



Olwen Tichmarsh in her Garden at Bures

NEWSLETTER

SOUTHERN EAST ANGLIA AREA QUAKER MEETING

Diary Dates for May

May 2017

Thursday May 3rd Local Council Elections Colchester QMH is serving as a polling station

Friday May 4th Colchester Farmers' Market at the Arts Centre

Friday 4th to Monday 7th Yearly Meeting weekend

Friday 4th to Monday 7th Jane's Walk weekend, including two Quaker History trail walks led by Rosalind Kaye www.walkcolchester.wordpress.com

Sunday May 13th Area Meeting - Sudbury

Sunday May 13th Being Friends Together - Colchester QMH

Tuesday May 15th International Conscientious Objectors Day www.ppu.org.uk

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

email address: AMClerk@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

EARLS COLNE

1st, 3rd & 5th Sundays 10.30 am

SUDBURY

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

London in the sun

Jet Grommel

I tried my best to be in all the camera shots, so people could see me on TV, but I guess might have been too far back.

I finished in 5;03 50 sec in the end.

Slower than I'd hoped as I had to do some walking due to nausea, a hell of a side stitch, and sore feet and legs. A result of the heat no doubt. And my hay fever has exploded in the last week.

Still, it was a great day, and I am glad I finished all

Editorial

Dear Friends,

Quite out of the blue, we have this wonderful sunny weather, and we are divided into two sorts, the shakers of heads who say it won't last, and the others who grumble and say it's much too hot.

In fact it is really quite nice! especially to see our young people again: can that really be Mary's boy? he's so

tall! Are you going to Yearly Meeting? I am very happy to be able to tell you some good news about John Hall, that he is completely cured of his cancer, but the sad news is that we shall not be seeing him here as he has almost completely stopped driving. Tim Holding is better than he was, too.

News, please, by the middle of the month, to Valerie Graves.



This cheerful picture taken of Jet Grommel, our loving compliments to her having completed her London Marathon run.

right (although a tiny bit disappointed at having to walk).

Here is a picture of me after.

Jet after 5 hours hard work in the sun last Sunday

John & Helen Lewis

Take a Backward Look

from Valerie Graves

I couldn't think what I would write about today so I idly looked through some old issues of the newsletter, and was amazed what fascinating stuff it was! So I decided to have another go - not the same, of course, and see if you recognise it in different trousers, as it were. I'm a great crossword fan, and easily baffled by things like the proper name for Women's Trousers. See what

Coffee Shop

Dave Lawrence

There's a fairly new coffee shop in Colchester, just outside the main gate to the Castle Park. It's called Claudius Gateway. All profits go to support World Food Aid. Part of it is a display of Roman foundations to the temple that stood in the park before the Castle was built.



Meeting for Sufferings

Carol Holding

During the opening Meeting for Worship an Essex Friend Angela Pivac was remembered. She was also a trustee of the Greenwood trust. QFP 20 68 was read and this talks of great understandable anger but no understanding "If we are angry we know how wars develop. It does not matter who is wrong, What matters is that we care enough to talk to each other"

This had great resonance for me.

Clacton News

Janet Thomas

Our very good news is that Liz Prockter, Silva Garton-Rogers, and Karl Sage have all become Members of The Society of Friends, and all at the same time. This is especially welcome news at Clacton, which is not one of the larger Meetings.

I came across a book at our local library called The

Forty Rules of Love, by Turkish writer Elif Shafak. It is based upon the Platonic, with a capital P, as far as we know, deep love

and friendship between a wandering Dervish, Shams of Tabriz, and the man we know as Rumi the poet. At the time of their Meeting, Rumi was known as a greatly respected scholar and only became a poet through Shams. A novel within a novel, it is a fascinating read. The Dervish is both infuriating and endearing, a paradox he may have appreciated. Sufiism, the active Peace Movement of Islam at that time, though considered heretical by Sharia Law, is based upon the Quran and practiced by Moslems and others drawn to the discipline. I mention it here because it may resonate with Quakers and in any case is an enthralling and enlightening read.

