Yearly Meeting in in 1988.

The business began therefore with a report from the sustainability group by LIs Burch which praised the institutions like Friends House and Woodbrooke in particular for their efforts at sustainability and felt that the trend with individuals was encouraging but patchy. It is difficult to measure but the idea was not to say “don’t fly” but invest in insulation, eat less meat and dairy, support wildlife trusts from trees to bogs. We should listen and not typecast and also learn to communicate with those who don’t agree - Leave out words, guilt, blame, etc. – more love. Quaker Life is exploring spiritual aspects of sustainability.

Southern East Anglia Area Quaker Meeting
Connected with this is our pursuance of a concern from Pendle Hill in 2014 regarding Fracking and our stand, not so much against as for preservation of the earth using renewables. Our environmentalist voice relies on climate justice and equality and therefore fossil fuels should remain in the ground. Area Meetings should make sure Friends know about an event at Pendle Hill on 6th May and that it is not a “nimby” idea. We are actually importing shale gas from America. Not many people know this.

QPSW reported that our support is also needed as there are Cadet forces in state schools now and some teachers are suffering from a lack of accountability and transparency in government. And in the notices we were reminded by YFGM of the need for AMs to include is “more Young Friends to ensure the future of Quakerism” and that the deadline for nominations to Junior Yearly Meeting Gathering is 15th March.

Members of Sufferings listened to the annual report of its actions and its functions, e.g. what is its relationship with trustees and agenda committee. Are we welcoming, and what is its relationship with our Area Meetings. We broke into Home groups to discuss (1) Are we doing the things we are asked to do? and (2) What would help us to do it better? One of our group’s conclusions was to be more visible and available to Friends between meetings and to communicate not just vividly in Area Meetings but in casual conversation.

The triennial report of Quaker Housing Trust by Jenny Brierley was inspiring and began with a quote from Grayson Perry who said “the shock of events in the world is the spur to creativity” and asked if this happened for us. QHS, founded 50 years ago, would be shocked to see how bad things are now, how polarised is the situation in the shockingly dysfunctional housing market. And we are asked to live adventurously and take risks. QHS has found many practical and creative ideas but of course they need money. Tackling the symptoms of the crisis is vital but tackling the roots of the problem is also vital, and local meetings should also be proactive. QHT have three sources of funding. (1) Donations (2) legacies and (3) repayments of the interest free loans it makes. There will be a day conference on Housing if Friends are interested. It is free but participants need to register on the website.

Deborah Rowlands, Clerk of BYM, reminded us of the YM Gathering at Warwick University at the end of July where there will be more space this year, more sport and different activities and no programmed events in the lunch breaks. Claire Scott-Booth said the focus would be on “anchoring” and workshops and plenary sessions would focus on “How we can integrate and what we can do”, finishing with all Age Worship. Spiritual documents will be out at Easter.

### Clerk’s Corner

April 2017

Alison Parkes

Recently Robert and I were in York and on the Sunday we attended Meeting for Worship at Friargate Meeting House. The experience of a Meeting for Worship in a different Meeting House is one of warm familiarity and yet refreshing difference. For us it was an opportunity to observe practical differences, including an impressive hearing loop, as well as differences of practice, such as a verbal report summarising the business of Area Meeting, which had been held the week before. I wonder whether Friends in our Area would welcome this? There were about 100 Friends present at the Meeting for Worship, so it was a large gathering in comparison with even our largest meeting at Colchester. Yet the sense of stillness was there, the sense of shared intention in support of our testimonies, and a sense of welcome to all who chose to be there that morning.

There is a value in visiting other Meetings, which some Friends do regularly. While you might gain personally from your visit, so might your presence contribute to the gathering you attend. Following the Meeting for Worship at Friargate, we stayed for a simple lunch of soup and a roll, which was followed by a talk and film presentation by Celia McKee, a member of York Meeting, on the subject “Re-Imagining Security”. Robert and I felt that her work might well be of interest to Friends of our AM, and perhaps the interest we expressed might add to the support she feels from York Friends. If you’d like to explore this topic further yourself, a video of her talk has been uploaded to the website of York Quakers. It starts with the striking image of a clenched fist.

