



Keeping Cool this Summer

Photo Jenny Kay

NEWSLETTER

SOUTHERN EAST ANGLIA AREA QUAKER MEETING

Diary Dates for September

September 2019

Saturday 22 September Social Sunday Alison and Rob's House in Lavenham

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)
Clerk to Southern East Anglia Quaker Meeting: Diana Naylor
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

Sundays 10.30 am

SUDBURY

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

The editor

As many of you will know four weeks ago Valerie Graves had a serious fall breaking her hip and needing surgery. She is recovering well in the St Osyth Priory Ward of Clacton General Hospital. She has given John and I permission to do this edition of the Newsletter without her, but only this one. This is a hopeful sign that she is intending to be around for the next. The newsletter is produced in the following way. John as the publisher receives Valeries editorial etc, collects all the items and puts the Newsletter together. It then goes to Valerie, via her son Tom's email to be edited. Once John hears from Valerie he makes

the final adjustments and the file goes to Inprint Colchester for the black and white copies and he sends out the email colour version. I have recently become more involved supporting John.

Tom passes on his thanks to everyone who has been in touch with Valerie. We are all holding her in our hearts and minds and looking forward to the next issue.

Jenny Kay



Well, contrary to reports, Colchester Meeting is alive, well and busy.

'Being Friends Together' continued though the year and will start again in September. **Café Quaker**, a get together on the third Saturday morning of the month has proved a vibrant addition to our community life. The Art group meet every Saturday morning in the Parnell room and we are joined by some young textilers who hire the children's room once a month on that third Saturday. What has been a real joy is the reinstatement of Wednesday lunchtime meeting together. This has happened slowly. The meeting room is held available from 12 to 2pm. Friends meet at 12ish for a greeting and chat and then have a half hour quiet time at 12.30. If they have time afterwards, they eat their picnic lunches together. This is being advertised outside the Meeting House at the time in

case passers-by fancy a bit of peace.

We have had a wedding and a funeral this year, both occasions where the Meeting House was full, the meeting room overflowed. We have had evening Meetings for Eating during the winter and two summer picnics and walks. Saturday events enabled Friends to travel by bus to the summer events. We have a Social Sunday tea still to come in September in Lavenham. We are opening the Meeting House for Heritage Day and planning a weekend Gathering in October – details elsewhere in the newsletter. Who said we were dying?

Yes, we have had several Friends in hospital, we have had deaths and Friends moving away but we have also gained new Friends who are very active in our community. We have instigated different ways

FIRST CONTACT

FOR FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

CLACTON.....Carol Holding

COLCHESTER.....Carol Holding

SUDBURY.....Peter Whiteley

News from Colchester LM

Life of the Meeting

Sometimes we count the number of Friends in our Meeting for Worship and get depressed – 'there are fewer than there were five and ten years ago' – oh dear – 'we have lost so and so' – everyone is older and so on. But we are in the middle of great changes in our Meeting alongside the great changes we see in society, our government and the world. Nobody likes change, news is instant and often wrong...



a legacy of individual attention on tap has not been easy. We have had unwelcome visitors, but also made some amazing contacts with fabulous organisations. The potential of that building as a Quaker centre for Col-

chester is enormous. of doing things to suit the changing talents we have. We are trying to simplify our committee structure and delegate and share certain jobs.

More mundane housekeeping

Alongside all the spiritual and fellowship activities the renovation project has created a major upheaval, not directly yet – that has still to be discerned but in changing the way in which the Meeting House is

chester is enormous.

However, legislation around employment, health and safety, privacy etc. has slowed us down. Friends have sat in their coats on MfW while we struggled to master the complex heating system, they have cleared cupboards and the garage and found and recycled some amazing things found in the place. We have uncovered issues with the building that have got to be

considered, as has, not least, how any renovations can be paid for. We have also recognised that our deputy warden system supporting Mervyn is not practical for the Friends we have available. Trustees,

who have responsibility for all the premises of our Monthly Meeting have guided, supported and challenged us through all our activities.