THE SUFFERINGS APPEAL REVIEW GROUP report given by its convenor Beryl Milner seemed much in this spirit. One of the recommendations was that conflict resolution could be called Conflict navigation and naturally mediation must be based on agreement by both parties. It is important to beware the void of inaction and to take professional advice early BUT not outside Quakers. It emphasised that mediators do not resolve conflict - only enable parties to resolve conflict and acknowledged the devas-

tating and lasting effect of some conflicts.

A Moving report from the SUSTAINABILITY GROUP reminded us of the Canterbury Commitment of 2011 and of its national and personal responsibility and it spoke of the commitment of many and the frustration of some, and also the desirability of reporting back annually. It is no longer a group outside the main committee structure. Sustainable living can be a joyful way of life which needs a spiritual basis and more money. We are

not alone in either the struggling or in thinking we have an answer. In 1948 Roger Wilson in his Swarthmore Lecture on peace building recognised it takes time.

It is however central to what we do. It is a tricky even dangerous step but it is everyone's concern, and an adventurous outlook is needed, and if existing structures are impeding progress, change them. The problem of the five times repeated failure of the group is not technical but fundamental. The minute said we have been moved to reaffirm our commitment and the spiritual basis as well as its centrality to all we do.

Somehow this must also ring in our heads when we consider the minute from

Southern Marches Area Meeting of Jan 25th 2018 which asked "In this Post Truth world" what can we do in the face increased contracting out of services who see secrecy as essential. Intense scrutiny as well as lack of it can lead to lack of honesty and we should begin with ourselves.

To me it felt like a let down to say "We return to this in November"

Finally the report by the convenor of BYM trustees, by Ingrid Greenhow was lively and thought provoking. When I first went to Sufferings six years ago, Jonathan Fox presented briskly and accurately, then Jennifer Barraclough put in the passion, and now In-

grid led us through the possible cliché/death wish of the grey haired middle class society that we are and said we need to change our ways of working to suit younger and working Friends. They should be part of Meeting for Sufferings and we should stop recycling ourselves, embrace diversity and not tokenism- Diversity of race and class. Our culture at present excludes young members. We have an average age of 64 and 70% have degrees and we should include younger members with nurturing and support.



Listening

David Lawrence

Quaker Faith and Practice 12.21

Some Quaker meetings have discovered the value of small groups in developing the art of listening to God, to others, and to oneself. Such 'worship sharing' or 'creative listening' groups can provide a setting where all who take part are involved in the process of learning about themselves as well as about others. Here silence, too, can heal and restore.

There is also Active Listening

When someone wishes to talk to you about a difficulty, you can help them understand their problem by actively listening. Active listening is an attitude. To be an active listener, one must accept people for who they are, their feelings, values, and their right to make choices for themselves as they resolve their issues.

How to be an active listener:

Opening. This can be the most critical part. Good opening statements convey a gentle and non-intrusive interest in where the other person is emotionally. Opening statements should be accompanied by calm body language and facial expressions, warm eye contact and mild voice tones.

Then, listen to the message. Put to one side your emotional material, and desires to be a problem solver or res-

ducer. Do not allow distractions. Be still and become absorbed by the information that is important for the speaker. If there are pauses do not interject; this is often a time when a speaker is deep in thought. You may need to check your interpretations because people do not always say what they mean or mean what they say; so, if this is necessary ask open questions only that help the speaker search for their meanings.

Barriers to active listening:

Using the word ‘Why?’ in your questioning. This word can put the speaker un-

der pressure to come up with reasons and explanations that they think will meet your needs. The most commonly used mistaken opening statements are questions that may seem caring but instead load the victim with the questioner’s hopes, fears and needs.

Asking leading questions. These are more likely to take the speaker away from their material and instead reveal your train of thought, your values and solutions.

Judging. Our tendency to judge people and situations distorts our ability to listen.

Thinking in advance that you know what someone is going to say. This can lead to ‘tuning out’ before the speaker is finished talking, or even interrupting and finishing their sentence.

Saying, “I know how you feel”. This can sound intrusive or it can sound as if you’re bored and don’t want to hear any more.

