



*March Area Meeting*

*Photo John Kay*

# **NEWSLETTER**

***SOUTHERN EAST ANGLIA AREA QUAKER MEETING***

***April 2018***

## ***Diary Dates for April***

Friday April 6th Colchester Farmers' Market

Sunday April 22<sup>nd</sup> Olwen Titchmarsh Memorial 2.30pm Sudbury FMH

Wednesday April 25th World Malaria Day: <http://www.who.int/malaria/en/>

Thursday April 26th Chernobyl Memorial Day

Thursday May 3rd Local Council Elections

Saturday 24 March, Patterns & Examples Day at Ashford, Kent - open to all Friends who hold a role in their meeting Cost £20

Friday 4 May - Mon 7 May - Yearly Meeting register at [www.quaker.org.uk/ym](http://www.quaker.org.uk/ym)

***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;***

Web Address: [www.essexsuffolkquakers.org](http://www.essexsuffolkquakers.org)

***email address: [AMClerk@essexsuffolkquakers.org](mailto:AMClerk@essexsuffolkquakers.org)***

## **Meetings for Worship**

### **CLACTON**

Sunday at 10.30 am  
1st Wednesday each month  
12 noon 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

### **EARLS COLNE**

1st, 3rd & 5th Sundays 10.30 am

### **SUDBURY**

Sunday 10.30 am  
Friars Street, Sudbury  
Thursday 12.30 pm

#### **FIRST CONTACT**

FOR FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

CLACTON.....Carol Holding

COLCHESTER.....Carol Holding

SUDBURY.....Peter Whiteley

## **Meeting for Sufferings**

(MfS), Friends House London  
3rd February 2018

Robert Parkes

This is somewhat shorter report than usual focusing on three key items attendees were asked to report to their Area Meetings (AMs)

### **Yearly Meeting 2018.**

This is to be held over the weekend of 4-7 May at Friends House,

London. Registration is now open and can be done via the Quaker.org website. This year

Yearly Meeting (YM) will be considering whether it is time

## **Editorial**

Coming into spring now and sometimes it does indeed look like spring, but with a nasty sharp little wind at the back of it. A busy time at the Meeting, with Yearly Meeting quite soon, and we are very busy with many activities from Eating to Thinking, underlined by anxieties about (for instance) Tim Holding, who seems to have slipped from his apparent

recovery. Nice to have Kate Grey Mason back with us.

News, please, by the middle of the month, to Valerie. John Kay has been tidying up the archives, old newsletters and publications such as booklets I have written e.g. about old Meeting Houses, the Doubleday family and others.



to revise Quaker faith & practice,

the book of discipline for Britain Yearly Meeting. Attending YM is a great way of seeing not only the bigger picture of Quakers in Britain but also of Quakers around the world. Here in SEAQM we are fortunate that Friends House is within relatively easy reach. People should not be put off going to YM because they feel they can't afford it. Help with costs is available.

Whether Friends are going in person, or upholding BYM at home or in their local Quaker communities, they are asked to help the discernment of YM by doing the preparation set out in Preparation for Yearly Meeting, which is also on the website. This year YM will be reported on social media in all sorts of

ways so those not physically attending will also be able to follow it.

### **Sustainability issues.**

MfS received an interim report from Lis Burch, Clerk of the BYM Sustainability Group, on progress across the Society in relation to the YM's Canterbury Commitment to become a low carbon sustainable community. She prefaced her talk with discomfiting words from GK Chesterton, "I tell you naught for your comfort, Yea naught for your desire, Save that the sky grows darker yet, And the sea rises higher." This heralded the broad gist of the report: in the face of turbulent times, Quakers in Britain still have a long way to go. A couple of challenging questions were put to us as individuals, as local

meetings and as area meetings: What is the meaning of a Yearly Meeting concern, if we as a Yearly Meeting don't do it? Is this the best that we can be? MfS will be returning to this topic at its next meeting in April. Looking further ahead, the next biennial national gathering on sustainability will be held at Swanwick on 19-21 October 2018. AMs are encouraged to appoint Friends to attend.

### Quaker Life.

MfS spent some time discerning the draft strategy for Quaker Life 2018 - 2022, which was mentioned in the last report. It heard that meeting for worship

remains the bedrock of living as a Quaker. Yet, as one Friend aptly put it, it is more than simply turning up for meeting. Friends need to be able to prepare for it. But to enable them to do that do we need to nurture our spiritual foundations? A continuing priority is knowing and understanding our Quaker discipline. The heartbeat of our Quaker life is meeting for worship, but if it is not beating strongly where will we find support as we go out in the world? The meeting heard of a couple of sources of support. The Being Friends Together website which now has free access. See link below. And the email message service called

Quake! This is the new monthly email update on the work of BYM and Quakers in Britain. It brings together different Quaker news and information, in one handy digest. See link below. As usual, a full report of the meeting and papers can be found on the dedicated MfS pages of the Quaker.org website. MfS also gets reported in The Friend, February 2018

Being Friends Together - <http://together.woodbrooke.org.uk/welcome.php>

Quake! - <https://www.quaker.org.uk/resources/newsletters/quake>.