We have made progress. We have consulted widely with Friends' House and other Meetings all over the country. We appointed Melanie Read to be our part time, non-resident temporary warden. Her contract now is now increased and

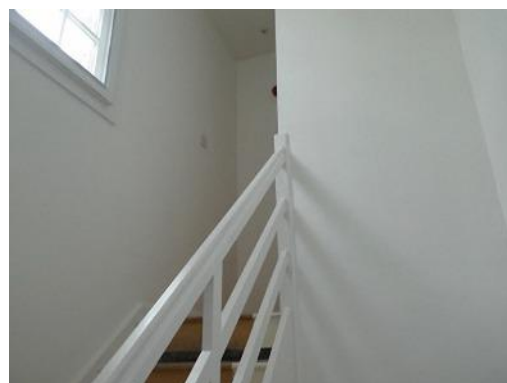
extended to the end of the year as she is undertaking the cleaning as well as dealing with hirers. This will mean a much more targeted approach to the cleaning as well as enabling savings. We have ideas for future staffing which are with trustees.

The premises committee have overseen changes to our hiring policy and charges as well as



looking more closely at the fabric of the building. The flat has been completely renovated with a new bathroom and kitchen, secondary double glazing, LED lighting and appropriate extractor fans etc. We only await some carpeting before we engage an agent to let it for us.

We will share some renovation ideas with Friends at our Local Meeting for Worship for business on September 1st and again at the Area Meeting in Harwich. After all it is the address of our AM and repository of all the recent archives. Watch this space.



run. Our warden, Mervyn Carter, handed in his notice last November and left in January because he felt we should not spend money on caring for the building. He made that very clear. Three of us took over the running of the Meeting House for hirers and Friends, we thought for month. Huh! Opening a building to a demanding public for 13 hours a day, with 4 options of letting, a complex pricing system and



Clacton News

Janet Thomas

The Buddhists here are very happy with the storage solutions Premises Committee have come up with for them. They are expanding their membership and are very pleasant people with whom to share these amenities.

Martin Rogers has carried out more improvements including repair and painting of the front bay window ledge outside and also a bike stand installation. The Quaker Meeting sign which was blown down some time ago now has been reinstalled and is pointing in the right direction.

The 1st Wednesday Meeting for Worship with light lunch meets as always at 12 mid day.

The Art Club is from 11am to 3pm on the last Fridays, bring your own lunch.

The Spiritual Friendship Group for Clacton and Harwich is on each 1st Monday from 11pm.

All welcome!

Another Matter

John Hall

It is said that some years ago, London Yearly Meeting was in session, late on a warm afternoon. All the doors and windows were open, and Friends had grown somewhat sleepy, when a hen appeared at the door, and walked up the aisle. The clerk looked at her over his glasses, and then asked, "What has thee to lay before us?"

Social Sunday

September 22, 2.00-5.00 pm
at the home of Alison and Robert
Parkes in Lavenham.

Please bring along a contribution for shared tea. We will have walks of different lengths, plus table tennis and tea in the garden, weather permitting!

Our address is in the List of Members.

Earls Colne News

Jenny Kay

On Sunday we heard Advice & Query 10, given in ministry reminding us how valuable this advice is. I reflected on how privileged we are that there is a Meeting in Earls Colne for us and for others who only occasionally seek out Quakers for solace. George Fox advised early Quakers to 'keep your meetings'. The children of Reading did so while their parents were imprisoned and there have been many stories since of Quakers who have continued to keep the Meeting for Worship as lone members until someone else turns up and it seems someone always does. Earls Colne Meeting was laid down as a business meeting and it's affairs placed under the Area Meeting in 2008 with one Meeting for Worship on third Sundays. Two Friends kept the Meeting every Sunday and within a relatively short time Earls Colne is fully fledged as a Local Meeting with clerk, treasurer and 6 -14 plus present every Sunday. We come from Bocking, Colchester, Eight Ash Green, Earls Colne, Fordham, Halstead, Kelveden and Stisted. I remember a group session with Beth Allen at a BYM Outreach Conference that Valerie Graves and I attended. Beth summed up that we need to do what we can to make our meetings known but to always remember that the Spirit is working out there too.