Searching for solutions and answers. This can cause you to only hear what suits you and your own ideas and to lose concentration on what the speaker is really saying and being with them as they find their answers.

Refugee Action Concert

Alison Parkes

There is a concert that is raising money for the work of Refugee Action Colchester with local refugees? It is one of the agencies we are working with and supporting, and they are all volunteers, so any money from this concert will genuinely go towards helping

the refugees. You'll see the message below from Iman, who is one of the people we've been liaising with, and her poster is attached. The concert is a cello recital by Orlando Jopling, who is the Artistic Director of the Roman River Music Festival, on May 30th at St Botolph's Church. I'm sure it will be a lovely occasion.

Refugee Action - Colchester presents
A Cello Recital
 by Orlando Jopling
 with delicious Syrian Food
 in aid of our local refugees

Come and enjoy Bach's much-loved Cello suites and indulge in some delicious Syrian food at St. Botolph's Church

Wednesday 30th May 2018
 7.30pm start, doors open 6.45pm
 St. Botolph's Church, St Botolph's Street
 Colchester, CO2 7EE

General admission: £20.00
 Student: £12.00

Delicious Syrian food included in your ticket!

Tickets available online at www.refugeeactioncolchester.org.uk or send a cheque payable to Refugee Action - Colchester 15 Queen Street, Colchester, CO1 2PH and please include the number of tickets required plus your contact information.

Wildspot

from Valerie Graves

It has continued being quite dotty, with Crocus all over the lawn, an amazing show of bright red tulips among some roses, and my autumn flowering cherry in full bloom. I am not grumbling! it is always interesting to see what decides to come up. My ceanothus, which

is a law unto itself, is covered with bloom, and everywhere the flowering trees are an amazing show, absolutely covered with pink or white, such as magnolias. And where trees had appeared dead, tiny little buds are appearing.

We have to wait and see.



Southern East Anglia Area Quaker Meeting

'Being Friends Together' in Colchester

Second Wednesday in the month

We aim to hold a study group using the materials from Quaker Life available on line: quaker.org.uk/quaker-life



7pm Meeting and greeting
7.30pm Meeting for Worship
8pm Study and discussion
9.30pm Finish

First session May 13th 2018
Introduction to Being Friends Together - Choosing our study group theme and approach, facilitated by Eliza Jones

Being Friends Together has been developed by Woodbrooke and Quaker Life to help Friends in meetings to:

- develop spirituality, both as individuals and meetings
- learn about aspects of the Quaker and Christian traditions
- grow as confident, Quaker communities
- live out Quaker testimony in their lives and localities
- integrate all generations into the life of meetings

It is packed with:

- activities and ideas from previous Quaker learning projects
- some newly written and recorded material
- suggestions for useful websites, courses and actions that meetings can engage with

Being Friends Together

In recent years at Colchester LM we have had study groups looking at Quaker Faith and Practice, or following the Quaker Quest and Hearts and Minds courses. We also have the more open 45 minute discussion session “All Things considered” that takes place after Meeting for Worship on the 3rd Sunday of every month.

Starting on the 2nd Wednesday of every month, on May 9th we will be hold-

ing a Meeting for Learning “Being Friends Together”. This is all about group learning, as a Quaker community based on exploring the rich online library of resources put together by Quaker Life and Woodbrooke. Organised around 4 themes it provides Quaker groups with a flexible picking and mixing of topics and approaches that can speak to their condition.

In our first session on May 9th we will reflect on where we are and identify what themes, subjects and topics we would like to explore.

What we want from Meeting

Robbie Spence

Something hinders me from attending Meeting more than once in a blue moon these days. I am prompted to mention it after reading What we want from Meeting by Rachel Britton in the March newsletter. I appreciate Rachel's courage in speaking up for what she and her husband David want from Meeting.

On the whole I prefer events like the Enquirers and Attenders (E&A) Day on 10 February to regular Sunday Meetings and I would like to explain why. Obviously, this is a personal view. Also, I'm speaking of subtle distinctions. The fundamental difference is in the quality of personal honesty

at events like the E&A Day. Heartfelt doubts get expressed as well as heartfelt convictions. For me, the discourse is more alive.