### Notes from the Minutes

AM held at Clacton, 11.03.2018

Jenny Kay

**Friends being met in the presence of God** Twenty three in all, and in the opening worship we remembered Olwen Tichmarsh and Reg Webb, whose deaths were recorded by minute. The reading from Quaker Faith and Practice 20.12 by Anne Hosking was on prayer as the exercise of the spirit. We accepted three Clacton Friends into membership and re-appointed members of the funeral committee, a trustee

and John Kay as Website Manager.

**Colchester Meeting House** Colchester LM's request for support for managing a renovations project for the Meeting House was referred to trustees.

Action on local poverty

Colchester Meeting were asking us to consider making funds available to support the work of local organisations addressing homelessness and poverty. John Lewis explained the two aspects of work being carried out in the town which we readily agreed to support making two annual

donations of £5000 to help the Colchester Food Bank to locate to new premises, while still balancing their budgets. John also described the work of Beacon House in providing an emergency winter accommodation scheme with St Peter's Church into the summer and beyond. We agreed to make grants of up to £625 per month subject to the following conditions: (i) another donor provides the balance, (ii) the grant is made only when the service is available, and (iii) the money is restricted to the purpose of supporting the

emergency accommodation scheme..

### Area Meeting Gathering

The meeting set the cost per head for the gathering at High Leigh in October to £150 per head and to offer full bursary support as required.

### LM Responsibilities

All local meetings have submitted reports. Printed copies were distributed to Friends present and will be incorporated into the Annual Report for 2017.

### Support for American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)

The letter sent to AFSC following the January AM read as follows:

"Friends of Southern East Anglia Quaker Meeting (part of Britain Yearly Meeting), met last Sunday for our usual Meeting for Church affairs. Among the items considered was the recent exclusion of AFSC from working in Israel. The news of this both shocked and dismayed

us all. We recognise the challenge to peace which such acts represent. Our wider yearly meeting contributes to peace and justice through the work of EAPPI which we support. However, we wish you all to know that we lovingly uphold you, your staff, committees and partners on the ground, in your efforts to work for peace in the Middle East. We collectively felt a strong guidance to send you a message of spiritual support at this difficult time. We send you loving greetings and hope that you might find stillness and Light, coupled with wisdom and energy in considering your way forward."

Kerri Kennedy of AFSC responded with thanks for our support and said she would make sure their team sees our message.

### Yearly Meeting 4 - 7 May 2018 at Friends House

Friends and attenders planning to go are reminded to register. The revision of Quaker Faith & Practice is the main item of business. We are all asked, whether there in person (bursary support is available) or in spirit to help the discernment by doing the preparation set out in 'Preparation for Yearly Meeting'.

Please ask a clerk, elder or overseer if you would like more information, or visit the website [www.quaker.org.uk/ym](http://www.quaker.org.uk/ym)

### Meeting for Sufferings report

Robert Parkes' report was received and is printed in this newsletter.



### On Wales and Welsh Language

from Valerie Graves

Many counties and areas have of course their own dialect and even distinct languages, such as Cornwall, but Welsh is spoken by one in six of its people, with some speaking little English. I was evacuated to Bangor as a student in the 1940's, and the local people clearly disliked us, with

notices in shop windows saying "English not spoke". In the common room students would gather round the piano to sing "Sospan Fach" (Dear Little Saucepan) a very silly little song sung as a round, with everyone joining in as appropriate. Such fun! we envied them. I learned just a little bit.

I wrote a bit, recently, about a Syrian family who ended up in Penberth in

South Wales where they were made very welcome, and the children of course learning to speak Welsh in school, as they all did, without thought.

I was reminded of this by reading about problems experienced by Yearly Meeting recently when arranging Meetings in Wales. Like Gaelic, it is a language especially attuned to poetry and many English poets use it. But of course there are many parts

of Wales where it is not used at all, and in many areas in the past it was not even allowed: one remembers that in the quite recent past, Polish was not allowed to be spoken, and my Slovak grand-daughter-in-law had to speak Russian in school, as did Marie Curie.

The only result, of course, is that children speak dozens of languages!



## **Wildspot**

from Valerie Graves

We have had some very cold weather on and off, and quite a lot of snow from time to time, but flowers have appeared, regardless, such as a bright pink primula outside Colchester Meeting House and a mass of yellow ones at Earls Colne, where, sadly, the tree at the gate and another big one at the side have had to be cut down.

I have looked hopefully for frogs, but I think it is wishful thinking. You cannot mistake their happy croaking.