Meeting for Sufferings

Robert Parkes

Friends House London 6th July 2019

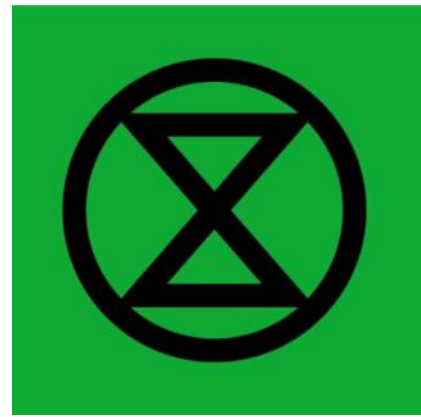
“George Fox exhorts us to be patterns and examples so that our ‘carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people... then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone’. How can we heed this in today’s world of political and social upheaval?”

This was a deeply thought-provoking meeting that released some passionate, heartfelt emotions. In tender discernment we sought to understand some of the issues around gender diversity and how they affect Friends and the Society. Many of us felt we still had much to learn about the situation of those in society who feel vulnerable and are marginalised by accepted normality and mores. MfS will return to this. Meanwhile, it would welcome further comments from AMs, LMs and individuals. Please send them to gender@quaker.org.uk. We hope this will help to articulate more clearly what a specific Quaker contribution there may be to this issue, remembering that the basis of our response is love and the recognition that each person is a child of God.

We heard from BYM trustees and their initial decision to develop work beyond the Vibrancy project to enable more local support for meetings. Essentially, that the current piloted model of locally-based development workers (LDVs) should be expanded so that there is an

LDV within reach of every meeting in Britain within 5 years, and that BYM will re-orientate its work towards more local support for Meetings. Change will not happen overnight, yet it is likely to mean some work that is dear to our hearts will have to be laid down to find the investment for meeting-centred support. It also heralds a departure from Friends House being the immutable hub of Quakers in Britain. In this regard, the Society is no different from many other organisations struggling to maintain a presence in central London. We also heard of the need for much better IT across the Society, such as video-conference facilities within or within easy reach of each meeting. Whilst some Friends have misgivings about all of this it is nevertheless felt the time to invest in the future of Quakers in Britain is now, whilst we have reserves, including in people, to enable the management of change, of infrastructure and of culture. The message is clear: without change the Society will continue to dwindle.

On sustainability, once more, we heard the clarion call for BYM to become a low carbon, sustainable community. Friends in Britain have repeatedly re-affirmed our commitment to action. We recognise the urgent need to address climate breakdown. Last year we agreed that central and standing committees should continue to take increasing responsibility for their role in facilitating progress. Yet there is frustration amongst some Friends and Meetings that the Society is but a spectator and that we have yet to become the



patterns and examples George Fox exhorted us to be. On the other hand, many Meetings are supporting the Extinction Rebellion movement. We heard about no less than 15 Quakers arrested earlier in the year as XR activists. Other Friends are speaking out at XR events. Meanwhile others contribute in quiet upholding. MfS encourages all Friends to consider how they are called to respond to the crisis, without getting arrested necessarily! Each person has a different contribution to make, and we can be stronger and make more out if we work together and support each other.

As usual, a full report of the meeting and papers can be found on the dedicated MfS pages on the Quaker.org.uk website. MfS also gets reported in *The Friend*.

Plainness

John Hall

Plainness was the original concept of what is now called simplicity.

In the case of meeting houses it may be said that typically, the Friends' meeting house is not so much intended to be plain as to be simple, not to be conspicuous as to be modest, not to be fashionable as to be timeless, not to be civic in its demeanor as to be homely, not to provoke but to engage, not to be neglected as to be cherished.' David Butler is of the opinion that the reason that the design of meeting houses 'was nationally so uniform in essentials is a consequence of the way they observed their testimony to simplicity in all aspects of their lives.' David Brett lends support for this view by saying that 'when The Society of Friends began, as part of their social consolidation, to construct permanent meeting houses, a definite type was established very early on, and we may wish to speak of "building as a sign".' While this is a valid opinion, it is surely more likely that the essential uniformity of meeting house

design is not so much a commitment to just simplicity but more to the uniform nature of the meeting for worship throughout the country.