Apart from visiting meetings a distance away from our AM, simply visiting those within our AM adds to our shared fellowship, support and vision. And of course this extends to Yearly Meeting. Have you thought about attending this summer’s
Yearly Meeting Gathering (YMG) at Warwick University? It would give you the chance to reconnect with Quakers on a national scale, to experience the diversity of Quakers in Britain and beyond, and has the potential to deepen your sense of belonging as a Quaker. Information about YMG is available at your Meeting House, through your LM clerk, or from the Quakers in Britain website.

“Living faithfully today” is the title of Chapter 20 in *Quaker Faith and Practice*. As we seek our own path to living faithfully today, Chapter 20 reminds us of our connection with the past as well as the future; as with all of Qfp, its passages can be challenging, inspiring, and deserving of reflection. 20.01 is one of my favourites:

I ask for daily bread, but not for wealth, lest I forget the poor.

Wildspot
Valerie Graves

There has been what I can only call an explosion of small wild flowers, many of which I have never seen before, such as white periwinkles, and little purple crocuses all over the lawn. I do love the enchanting little miniature daffodils. I have no objection to gigantic flowers, but they don’t have the same appeal. Curiously enough my autumn cherry is still blooming in a desultory way. I remember the huge Japanese cherries I had in my previous garden and a small girl standing on the drive saying “Pink snow!”

Becoming the Change we want to see

Eliza Jones

Quaker Life Representative Council 14 - 16 October 2016 at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, Birmingham

Despite the best of intentions I set off to Woodbrooke feeling under prepared as my area meeting news report was put together very much at the last minute. I was very pleasantly surprised to find that my piece about our area meeting’s work with refugees was seized up on as a good example of social sustainability work in our first home group session.

I found Alex Wildwood’s introduction to the weekend in the plenary on Saturday truly inspiring. Entitled “A vision to Sustainability” he made it clear from the outset that sustainability was a lot more than energy saving measures to reduce our carbon footprint, suggesting that as Quakers a spiritual basis for sustainability, “treating the earth as if we mean to stay” (a definition coined by diplomat/environmentalist Crispin Tickell) was critical. “Now is the time to hear within us the sound of the earth crying” (Thich Nhat Hanh)

He referred to a conscious evolution, evolving by choice not chance, making the shift from thinking about the planet to thinking as the planet, a kind of collective spiritual awakening. A fundamental sense of connection to all that is. All existence is one and interdependent and how we behave as a result of that awareness. We are called to become co-creators with that power or as Rumi has put it “You are the universe in ecstatic motion”. He ended his talk giving us some questions to think about:

What gifts/skills and talents can I personally bring to a transition to a just and sustainable for all beings

Later in the weekend he facilitated a workshop on Self Actualisation, Life Purpose and the Evolutional Shift which enabled us to come up with our life purpose statements!

Bryony Rowntree spoke of the challenges of living the testimony of integrity while Rachel Harrison spoke personally about deep listening, stretching the muscle of presence, listening to the earth and developing a deeper connection to what is happening around us.

Ideas that resonated with me over the weekend include: our Quaker contribution to sustainability; the collective is important; tapping into the collective consciousness; that of God within; making the link with our life purpose; ongoing challenges of living
with integrity and our use of cars, planes and fossil fuel. Our local meeting can help us make the link between connection and activism.

At a gathering of Friends to explore how our faith relates to ecology and sustainability that took place in Woodbrooke earlier in the year, three main themes were distilled, communion and community, telling our stories and action/change agency. People find different ways into eco-spirituality, some start with connection, some with vision or narrative, some with action. As the diagram illustrates these are inseparable and mutually entwined paths with distinctive Quaker approaches to each. So we can tell our stories, we can consider how sustainability is central to the spiritual life of our meeting and we can set up and nurture small groups to take action.

More about Peregrines

Joan Rew

I have been following the lives of the Peregrines nesting on the spire of Norwich Cathedral since last summer. A very unusual photo was in the Times newspaper, showing two Peregrines passing food in mid-air. A letter followed explaining these were the birds on the spire, giving the website, which I visited. It was an exciting experience, seeing the birds at close hand and hearing their conversation. The camera looks out from the spire over part of Norwich with a microphone added.