Lots of breaking buds and of hyacinths planted out from winters past, including things I can't identify, but I am expecting people to cut the grass at any moment. Some daisies would be nice but they were carefully excluded when the lawn was planted.

## **Musings on everyday things**

John Kay

I have, as most men have, a sock drawer. Every day I open it and I take out a fresh pair of socks.

Modern socks do not wear out completely. The mixtures of man-made and natural fibres gradually lose their natural element until the acrylic remains to allow the intimacies of your toes to peep coyly through as if behind the last of the seven veils. It is then time to throw them away with a clear conscience

yesterday however I realise that my sock drawer preserved kind of record. There are the usual lonely single socks, waiting hopefully yet often in vain for the return of their lost partners.

Rather sad really because the missing one has probably departed for that great sock drawer in the sky, by way of the washing machine. Somehow one hasn't

the heart to throw out such a healthy looking and well preserved specimen, looking more presentable than any one of the pair and so it is allowed to wait forever.

No, what I was contemplating was how the very selection and variety of socks that are present encapsulates some of the more hasty decisions of the past. It is inevitable that the most popular socks get worn out the quickest. It is the socks in good condition which lie there accusingly.

At one time I decided that I would only have socks of one colour. Then if any became separated from its partner, it wouldn't matter, it would happily pair off with another of the same colour. Things don't work out that easily of course. The near matches were probably the most obvious once they were on. Socks from different stables have different shrinkage rates and different rates of wear. I found myself wearing one badly worn sock with one of a

very new appearance. Even when out of sight these gave a different feel to each foot, one seeming very cold and one warm. Worst of all sometimes they differed in length in one fell down while the other stayed resolutely up. After this I saw the error of my ways and clear to all and sundry that henceforth I would have nothing but pairs of multicoloured socks in future, the more unlike each other the better. Golfing socks of all hues and descriptions now grace my drawer. Sadly their loudness and braggadocio has palled upon me and I guiltily don them from a sense of duty when their quieter companions have been exhausted. The long neglected thermal and thick walking boot variety, I will gloss over quickly, they are mutually approach at the enthusiasm I once had for them is more than I can bear.

*Reprinted from an offering I first wrote for the newsletter in September '94.*



*Meredith Higginson from Glebe House, Transitions and Circles Co-ordinator and an attentive audience.*

## **Circles**

On Sunday 11th March, following our Area Meeting at Clacton, those present had the privilege of welcoming Meredith Higginson from Glebe House to talk about her work as the Transitions and Circles Co-ordinator, which we have helped to fund. Glebe House and Circles are not-for-profit organisations with Quaker roots.

Glebe House is a therapeutic and training community for small groups of young men aged 15 to 18 years who have committed serious sexual offences. Successful transition from Glebe House to the wider community is facilitated by enlisting the services of.

Meredith expressed her gratitude for the financial assistance we provide, and then explained in more detail what the Circles work entails for each client:

The assistance includes help to find suitable accommodation, employment and social contacts in liaison with other authorities. This is a difficult step for most young people, but in the circumstances pertaining to these

young men, it is further complicated because of the legal restrictions placed upon them, and the fact that their families and friends may be unsuitable. Meredith described some of the work carried out by the volunteers, including accompanying to social settings, work placements and building up invaluable relationships of mutual trust and respect.

### **Finances.**

We agreed to provide £30,000 per year for three years, £90,000 in all to support Circles. Is it worth it?

Some conservative facts and costs of sexual crimes in the UK:

1. In the UK it costs £65,000 to imprison a person for the first year, once police, court costs and all the other steps are considered. After that it costs a further £40,000 for each year they spend incarcerated.

If Glebe House and Circles only managed to prevent a few clients from committing further crimes, economically it would make financial sense. Research is underway at present, but their conservative estimate

is that the intervention and support is at least 80% successful.

2. The best research in the UK so far produces a sum for the cost of sexual abuse at £3.2 billion per year. The above considers only economic measurable costs. But there are costs far more difficult to measure:

A paedophile molests an average of 260 children during his/her active lifetime with ongoing abuse escalating over time. Serial paedophiles molest over 400 child victims during their lifetime.

3. The most recent statistics indicate that more than one in ten women and about one in twenty men have been the victims of sexual abuse at some time during their lives. There are no reliable statistics on the total offences against each individual child or adult victim, but for some it exceeds many hundreds of incidents, for others it can be many incidents a day.

The harm caused by abuse is mental, emotional, and spiritually destructive. Victims usually fail to achieve their full potential at work, so-

cially or within their close relationships with partners and family; some commit suicide.

Sexual abuse is a root cause of homelessness, poverty, and the other social ills we know of all too well. These costs are immeasurable to society as a whole; arguably we are all victims.

