NEWSLETTER

SOUTHERN EAST ANGLIA AREA QUAKER MEETING

July 2019

Diary Dates for July

Saturday July 20th Café Quaker and summer event for family - see poster below, all AM welcome
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
Sundays 10.30 am

EARLS COLNE
Sundays 10.30 am

SUDBURY
Sundays 10.30 am
Friars Street, Sudbury
Thursday 12.30 pm
(Bring Picnic,

First Contact
For Funeral Arrangements
CLACTON...............Carol Holding
COLCHESTER............Carol Holding
SUDBURY.............Peter Whiteley

Area Meeting Report
Chris Samuel

Nineteen friends and two attenders attended Area Meeting at Earls Colne on 9th June 2019. With sadness, the deaths of our Friends Dora Apps and Audrey Hind were noted. The Meeting then passed on to Area Meeting business.

The main item of business was the Area Meeting Accounts and Trustees report. A copy of the Accounts, setting out the figures is available at each local meeting. Jenny Kay gave us full, comprehensive statement of the Area Meetings Finances and the Area Meeting Trustees were all present. The position is that our Area Meeting has been living on its reserves, indeed, running at a deficit for the last 10 years.

Jenny pointedly asked the question “how long can Area Meeting survive in these circumstances and what can be done to reduce the deficit?”

More than one friend made the point that Friends and Attendees need to consider increasing their annual giving to help reduce the deficit. Area Meeting may have got used to using its reserves, built up by our forebears to contribute to good causes, rather than finding current income to pay them.

This could be particularly important when we are already committed to spend large sums for the renovation of the flat at Colchester Meeting House. There were other items of business, Layer Breton Friends Burial Ground stands in a remote area with Quaker support and no visitors. A local resident has shown an interest in purchasing or leasing the land from Area Meeting. The Area Meeting approved a proposal that the trustees enter into negotiations with the resident and report back with more details of his proposals.

Finally, Rob Parkes of Colchester Meeting had written to ask Area Meeting to make a donation for the ongoing support of the “Sanctuary Everywhere Program”, which provides support, sanctuary and advice to refugees.

Area Meeting Clerk was requested to invite Rob to contact local meetings directly with his request.

Editorial

Dear Friends

I believe we are still looking for some kind of warden, perhaps temporary or non-residents, but I am not sure. But there is a lot of activity and everyone is doing their bit.

We are missing Audrey Hind and Dora Apps - two much loved Members. But we are pressing on, and most people are joining in. Lots of interesting things are being planned for the summer months.

News, please, by the middle of the month, to Valerie Graves.
It continues to be a fantastic year for roses, both the cultivated kind and the wild. Roses seem to spring up everywhere! And when they do, they are full of bloom. I keep pricking my finger on something that turns out to be another rose!
Dora Apps

My mother, Dora, lived her life with faith, hope and love at the very core of her being.

She was born in Edmonton, the only child of Ethel and Albert Smith. She was brought into this world in a great act of hope. Both my grandparents were quite old when mum was born, and her father had survived the first world war, but with only a quarter of one lung!

Dora was raised an Anglican, but from an early age appreciated the richness of other non-conformist traditions. Albert was from a family committed to the Salvation Army, and Sunday afternoons were full of music at the Smith family gatherings.

My father started life as a Methodist, but Bill and Dora married at St Mary’s Anglican church, in East Barnet. and so began a life together that became a spiritual journey of exploration.

In Colchester, they found the Quakers, and the Quaker discipline suited their wish to be of service in their community. They worked together with others to bring St. Helena hospice to life, and were very active in the parent support and fund-raising group at Turner Village, where Christine, my older sister lived, because she is mentally handicapped.

My parents spiritual journey took them later in life to Hengrave Hall, where they were able to work together as part of an ecumenical community. This experience brought them closer, and drew the strands of their life work, religion, art, music, dance together into a single woven tapestry.

Mum’s love for her family is profound, as you all know; it is also a brave love. She honoured my wish as a young child to do everything myself, despite having only one hand.

She nurtured my independence, knowing that freedom comes with risk.

But perhaps her greatest act of bravery as a mother was to bring my sister Christine up at home for 16 years, but then to recognise that Christine needed to go into a care home, to be looked after by others. Her faith was deeply tested at this time, but her love never faltered. She remained, throughout her life, committed to Chrissy’s physical, emotional and spiritual well being.

“So, now faith, hope and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love”

Painted Lady

Julia Usher has had a deep love of Butterfly Observation for many years; living very close to the many and varied habitats of Highwoods Country Park.