By contrast, Friends who minister at Sunday Meeting can sometimes sound as though they want to educate the Meeting and exhort Friends to take a particular course of action. Again, this is a subtle matter and I do not want to reject 'educational' ministry out of hand: I am sure I have done it myself at times. I understand too the importance of our Quaker tradition that ministry is inspired by God. Friends who believe in an impersonal God (as I do) are naturally likely to minister in impersonal terms.

My point is that the combined effect of these factors can diminish the quality of

heartfelt self-expression, which I find most valuable about Meeting. To illustrate, let me refer to a couple of passages from Quaker Faith and Practice. Essentially, what I am searching for – and have been for thirty years – is small circles (Rufus Jones, 24.56) where we meet one another in that which is eternal (George Fox, 2.35). I have found this in Quakers, especially at events like the E&A Day and within the worship sharing of the Hearts and Minds Prepared course. I have also found it elsewhere – especially within the Nonviolent Communication community where, without being focused on God or religious belief, we aim to speak about what is alive in us. I only wish I could find this quality of heartfelt, personal

alive-ness more often in our regular Sunday Meetings.

If this resonates with you and you hear ministry in Meeting that has this personal, heartfelt quality, I would love you to consider giving the speaker some appreciation or positive feedback afterwards. Perhaps this would encourage more people to feel more confident in speaking from the heart.



Notes from a talk by Olwen Titchmarsh

Jenny Kay

For many years, I delivered Sudbury's Newsletters to Olwen Titchmarsh, even during the nine years when she was caring for Philip and unable to get to Meeting, as there was always someone she could pass them to. It was an occasion for tea and a chat, or lunch at the Eight Bells. Our conversations ranged widely but there was always something on Quaker matters and personal beliefs. She thought deeply and was always ready to talk.

I remember one special occasion when Olwen gave a talk to those of us gathered

The Loo of Friends' Meeting House

Use the garden entrance of this great building - half Quaker Church, half Quaker administrative offices - and go down to the basement near the No Smoking

Restaurant. The Gents is vast with a good old-fashioned feel to it. 9 cubicles with Western-type swing doors, 20 king-size stalls, 18 centrally-situated (in the room) hand-basins on fine old iron stands and all draining into one communal open gutter which runs be-

neath them. The Ladies has 100 coat pegs (all empty, perhaps because of the sign hanging beside them) This cloakroom is not under supervision. Personal property is left here at risk, 5 Western-style cubicles, each with a shelf on the wall for keeping handbags and personal property safe and dry, each with an amazing Unihygea Automatic Disinfectant and Deoderiser device attached to the cistern and which springs into action every time the loo is flushed. Also some hand basins around. There is also a machine between these 2 loos which dispenses cheese and onion crisps and Mars Bars.

at Hengrave Hall in the early 1990s. It was the weekend when Alastair Herron, author of 'Quakers, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow' was the guest speaker. I made some notes of Olwen's talk which read rather like a set of advices and queries. I offer them here as challenging to us today.

- Share what is important: both conviction and uncertainty
- Faith holds us together, can we define this? How deeply does it influence us?
- Fox urged people to subject themselves to experience.

- "The Quaker baby and the bathwater?" but the bathwater must be changed.
- We need to take into account the context of social change and people's needs.
- We seem fragmented now compared with the previous solidarity of Quakers. We are now "in the world"
- The spirit is the inescapable relationship with another dimension. We are not always aware. We need to seek awareness, making no distinction between the sacred and the secular.
- Can we look at our own formative years? What lifted the spirit?
- The switch to the inward light is not automatic, it is



a discipline, we need to find time for meditation and prayer. We need to consider prayer as distinct from ministry in Meeting for Worship. (Once Friends knelt for prayer and stood for ministry.)

- How do Friends regard the bible? As the best unread seller? Many search for a version which they can read comfortably. George Fox

never regarded it as his final authority, its insights influenced him..

- Jesus? What do I believe? Is there a substitute for the Bible narrative? How far do we trust the inward teacher?
- How would we see spirituality if we had no spiritual upbringing?