There are many other web sites with nest for the Peregrines on various high buildings round the country like cathedrals. There is one on a new high rise block of flats on Ipswich Quay and a tea room in Maldon that has a webcam where you can sit with a cup of tea and watch the birds. But I prefer the one on Norwich Cathedral because of the wonderful view over that part of Norwich.

The female is the Peregrine, the male is really a Tiercel, which is a translation from vulgar Latin for “third” as the male is a third smaller than the female.

I became addicted to watching the drama that followed. Four eggs were laid and cared for by both parents so tenderly. Their talons were withdrawn when touching the eggs and kept warm. I saw one hatch and the others appeared later. Both parents brought in food, mostly wood pigeons, tearing up the meat and delicately offering to the young chicks. Then there was an intruder. Another Peregrine with a leg tag for Somerset, invaded the nest, attacking the chicks.

If you want to see the rest of the massacre, go to the website on Urban Peregrine Project. Follow down to 2017 Norwich Live Webcam Feed and click to get the nesting site. The birds will be there sometimes. Scroll down further on the home pages and search for a video of the action.

I have also attached another peregrine picture. this was in the newspaper in May 2016 that started me off watching the webcam. It is an amazing achievement to catch the birds in mid air on camera like this.

The Spaces In Between

from Valerie Graves

I am, as so often, going back a very long time, to the 1940’s, when I was teaching pre-clinical subjects to medical students, and trying to give them some idea of atomic structure. I said that when you are, for instance, going upstairs, you are not actually climbing on a solid structure but on an illusion created by the movements of atomic particles.

(A very good book on this topic is The Anatomy of Judgment by Abercrombie Johnson) A girl who I had always thought of as calm and sensible suddenly burst into tears and cried out that she could not, would not, accept it, that she must have something solid to get hold of. The book I mention has among other things a lot about optical illusions, though of course what I am talking about is not really that.

I learned a lot that day! But the more I think about it, the more I realise what a number of things do depend on the spaces between one thing and the next: the obvious one is music, but I was reading something about housing, where again the space between buildings is so important. You will think about others for yourself.

Southern East Anglia Area Quaker Meeting

5
**News from Earls Colne**

Jenny Kay

The landmark ash tree in Earls Colne grounds is experiencing problems. In the autumn of 2015 a large limb came down in the wind, weakened by a fungal infection. Fortunately it fell into the grounds, no-one was hurt and no damage done. The tree has been trimmed on many occasions in the past to avoid the overhead electricity wires. Inspection by a tree surgeon suggest that the fungus was prevalent in other limbs. At the beginning of 2016 Earls Colne Friends were accustoming themselves to the idea that the tree might need to be taken down and replaced with another.

The tree officer from Braintree Council confirmed this view when he visited, making the comment, “don’t stand under the tree.” We sought a quote from a tree surgeon who stated that nothing could be done until UK Power had taken down the branches surrounding the wires. Over the past year I have kept in contact with UK Power hoping to hear that the scheduled work on the tree had been carried out. We are still waiting but a new engineer will be looking at the tree this week. The area manager and I discussed the condition of the tree, taking comfort from the fact that no limbs or branches came down during heavy winds this winter and expressing the hope that the tree is in better condition than we thought it was. The buds are filling out and soon it will be in leaf again. Hopefully the tree survive for another year, God willing.

**Fighting for Peace**

Robbie Spence

For your info, Friends. See below for a link to this exhibition

Take a journey from the First World War to the present day, exploring how peace movements have influenced perceptions of war and conflict in this major exhibition.

From conscientious objectors to peace camps and modern day marches, Fighting for Peace tells the stories of passionate people over the past one hundred years and the struggles they have endured for the anti-war cause.