But it was a different concept that led Friends to a commitment linked to truth and as a challenge to the 'vain fashions' in speech, dress and behaviour evident in seventeenth-century England. It was explained by Robert Barclay, the leading Quaker theologian who in 1678 wrote that, 'It is not lawful for a Christian to have superfluous details in apparel which serve only as ornaments or are a matter of vanity', although he does go on to say that they should not either preclude a man dressing better than his servants, or the use of rich materials. Consequently and subsequently, William Penn argued that observing plainness was a weapon against 'impudence..., lust, pride, vanity and wantonness.' It led to 'universal chastity ... godly austerity, virtue ... and the end of gluttony and gaudiness in apparel, flattering titles, and a luxurious life' bringing back 'primitive innocency' and would restore 'that plainhearted, downright, harmless life [so

that one would be] not much caring what we should eat, drink, or put on.' Such a commitment, however, was not cost free. In their January 1672 Testimony of true and brotherly love Gilbert Latey and eleven other tailors advised Friends on simplicity of dress particularly against 'lace, ribbons, and needless buttons.' Such meant that they could no longer supply such items themselves and as a result were unable to provide fashionable clothes. The result was that Gilbert Latey went from being a very successful and rich man to being quite poor.

With the rise of evangelicalism in the nineteenth century and its concomitant reduced emphasis on the 'Inner Light' of Fox, Barclay and Penn, the decline of its associated anti-intellectualism, the Society of Friends moved towards other Protestant churches and away from its individualistic past. While plainness of dress continues in Ohio Yearly Meeting, elsewhere it is just seen as part of a long-gone history.

Originally appearing in, Friends Meeting Houses, Issue 7

Jacob's Well

John Hall

At the time that the Erie Canal was being built across New York state, shares in the project were a popular investment among Friends. So it was with some dismay that the members of New York Meeting heard such investments denounced by a powerful speaker.

A main argument was that if the Lord had intended to put a waterway there he would have done so; and further more, who was man that he should presume by his own works to make such a channel? The meeting, subdued under the effects of the oratory, settled into a disturbed silence. It was finally broken by a man of slight build and not too strong

voice, who quoted, "And Jacob digged a well."

[It is perhaps appropriate to point out that no such phrase appears in the Bible although there are a number of references to Jacob's well]

Notes from Afar

Barbara Hart Appel,

Attender of Sudbury Meeting, but resident for 18 years in an Eco Village in Spain.

Several articles in the August newsletter spoke to me.

Firstly, the wonderful quotes of John Woolman, “Wait on the Lord to know His mind” and Psalm 46 v 10, “Be still and know that I am God”, it was rather like having a Friends Meeting brought here! It is so necessary here to feel a presence and stillness at all times.

It is a very active and physical life, with new people arriving all the time. Getting the everyday things done with no mains water or electricity, managing our own supply and trying to live as sustaina-

bly as possible. People visit the Village each year from 1 week to 6 months, those staying longer seldom stay for more than 4 years, just long enough to understand the ways of things!

Secondly, the picture of Quaker Meeting in Gracechurch St, reminded me of a notelet from Brigflatts Meeting of Anne Wilson speaking at Meeting in 1696. It was not until it was on the mantelpiece here that I realised the significance, the privileges I grew up with, more than so many people even in Europe.

A dear local friend's parents are in their mid 50s, kind and socially minded, but have no concept of any other Christian religion, only Catholicism. People know of Muslims, who ruled here for about 80 yrs,

but there was no other choice here for generations after that time. I have not counted the number of Christian religions there were when I was growing up in England.

Back to the painting of Anne Wilson 1696, speaking at Meeting. (Actually she was telling Samuel Bownas off for sleeping in Meeting and paying little attention to the ministry!) The warden at that time was also a woman Mary Dawson, who painted the picture of Meeting.

