Diary Dates for October /November

Friday October 5th Farmers’ Market at Colchester Arts Centre
Friday October 12th Area Meeting Gathering weekend
Saturday October 28th Clocks go back an hour overnight
Sunday November 11th 2.15pm Area Meeting at Colchester Meeting House
Saturday November 17th 10-4pm Kindlers Workshop on Vocal Ministry, Colchester Meeting House, please bring packed lunch and sign up on the list on the notice board.

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
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

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**FIRST CONTACT**
FOR FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

CLACTON.........................Carol Holding
COLCHESTER.......................Carol Holding
SUDBURY.........................Peter Whiteley

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**Editorial**

Dear Friends

We have had some torrential rain today, which is probably why we had only a few at Meeting. Yes, we do desperately need the rain, but as always, it is just a bit more than we wanted. It was supposed to be an All-Age Worship Meeting and we had just four children. I have placed copies of two books, “Sam Peel, a man who did different” by Sue Wild and “Benjamin Lay” by Marcus Rediker in Colchester QMH Library.

News, please, to Valerie Graves.

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**Premises Committee Report**

Sylvia Jeffcock

The Premise Committee has met regularly over the last year and Mervyn, our warden reports regularly to the committee.

Room hirings remain steady with an income of around £2200 per month. We have received many comments on the recent hirers questionnaire appreciating Mervyn’s help and support.

Peggy Lewis has stood down after two triennia as convenor although she remains on the committee. We thank her for her service.

The renovation of the Meeting House has been considered for some time. In September 2017 Local Meeting first asked Premise Committee to consider obtaining suggestions from architectural firms for a refurbishment of the building. After consideration by Area Meeting and Local Meeting this was given the permission to proceed in June. This has affected the work of the committee as we do not wish to commission work which would be superseded by any future refurbishment. Never the less we wish to maintain the building as an attractive and welcoming place for people to meet and worship while remembering our commitment to sustainability.

Anne Watkinson has convened a small group to consider this and commission a feasibility study. She will report on this separately.

The Quinquennial report was carried out in March and we have carried out any repairs which required immediate attention including work to the roof, repairing the dormer window and work to the flagstones at the front of the building. The Parnell room has been redecorated and the rear door repaired.

Some of the other recommended work might be superseded by any renovation of the Meeting House. We consider the areas to concentrate on are: the roof, decoration, furnishings, the wood panelling as this needs cleaning and the warden’s flat which needs repairs and decorating. We suggest that we draw up a plan to decorate a couple of rooms each year starting with the stairwell and corridor.
Ann Dowden has convened another small group to consider ways of meeting the Meeting House more attractive in the short term. We have agreed to replace the curtains and cushions in the Lobby and to repaint the entrance porch. Most of the other suggestions involve cleaning and decluttering the different rooms.

We have had two clear out days when the upstairs kitchen was deep cleaned and the children’s room tidied. We are looking for a suitable way of cleaning and refinishing the wood panelling have tried using restoration as recommended by Peter Whitely on a test patch. However the task of clearing items which are no longer required needs to be continued and we envisage further days later in the year.

Work has continued on the garden with several new shrubs bought to brighten the front garden.

We will continue to ensure that the building is maintained and to look for ways of making it more attractive while waiting for the recommendations for more extensive work.

Wildspot
from Valerie Graves

We have had rain at last: but as one would expect, far too much. Can’t grumble. I was very glad to see the rain: but not quite so much at a time! I have a tree which is near death (a forty year old cherry), so perhaps there is hope for it. We continue to have all sorts of things flowering at the wrong time, or suddenly dying and some recovering. A ceanothus which died suddenly ten years ago and then recovered, is now flowering for the third time this year.

The squirrels are a great trial.

All the flowering shrubs along the road are covered with blossom, like a lot of cauliflowers. Very pretty but I don’t trust them not to die suddenly. Anything may happen.
**Living with the Amish**

John Kay

It is quite remarkable that lately I am starting to bring fresh light on some of the beliefs that at one time I regarded as self evident.

Having lived through the sixties the logic behind the freeing of women's positions in society seemed so right and therefore impossible to reexamine. The opening of opportunity to them in areas previously the exclusive domain of men seem to follow logically from that.

What was not envisaged at that time was the women would find themselves in the invidious position of being obliged to seek outside work in spite of having to raise a young family. Governments jumped on this bandwagon of cultural change and work became an expected requirement for every person of working age.