Specifically, the value of the Circles project is that:

1. It helps greatly to safeguard and secure the investment of time and money spent on the clients while in the therapeutic community of Glebe House. Without Circles, many clients would soon fall between the cracks and be much more likely to reoffend.

2. With Circles, the clients have the best opportunity to lead a good and self-fulfilling personal lives.

3. Because of Circles, crime is significantly reduced and with that financial benefits, to everyone; not forgetting, unknown benefits to those who would have become victims.

Circles is work that we support and in so doing, we are contributing to the values of love which lies at the heart of our organisation.

Our financial assistance is in my opinion money extremely well spent.



### ***Olwen's Memorial Meeting***

The Memorial Meeting for Olwen Titchmarsh will be held at Sudbury FMH at 2.30pm on Sunday 22 April. There will be light refreshments after the Meeting.

It would be helpful for the family to know who expects to attend, but anyone deciding last minute is of course still welcome. Contact Ella Speirs on 07922 620503 or [ellaspeirs@hotmail.com](mailto:ellaspeirs@hotmail.com)

### ***Whose opinion counts?***

John Hall

I imagine I was not the only person to be dismayed to read Rachel Britton's article *What we want from Meeting* in last month's newsletter. She described how she and David were challenged to such a degree and in such a manner that that there appeared to be no point in us worshipping together.

For those interested in David's views on the after-life, I commissioned him to write a 4000 word article, *Immortality and Fellowship* in volume 11 of the magazine *Friends Meeting Houses*, which is in Colchester Meeting House Library. If you cannot find it, I am happy to supply any Friend or Attender with a copy of the article.

David's views are based on traditional Quaker theology.

Until the middle of the twentieth century Quakers challenged the Calvinist view that preparation for the after-life was "seen as egoism and self-importance, and nothing else." As he points out, Margaret Fell, the Mother of Quakerism, strongly told Friends that their souls are immortal. Our modern times, he says, consider the belief in immortality to be a delusion." British Quakers live "in the hope of making the secular sacred [which

has] the effect of making the sacred secular, and in the end everything secular.” You can see why this is a challenge as to what happens in a Meeting for Worship.

I am not concerned to defend David’s orthodox views but rather to wonder why such views are totally rejected by some Friends to such an extent that those of his persuasion cannot find a place at Meeting among members of the Religious Society of Friends.

There is no doubt that pre-Enlightenment Quakerism had no place for science and its modern discoveries. But for me, much science, as opposed to technology, provides many more questions than answers. When Douglas Adams said amusingly that the answer to “Life, The Universe and Everything” was 42 he was not challenging science but us as to the questions we ask. When Steven Hawking said a couple of years ago that he was close

to providing an equation which would be the answer to everything in the universe, I felt hubris had entered the world of astro-physics.

Quaker theology is now very different to that of the seventeenth century but as then, it should be a theology of questioning. If it is, should not the questions to fellow Quakers be persuasive rather than excluding?

### **Bursary funding opportunities**

for members and attenders

Alison Parkes

Would you appreciate funds (for specific purposes) to help you get through a challenging time?

Would you like to attend a course or learn a new skill?

Would you be glad of funding to attend a Quaker event?

As a member or attender of Southern East Anglia Area Quaker Meeting, you may be eligible to apply for financial support from the Meeting.

The Richard Waynforth Trust, which has its origins in a bequest from 1726, was extended in 2015 to members and attenders of Southern East Anglia (SEA) Area Quaker Meeting; this includes Clacton, Sudbury, Earls Colne, Harwich and Colchester Meetings. The Trust uses income from its ethically managed endowment fund to award grants that can alleviate

hardship, distress and need. For more details about what you can apply for, speak to an Elder or Overseer or the clerk of your Meeting.

Quakers have been fortunate through the years to receive legacies enabling them to encourage education and spiritual development within the Meeting. Francis Freshfield in 1808, John Kendall in 1815, and Jack Fields in 2007 all left money to be used for Quaker education in Colchester. Southern East Anglia Quaker Meeting also sees the importance of promoting education and spiritual development throughout all the local meetings in its care, and in addition is mindful that financial help may at times be needed for pastoral care of Friends and Attenders when they are in difficulties.

Applications are welcomed from Friends and Attenders of all ages. Application forms and guidelines can be obtained from AM Elders, Overseers and Clerks. A list of the Friends you



### **OPEN CHARITIES**

can speak to will be on your Local Meeting notice board. Alternatively, the forms and guidelines are available on the Area Meeting website [www.essexsuffolkquakers.org](http://www.essexsuffolkquakers.org), Business page, AM Documents.

Bursaries may be given for educational purposes of **any** kind – they do not necessarily have to be Quaker based. These educational bursaries and grants for pastoral care are not means tested and are available to all members and attenders of the Area Meeting and their families. Sometimes Friends request partial funding; if you can make a contribution to the cost, this would be appreciated.