I am so grateful to have found Friends Society many years ago and to have had the choice. Although so far away, I still feel ‘held’, (in strength) and hope that I can ‘hold’ at least some of the people who pass through here.

Penn's Holy Experiment in Pennsylvania Part 1

(Part 2 will appear next month.)

A remarkable group of dissenters, commonly known as Quakers, arose in England during the mid-1600s. Their name derived from the report that they "quaked" when touched by deep religious emotion. Officially they were known as the Religious Society of Friends.

Quakers were especially offensive to the authorities, both religious and civil. They refused to support the established Church of England with taxes. They built simple meetinghouses, without a paid clergy, and “spoke up” themselves in meetings when moved. Believing that all were equal children in the sight of God, Quakers kept their broad-brimmed hats on in the presence

of their “betters” and addressed others with a simple “thee” or “thou,” rather than with conventional titles. They would take no oaths because Jesus had commanded, “Swear not at all.” This peculiarity often embroiled them with government officials, for “test oaths” were still required to establish the fact that a person was not a Roman Catholic.

The Quakers, beyond a doubt, were a people of deep conviction. They abhorred strife and warfare and refused military service. As advocates of passive resistance, they would turn the other cheek and rebuild their meetinghouse on the sites where their enemies had torn it down. Their courage and devotion to principle finally triumphed.



Although at times they seemed stubborn and unreasonable, they were a simple, devoted, democratic people, contending in their own way for religious and civic freedom.

William Penn, a wellborn and athletic young Englishman, was attracted to the Quaker faith in 1660, when only sixteen years old. His father, disapproving, administered a sound flogging. After various adventures in the army (the best portrait of the



peaceful Quaker has him in armor), the youth firmly embraced the despised faith and suffered much persecution.

Penn felt keenly the plight of his fellow Quakers, thousands of whom were executed, flogged, or cast into dank prisons. Penn's thoughts naturally turned to the New World, where a sprinkling of Quakers had already fled, notably to Rhode Island, North Carolina, and New Jersey, eager to establish

an asylum for his people, he also hoped to experiment with liberal ideas in government and at the same time make a profit. Finally, in 1681, he managed to secure from the king an immense grant of fertile land, in consideration of a monetary debt that the crown owed to his deceased father. The king called the area Pennsylvania ("Penn's Woodland") in honor of the father.

Pennsylvania was by far the best advertised of all the colonies. Its founder sent out paid agents and distributed countless pamphlets printed in English, Dutch, French, and German. Unlike the lures of many American real estate promoters, then and later, Penn's inducements were generally truthful. He especially welcomed substantial citizens, including industrious carpenters, masons, and shoemakers. His liberal land policy, which encouraged substantial holdings,

was instrumental in attracting a heavy inflow of immigrants.

Penn formally launched his colony in 1681.

He farsightedly bought land along the Delaware River from the Indians for his town of Philadelphia ("brotherly love" in Greek). His treatment of the native people was so fair that the Quaker "broad brims" went among them unarmed and even employed them as babysitters. For a brief period, Pennsylvania seemed the promised land of amicable Indian-white relations. Some southern tribes even migrated there, seeking the Quaker haven.

Reprinted from, The Brief American Pageant: A History of the Republic
By David M. Kennedy, Lizabeth Cohen, Mel Piehl

Blue Coat

John Hall

William Evans was with Jeremiah Hacker in North Carolina on a missionary visit. Beside him in the ministers' stand sat a Friend in a bright blue coat with brass buttons. After Meeting, William Evans said, "I have been troubled as we sat together by the style and colour of thy coat. Is it right for one who sits at the head of the meeting to wear such a coat?"

The man replied, "Since thee has spoken so, it opens the way for me to tell thee that I have been much troubled by thy clothes. They are plain to be sure, but of very expensive broadcloth. I am a poor man, too poor to buy a coat, and this one was given to me."



In Lieu of Wildspot

Jenny thought you would like to see this. She took this photo of our overnight visitor in our miniature barrel pond B & B and chill-out for frog visitors. White halo for the benefit of those with less than acute eyesight.