It seems that today the validity of running a home and rearing children has been lost as an option for women. Although nominally extended to men as a choice and sometimes utilised by them, it is still regarded by society as a "cop out" from social responsibility.

While watching and earnest young English visitor talking to a young Amish wife it was obvious that she found the wife's eager acceptance of her role as something incredulous. She asked if she did not see that household tasks were sometimes demeaning and restrictive.

The wife replied that she believed that her position as being in charge of the home and being a helpmeet to her husband was not only strengthened by the Bible but constituted a source of respect and high esteem on the part of Amish Society.

During their discussion the wife actually turned to the relevant verses in the Bible that supported her opinion of her position.

The agitation of the visitor contrasted so markedly with the confidence and self assurance of the wife that it certainly gave me real paused for thought. I could easily imagine my reaction in the past where I would have rushed to judgment and even had been dismissive of a lifestyle based on a literal interpretation of the Bible. Thinking again made me realise that such a calm demeanor was the direct result of someone with great self respect and a "proper respect" gained in the light of the true security of her position.

Hopefully I learned from this experience to reserve judgment and look at things from a far wider perspective than previously.

**The Persistence of Quakers**

Valerie Graves

I have been reading an old book about Sam Peel, of Wells-Next-The-Sea, who transformed all kinds of things in Norfolk, quite a long time ago. (The book is called 'Sam Peel: A Man Who Did Different', by Susan Wild.) A very inspiring story of effort against strong opposition in the schools of Norfolk. I had almost forgotten him, but his story is inspiring and worth a read. He had a terrible time fighting the indifference, if not actually anti, opposition of the County Council to all the improvements that were necessary. The Council refused to pay their own rates while insisting on high rent for appalling council houses, that they owned.

It was a difficult battle but Sam did win it in the end by sheer obstinacy - they had to pay their rates in the end. Poor Sam was very unpopular but he stood his ground. That was the beginning of his battle. He got the houses repaired and the rates paid at the price of great unpopularity, but the houses were repaired and better ones rebuilt.

He went on to apply his methods to all sorts of things that were wrong with Norfolk, but you can read that for yourself. The end of the story was when he was in his late seventies and Norfolk provided with good schools of all sorts and proper housing.

It reminds me of another persistent optimist: Fell Christie, of Chelmsford Meeting, who never stopped pestering the betting-shops. He died after a brief illness, and I don't know if anybody else took on the pestering business. But I think they were both greatly supported by their respective Quaker Meetings. This was all quite a long time ago.

Sam Peel went on to become quite a power in the land, and left schools and even a university in Norfolk, which had never aspired to any of these things before.

This book can be obtained from the Wells Local History Group.
Reg’s Epitaph

I would like to pass on the message and photo which Kate Pace has just shared (below), of Reg Webb’s epitaph. Those of you who attended his funeral will remember hearing an interview with Reg in which he talked about ‘making the most of the hand you are dealt’. So his epitaph, chosen by his son Paul, is especially fitting.

In Friendship,
Alison
– Forwarded message – From: Catherine Pace
I thought you might like to see Reg’s epitaph, I left this to Paul and he got it right, didn’t he? X

Colchester notices
October

Anne Watkinson
October 12th-14th Area Meeting Gathering – any interest in late booking or any further information contact Peter Whiteley.

Sunday 21st All things considered – nothing special, just whatever anyone wishes to consider from 12.00 to 12.45.
**Notes from the Minutes of Area Meeting**

at Harwich, 09.09.2018

Jenny Kay

Our shared experience of waiting for God’s guidance in our meetings for worship and church affairs, together with careful listening and gentleness of heart, forms the basis on which we can live out a life of love with and for each other and for those outside our community.’ Quaker Faith & Practice 10.03 paragraphs 3 and 4

Twenty one Friends and attenders met in the presence of God and part of the reading in the opening worship ‘...The celebration and commemoration of life’s great events draw us together as we share the occasion and rejoice of mourn with one another’ prefaced the record of the death of our Friend Bob Hurley, age 84 and the interment of his ashes in Roman Road Burial Ground.