Over three hundred objects including paintings, literature, posters, placards, banners, badges and music reveal the breadth of creativity of anti-war protest movements, reflecting the cultural mood of each era.

http://www.iwm.org.uk/exhibitions/iwm-london/fighting-for-peace

**Mulanje Hospital**

Rod Usher

Dear Friends,

Colchester Meeting has donated money to Mulanje Hospital in south east Malawi. For the past year a young Dr from Colchester, Isobel King, has been working in this well established hospital. Last year her parents, known to several Colchester Friends, visited their daughter and returned determined to try and help the hospital. During Local Meeting for Business earlier in the year, Dave King explained the work his daughter was engaged in. Since then a small group of Colchester Quakers has organised a strategy to support the hospital. This year £3,000 will be sent, with £2,000 added in the following two years (a total of £7,000). The Hospital Director, herself a Scottish Quaker, has been asked to use the funds, if possible, towards strategies to alleviate malnutrition; this is a long term project of the hospital.

Dr Isobel King will speak to Colchester Meeting when she returns to England. Recently she sent a ‘newsy letter’ which highlighted aspects of her work in recent weeks. This is a part of what she wrote:

“My raison d’etre is a hospital full of sick patients and eager colleagues, people to serve and teach. It is a working life full of contradictions. This week, I lost four babies. One of them we worked especially hard to save, a little premature baby whose gut just wasn’t ready for life outside the womb. I have never been prouder of our nurses, who checked him every 2 hours and injected tiny volumes of sugar into his veins and sucked excess fluid from his tummy so he wouldn’t aspirate. They did that for a whole week. I struggle to imagine a place where a baby would get such tender attention, where a staff would be so committed. The day the baby died, each of the nurses wrote me a message, about how we had lost the battle, or fought in vain. I reassured them that this was a job well done, that we had lost a fight but had fought well, and nothing makes me prouder...
Amidst the Nursery drama, we sent two newborns to the surgeons in town, one with a stuck hernia and another with a gangrenous foot. But in that ambulance also went a good friend of mine, a wee 11 year old who had a stroke because of HIV back in April. We’ll call him Reuben. At the time, he had no movement at all in one side, like a little rag doll. His mother used to carry him in a never-ending piggy back and all I could do was refer him to physio. The week before Christmas, Reuben ran into the office and hugged me. His mum asked me for school supplies. I didn’t give her them, but I cried, because I never thought he’d walk again, let alone run or be able to return to school. He’s also on cancer treatment for an HIV-related disease called KS, and we have had a nightmare trying to get him the right treatment. In that ambulance this week, one of our nurses delivered him to the Cancer ward at Queens, where he got his treatment and hope was restored. I know as you read this, you might be overwhelmed – no child should have HIV, cancer or a stroke, and this champion has all three – but dwell not on the tragedy. Hold fast to the joy of a running child and a child given medicine because of a staff willing to deliver him personally to where he needs to be...

When they arrived, her Mum said they couldn’t stay as they had no money. That same reason was surely why this child was now sick. I said we would pay the bill from Bed Sponsorship. Every day, she told me she couldn’t pay, every day I told her we would. Lots of her treatment – HIV and TB meds plus nutritional milk – was free. The rest came to a grand total of £6.50. I discharged her yesterday, home with a mother spared the guilt of knowing that her delay could have cost her baby her life. Pray for her, would you? Pray for their health, their family, their economics. Pray for this child’s future, that she would have one, a future full of good things. Pray too for our malnourished boys – we’ll call them Ben and Jerry, though God knows their names. They are tweens, already living with HIV for 10 years. Pray their bodies would be made strong, their mischievous spirits would embrace a life of daily medication and they would be back at school before Easter.”

**Area Meeting**

Clacton, 12.03.2017
Jenny Kay

The meeting opened with 22 friends present. Charles Bather, at the table with Alison Parkes, was appointed as Assistant Clerk for two years. We recorded the death of Mary Farquhar, a Friend of Clacton Meeting, who died on 22 December 2016. Mary was in her 90s.