“This year has already been a fascinating year, with large numbers of many different species to be found on their chosen food plants.

I have never before seen this gorgeous butterfly below, in our park: a Painted Lady. I counted five of them altogether: on a bank of bramble flowers. Below is another great favourite of mine: a Comma, with its ragged wing shape. This year, the intense orange of the young brood is dazzling …”
Quakers and Amnesty International

For many years Colchester Meeting House has been the venue for the local Amnesty group. Amnesty International (commonly known as Amnesty or AI) is a non-governmental organization focused on human rights, with an estimated seven million members and supporters around the world. Its stated mission is to campaign for “a world in which every person enjoys all of the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments.”

Quaker connections with Amnesty go back a long way. Friends were closely involved in setting it up in the early 60s. Many Friends continue to be involved. Many Meeting Houses around the country host Amnesty groups.

The Colchester local group is a small band of volunteers. We meet every third Tuesday of the month at Colchester Meeting House, at 7.30 p.m. In a typical meeting we would get an update on violations of human rights around the world, which, sadly, continue on a daily basis: they need to be challenged. From time-to-time we get external speakers, for example, a former political prisoner in Myanmar.

A lot of our core work is writing to governments, where there is abuse of human rights in their particular country. Our particular focus is on Latin America, particularly Central America. We have already helped to secure the early release of a young woman in Honduras who was sentenced to thirty years in prison for an alleged abortion under the ultrastrict laws of that country. Increasingly, we are hearing about the plight of indigenous peoples and the abuse of environmental activists.

You may have seen one of our stalls at the local Farmers’ Market or at local churches. A similar article to this has appeared in church magazines across town. At the regional level we tend to work with other groups, especially the Ipswich one, which happens to meet at Ipswich Meeting House.

Feel free to come along to one of our meetings. You will be most welcome. If you would like to know more please contact me – I’m in the list of members – or our local information co-ordinator Don Manhire on manhire@uwclub.net.

Robert Parkes

Brief Notes

from the Trustees Annual Report and Accounts 2018

Jenny Kay, Clerk to Trustees

Prompted by the overspend of £33,872 (Income £90,383, expenditure £124,255) trustees have looked back at past figures. In the years from 2012 to 2017 the overspend was approximately equal to the charitable contributions made to other organisations including BYM. In 2018 some of the overspend was due to running costs.

Over the last five years the total deficits reached £220,000. This figure represents the charitable giving which SEAQM has felt privileged to make. Investments with Rathbone Greenbank had compensated for with an increase of £110,000.

The value of investments stood at £485,726 at December 2019 including £39,000 approximately which provided an income for Colchester to distribute to other causes. Funds with restricted use of £144,312 and designated funds of £278,512 account for £422,824 of the total investments and cash.

At the beginning of this year the available cash in the bank, held by AM and LMs was £151,000 of this £110,000 was already designated to be paid out: £30,000 due to be paid to Glebe House as agreed by AM, £5,000 for the Colchester Foodbank, £5,000 to be available for refugee grants, a further £50,000 for the refurbishment of the Colchester flat and £20,000 approved by AM for sending to BYM.

A trustees’ minute records that an overspend of up to £100,000 is expected in 2019 requiring us to draw on our investments. It is obvious that both in the long and the short term we need to reduce our deficits. Trustees will be considering how this might be achieved.
On unicorns

from Valerie Graves

There were pictures last month of the stone unicorn from my garden, which was dug up (with difficulty) and sent to my son in Wales. We had a picture of it in last month’s newsletter, one in colour, absolutely surrounded by little double pink wild roses.

She arrived safely and we haven’t yet heard back where she is going to be put.

Quaker Renewal

John Kay

I have sent for this book and hopefully I’ll be able to report on it in the Newsletter after I’ve read it. We are always happy to print book reports from Friends.

A collection of 16 essays by Craig Barnett on the spiritual renewal of the Quaker way, 56 pages, brand new - direct from author.

This is the author’s profile.

I am a Quaker living in Sheffield (UK), and currently serving on Britain Yearly Meeting’s Book of Discipline Revision Committee. I work for a local refugee charity, and am co-chair of Sheffield City of Sanctuary.

“In these essays Craig Barnett explores possibilities for spiritual renewal, new life and creativity in the Religious Society of Friends. He invites contemporary Friends to encounter the extraordinary potential of core Quaker practices for worship, discernment and testimony, and to rediscover their vocation as Spirit-led communities.”