**Annual Report and Accounts 2017**

Jenny Kay, Clerk of Trustees and Tom Tebbutt, AM treasurer presented the Trustees Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending December 2017. Excerpts from the report had already appeared in the September Newsletter. The report, prepared by Whittles and Co, independent examiners, signed by Tom Tebbutt, Treasurer, and Jenny Kay, Clerk of Trustees, was accepted by AM. It was agreed to retain Whittles as our independent examiners for the year ended December 31, 2018.

The work done by the Treasurer, Trustees and bookkeeper, Sue Dowden, to maintain functioning of the AM was gratefully acknowledged and Friends were reminded that the involvement and awareness in the work of trustees is an important obligation of being a member of the Religious Society of Friends.

**Eden’s Youth Centre Project in Sudbury**

Area Meeting, subject to the satisfaction of trustees, agreed to the request from Sudbury Friends to make a donation of £500 towards the purchase of the Eden’s Youth Centre which has been used in Sudbury for the past 18 years. Eden’s Project is a Christian charity seeking to raise £180,000 by January 2019. Quakers have been involved with this from the beginning.

In view of a concern expressed by a Friend about safeguarding of young people and others, the Meeting agreed to seek reassurance that Eden’s Youth Centre policies and procedures are comprehensive and effective. Area Meeting asked trustees to monitor the progress of the fund with a view to making a possible further contribution. If the full amount needed for purchase of the premises is not reached, then AM requests the return of the donation.

**Review of AM business arrangements**

As I presented this matter without having prepared a paper in advance of the meeting the skill of the clerk Alison Parkes is clearly demonstrated by the consequent comprehensive minute written by the clerk. It is reproduced here in full as information for those attending local meetings where the issue will be raised.

Jenny Kay presented a vision for changing our AM business arrangements. Her thoughts on this are based on her experience as clerk to AM Nominations Committee (further to Minute 2018/40, Report from AM Nominations Committee), which has been reduced to a committee of one (herself). Currently Colchester LM Nominations Committee is supporting Jenny by meeting with her. The AM Nominations Committee has reduced the list of appointments. However, those Friends in appointed roles often find themselves taking on more work as there are fewer Friends to do the necessary tasks, and this especially applies to Trustees. We are now in the position of needing to identify an AM Clerk, Assistant Clerk and Treasurer, three key roles which need to be filled in order for the AM to function properly.

We considered the following questions:

- Would it help to reduce the number of AMs to three?
- Would each LM be prepared to organise an AM event (for fellowship or learning) to be held at their Meeting House or premises? This could include such things as the National Friends Fellowship of Healing, a Kindlers workshop, a talk from a Quaker speaker (including ourselves), etc. These events would aim to be enjoyable, uplifting and possibly challenging?
- Would each LM be prepared to serve on the AM Nominations Committee, as a matter of urgency. For the time being, we thank Colchester LM Nominations Committee for its willingness to support AM Nominations Committee and ask that this continues until other arrangements can be made.
- Would Friends agree to setting up a committee of clerks, to include AM Clerk and LM Clerks, which would meet to manage some of the business of AM and help reduce the agenda for the AMs?
- Is there anything more you could do to help with the Area Meeting?

We took a sounding of the responses of Friends present. We recognise the desire of Friends to be open and participative in business arrangements, which has at times contributed to unnecessarily lengthy meetings. It might be possible to consider detailed and instru-
mental matters in other ways, perhaps by a committee of clerks. Trusting the people to whom we give responsibility would reduce our business meetings and make them more interesting.

We must be sensitive to our needs, our lives and our different gifts, pulling us in different directions, and yet find ways to support one another joyfully.

We ask each Local Meeting to consider the suggested changes to our AM business arrangements and report back to AM in November.

**Dates of AMs in 2019**

Consequent on the previous minute we now have a number of options to consider in our local meetings for the holding of AMs in 2019. We are asked to report back to the November AM on the following suggestions:

**6 AMs**
- January 13 - Colchester
- March 10 - Clacton
- May 12 - Sudbury
- July 14 - Earls Colne
- Sept 8 - Harwich
- Nov 10 - Colchester

**3 AMs**
- January 13 or 20, Feb 10 or March 10
- May 12 or 19, June 9 or July 14

**Earls Colne News**

**Jenny Kay**

I had the privilege to give a talk to the Earls Colne Society on Quaker Women in September. This arose from a request to our meeting, an opportunity not to be missed. As I began the research I realised what a huge subject this could become. I selected 14 women from 1647 to the present to reflect the variety of Quaker women's insights and experiences but without making any claim that such insights and experiences are or were solely Quaker.