Among the reports we heard about the **Conference on Forced Migration**, (see John Lewis report on p.8), **Meetings for Sufferings** (see Carol Holding, p.2) and **Quaker Life Representative Council** (Eliza Jones, p.4)

Peggy Lewis, reporting on **Refugee working group**, told us how they were supporting the Syrian families. We need to increase this support and Friends are asked to consider ways to help, particularly with English. Any Friends willing to join the befriending group are asked to speak with Peggy or Alison. John Lewis’s conclusions about the importance of being better informed in order to appropriately support the families we are befriending were noted.

Colchester Meeting has asked AM to consider adding to the support it is giving to the **Mulanje Hospital in Malawi**, (See item by Rod Usher p.6) Colchester LM has agreed to support the hospital for the next three years in a sustainable project with £3,000 for the first year and £2,000 in the following two years; a total of £7,000.

The minute ended “We endorse the suggestion that AM authorise the funding of the project as agreed by Colchester LM. We
ask Trustees to consider how AM might effectively give further support to the hospital and to bring their recommendations to the AM.”

Clerk of Trustees, Peter Whiteley, reported that we have made a second donation of £30,000 to Glebe House. The process of handing over the book keeping work to Sue Dowden is proceeding satisfactorily.

Our financial support for Britain Yearly Meeting will be expected to average £250 per capita for the next year. The average contribution from individual Friends does not amount to this and Trustees would welcome AM guidance on how much they should draw from our resources to make up the shortfall. Trustees were asked to supply more detail about the amount AM will request of Friends to support the work of the Area Meeting.

Responsibilities of Local Meetings, Earls Colne, Colchester and Sudbury Meetings confirmed their endeavours to carry out the duties laid upon them in QF&P.

### Forced Migration

Woodbrooke February 2017
John Lewis

If you call yourself English your own personal history is likely to have been affected by the unending story of migration which peaks irregularly throughout history.

In front of me is a letter in stilted English on cheap flimsy paper, written on a manual typewriter, “... I am sorry I have not written earlier but I heard now that I will not be allowed a visa to travel to London ... I cannot go back home and the people here hate us ... I have been here for 3 years and do not know any future ...

The letter is from a Displaced Persons camp in Bari and dated March 1948. I believe the writer was from an anti-communist guerrilla force hunted out of Yugoslavia by Tito after the collapse of Germany. It was written to my father, who had been the military commander of the DP camp. And long before that my mother’s foreign ancestors came to England and dug fenland drains.

This was a big weekend in Woodbrooke, with 90 participants and covering the huge field of migration problems, so I am selecting only a handful: for example our small group re-stated that the sufferings of refugees are universal, probably from the beginning of human history, and are properly viewed as a permanent Quaker concern.

The current issues that rightly concern us all – how to welcome the distressed, how to end the detention of those who are not criminals, especially children, how to ameliorate the brutality of some English legal conventions and how to pull back from the ugliest political attitudes. All these are current concerns in detail, but there is a bigger picture, that there are millions of displaced people in distressing conditions in many countries, in camps, hedges and bomb sites and this state will be with us throughout our lifetimes and beyond.

Out of the mass of tips from Friends and from formal presentations relating especially to the to the Syrian refugee families we are befriending, I resolved:

- To inform myself more fully about the legal status of our befriended families, obtain a copy of Gina Clayton’s Immigration & Asylum Law (up-to-date editions are expensive).
- To understand exactly the rules concerning permitted paid work for refugees generally and for Syrian families specifically.
- To understand what the families’ income and benefits are and for how long. (Some Meetings give regular small allowances to refugees.)

- To consider if it would be helpful to arrange a rota of house visitors?
- And a weekly drop-in at a convenient place?
- Are there arabic-speaking students at Essex University who would welcome a small income in exchange for helping with interpreting or teaching English?

(For information: as part our small credit proposals, we are already trying to work out which local refugees have the self-confidence and skills to work independently and may show up those who are most likely to be open to employment.)

And accidentally I seem to be part of an activist legal group determined to challenge the sections of the asylum acts which suspend habeas corpus, that is, permit the government to detain certain people without being called before a court to justify the detention.

The problems of perhaps the greatest European immigration ever could not fit on one small sheet of paper nor could the input of 90 Friends and a weekend of formal presentations be summarized here. We have peered into a vast turmoil of issues that our grandchildren will be struggling with.