6 things you never knew were invented by Quakers

Jon Martin

The Mason-Dixon Line

While the Betsy Ross flag story isn’t favoured by many scholars today, the next Quaker innovation is a firm historical fact – though it had some pretty questionable consequences. It was the work of a Quaker named Jeremiah Dixon, a British 18th century surveyor and astronomer.

Dixon had a curious career. Alongside fellow surveyor Charles Mason he attempted to observe the transit of Venus from Sumatra but ended up observing it at the Cape of Good Hope. Then, from 1763 to 1767, he and Mason went to North America and drew the now infamous Mason-Dixon Line across the nation.

At the time, Dixon’s work helped settle a border dispute between Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. However, it came to be widely seen as representing the border between the Northern United States and the Southern United States. In the years preceding the American Civil War, the Mason-Dixon Line marked the northern limit of slavery in the United States.

In his time Dixon was honoured as a Fellow of the Royal Society. He died young in 1779, surveying castles in County Durham, and would have no way of knowing the significance his line would have in coming centuries. He did, however, gain notoriety in Quaker circles due to his tendency to wear a long red coat and drink excessively – outrageous stuff for 18th century Quakers!
Jenny Kay

Thanks to Alan Arnold and Colin Saunders our notice board has taken on a new lease of life. Sanded down and newly oiled it now has notices back and front.

The board was originally designed to replace the old one, facing the road with the back to the bushes but putting it in the open space by the path has enabled the back to be used, giving additional display space.

After thinking about installing more poster frames we have opted for a simple solution. For the time being posters are laminated and secured with drawing pins.

After being stored for a while the four posters displaying the statement 'In Turbulent Times' have gradually become very relevant to our lives in local, national and international affairs.

The four testimonies to peace, truth, equality and sustainability are a vital guide to our lives but I have been trying to give some thought to aspects of 'Being a Quaker' which are be personally helpful and sustaining; times of calm and quiet in meetings, our ability to find space for the work of the spirit in our daily lives and being open to opportunities for enjoyment especially within our meetings. I'm sure there are many more.
Belonging to a Quaker Meeting

It was said of the early Christians, 'Behold, how they love one another'. Could this equally be said of us? Or are our meetings places where newcomers may not always be welcomed, where people feel alone?

What happens to those who are part of our meetings? Are their lives changed? Do they care more? Love more?

What do we know of one another’s lives outside of the meeting? Of one another’s spiritual journeys? Do we seek to share joys and humour as well as sorrows, or are we perhaps too near the ‘sober-sides’ images of popular belief?

Surely the nurturing of relationships and the response to their breakdown will arise from the willingness of each of us to enter with imagination and love into one another’s lives. If we truly know one another then we are likely to be sensitively aware of one another’s needs. Often it is just being alongside someone; listening; a gentle touch when words cannot be found. Our extreme busyness, and the pressure and tension of modern life, make it at once more necessary and at the same time more difficult that our meetings should become living and loving communities.

June Ellis, 1986

*Quaker Faith and Practice 10.10*

Quaker Blogs

Jenny Kay

*A way to explore the future of the Religious Society of Friends and the revision of Quaker Faith and Practice.*

John discovered Craig Bennett, a member of the revision committee at [https://transitionquaker.blogspot.com/](https://transitionquaker.blogspot.com/) where Craig’s essay on the future of the Religious Society of Friends written in 2009 for the Friends Quarterly Essay competition and a talk given by Rex Ampler to Lancashire AM on the theme of the publication sent to every LM ‘God, Words and Us’ can be found. Both worth reading.

Sam Barnett- Cormack who describes himself as a non-theist Quaker is to be found at [https://quakeropenings.blogspot.com/](https://quakeropenings.blogspot.com/) where he has written up his thoughts on the revision process. Woodbrooke Programme Team members, Mark Russ and Rhiannon Grant write blogs. Mark a Christian Quaker at [https://jollyquaker.com/](https://jollyquaker.com/) explains his Christian understandings in his article ‘Jesus the key to my experience’ and gives his interpretation of the use of the word ‘privilege’ in his reflections from BYM 2019. Rhiannon Grant’s personal ramblings can be read at [https://brigidfoxandbuddha.wordpress.com/](https://brigidfoxandbuddha.wordpress.com/).

There’s plenty more to follow up once you get started.

Wildspot

from Valerie Graves

A typical new flower I hadn’t seen before is a sort of wild antirrhinum. It is a pale mauve, with tiny little flowers, most attractive, each flower about the size of a farthing. Another one is a bell-flower, like the blue one but a brilliant white. The whole garden is over-run by a wild yellow iris which has spread out of the pond. I shall probably leave them.