Using the tapestry panels for illustration I introduced the early women: Elizabeth Hooton, a seeker convinced by George Fox but who in turn opened him to the spiritual contribution of women, Margaret Fell ensured the survival Quakerism and the participation of the 12 women in the Valiant Sixty helped spread the movement through Britain, Europe and the New World.

Three Earls Colne Quakers featured in my talk. Ann Burton 1616 - 1681 was an Earls Colne Quaker midwife, reported by the church for not having a midwife’s licence and for not paying tithes. A faithful Quaker, she witnessed the marriage of Joseph Bott and Joanna Hutley which took place in 1675 in Earls Colne Meeting House. Sarah Tawell brought her 2 year old son to Earls Colne in 1845. In that year her husband John was hung for murdering his mistress. His story can be read in Carol Baxter’s ‘The Peculiar case of the Electric Constable’ (there are 2 copies available in Earls Colne Library) and Sarah’s story of a faithful Quaker mother is currently being written by Hilary Evens. Marjorie Derring who was clerk at Earls Colne for 40 years was included.

The inclusion of Jocelyn Bell Burnell, the award winning astronomist, active and prominent Quaker brought the talk to an end apart from allowing Margaret Fell to have the last word. As we looked again at the first panel of the tapestry which illustrates the divine Light passing as a spectrum of many colours, I read the prophetic quote from Margaret Fell ‘to insist that we must be all in one dress and one colour, this is poor silly gospel,... better to live righteously, justly and holily ....’
**Benjamin Lay**

Benjamin Lay was born to Quaker parents in Copford outside Colchester in 1682. There were many traits that distinguished him from others and placed him well ahead of his time. He stood barely over 4 feet tall, and was a hunchback with a projecting chest. He was a strict vegetarian, eating only fruits, vegetables and honey, and drinking only milk and water. He would not wear anything, nor eat anything, made from the loss of animal life or provided by any degree of slave labour. He worked as a shepherd and glove-maker and later as a sailor, moving to Barbados in 1718. Here he witnessed the poor treatment of African slaves that instilled in him his lifelong anti-slavery principles. He used dramatic gestures to convey his anger about the hypocrisy of people, including Quakers who kept slaves, and also his disagreement with women and men holding separate Quaker business meetings, believing in the equality of men and women.

He first began advocating for the abolition of slavery when, in Barbados, he saw an enslaved man commit suicide rather than be hit again by his owner. His passionate enmity of slavery was partially fueled by his Quaker beliefs. Lay made several dramatic demonstrations against the practice. He once stood outside a Quaker meeting in winter with no coat and at least one foot bare and in the snow. When passersby expressed concern for his health, he said that slaves were made to work outdoors in winter dressed as he was. On another occasion, he kidnapped the child of slaveholders temporarily, to show them how Africans felt when their relatives were sold overseas. The most notable act occurred in Burlington, New Jersey, at the 1738 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Quakers. Dressed as a soldier, he concluded a diatribe against slavery, quoting the Bible saying that all men should be equal under God, by plunging a sword in a Bible containing a bladder of blood-red pokeberry juice, which spattered over those nearby.

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**Essex and Suffolk Regional Gathering**

Clerk: Susan Garratt
Tel:01277623271
sue@fairfield10.plus.com

Regional Gathering at Bury St Edmunds Friends Meeting House
Saturday 29th September 2018

**Programme**

Quaker Discipline and Process, Keeping the Peace, Keeping the Faith.

Ben Pink Dandelion will lead us on a day around how we can best explain our faith to newcomers, avoid misunderstandings, and conflicts in Meetings whilst remaining open to new light.

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>Gathering for tea and drinks refreshments, name badges</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.30</td>
<td><strong>Meeting for Worship</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11.45-12.00</td>
<td>Our treasurer Jonathan Morrell will present the accounts and treasurers report</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.00-1.00</td>
<td>Morning session</td>
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<td>1.00-2.00</td>
<td><strong>Lunch</strong>, bring your own, Bury St Edmunds Friends will provide drinks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.00-4.00</td>
<td>Afternoon session, including closing worship.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.00</td>
<td><strong>Tea</strong> provided by local Friends</td>
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