



Guide Dogs Group

Photo: Anne Watkinson

NEWSLETTER

SOUTHERN EAST ANGLIA AREA QUAKER MEETING

AM Dates for 2020

9th Feb at Clacton
19th April at Sudbury
14th June at Colchester
13th Sept at Earls Colne
8th Nov at Harwich
Each Meeting starts
at 2.15 pm.

DATES – DEC, JAN

Colchester LM – Christmas Lunch 10-12 Sun 15 December 2019
Clacton LM – Meeting for Carols 3.00 pm Sat 21 December 2019
Clacton MfW 10.30 - 11.15 am Wed 25 December 2019
Clacton Spiritual Friendship Group Mon 6 January 2020
Clacton LM for Church Affairs 10.30 am Wed 22 January 2020

December 2019

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

FIRST CONTACT
FOR FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS
Charles Bather. Peter Whiteley



Area Meeting Report 10/11/19

Jane Herd

The area meeting of 10th November was held at Colchester and was well attended by Friends from several local meetings, with about 20 in attendance. Minutes will be made available and Jenny Kay chair of trustees will write separately about her finance report from trustees so here are a few personal thoughts.

It was a poignant day, Colchester as a military town had a big parade for Remembrance Sunday which was noticeable by the many uniforms and medals sported in the town. At the same time

Dear Friends,

Valerie came to Earls Colne on third Sunday and we were able to thank her on behalf of AM for her long service as Editor of the Newsletter which on investigation proved to be 29 years. Nominations will be seeking a new editor to take over in 2020. Looking back through the old copies we discovered that Valerie was appointed in the autumn of 1990 at the time when the Newsletter was printed after midweek meeting on Wednesdays in Colchester

Editorial

From December 1990

Dear Friends

Early Friends did not celebrate Christmas, regarding it as a vain and idolatrous, just like other feast days. Nowadays we allow ourselves to enjoy festivals, with of course a good deal of anxiety about commercialism. Probably we scoff at the beautiful old legends, the baby in the manger, the animals kneeling at midnight. But good historical evidence can be found for many parts of the Nativity - the census, the star, the wise men, Haemorrhoids murders. If they have been

Colchester Meeting House had sold out of white poppies and had a peace display up in the meeting house.

The Area Meeting was a long one of 3 ½ hours. There was some discussion of how to fill Area Meeting vacancies both for Clerk and nominations. It was suggested that the Clerk role would be shared by up to 5 people for at least the next year and some work will be done to identify and allocate specific tasks and to make clear to all who is doing what, communication will be key to make this new arrangement work.

Rob Parkes reported on his attendance as a residential weekend for Meeting for Sufferings which allowed for greater time to explore issues in more depth. These included acting under concern in

Meeting House. The Gestetner was operated by Gladys Teagle and Marjorie Pollard who invariably ended up covered in black ink. Friends helped with collating and stapling and John has vague memories of preparing the skins.

With the lack of an editorial we are reprinting Valerie's first December one, as relevant now as it was then.

Jenny Kay

put together with artistic licence to prove a point, so has most of the Old Testament. Does it matter? Should we not be worse off without the Christmas story to provide a focus for remembering old friends, giving to charities, rethinking our lives? And how wise of the early Christians to combine the birth of Christ with the pagan celebrations at the winter solstice, time of death and rebirth.

There will be no newsletter in January. Material for February by 20 January, please. Very many thanks to all my correspondents for being so helpful. A happy Christmas and the best of good resolutions!

terms of being arrested or imprisoned, climate injustice and assisted dying. There was some interest in the meeting about exploring the issue of death and dying and some expertise identified, we would hope to take this forward though this would be up to friends to be in action about.

Jenny Kay the chair of trustees then provided a long and very helpful explanation as to the Area Meetings finances. I myself am aware that there is a sense that we have a lot of money and that may have been the case previously. However, most of our wealth is in fixed assets, in terms of property and we have no wish to sell any of this currently. This still leaves us with what seems like a substantial amount in the bank however about two thirds of this are restricted funds comprising of a nec-

essary reserve and various legacies which have specific terms. This would still be OK if we were not running an ongoing deficit year on year in that only one of the meetings is currently meeting its own costs and if the Colchester building did not need substantial repairs partly created by decades of make do and mend which leaves us with a 50 year old boiler, and many aspects such as

windows, doors, flooring and toilets not meeting current requirement in terms of ecology, safety or access. The Chair of the Colchester Meeting Premises Committee provided another long and helpful report in this respect. We were left concluding that finances are tight but the essential Colchester work has to be done and it was agreed that we will pursue this and the next step would be to

get a more definitive costing from the architects. Trustees will look as to whether some of the restricted funds can be made available but this is a short term fix and we do need to look to more income generation in each of our meetings whether this is by grant application, fund raising, donations or higher hiring incomes.

Inter-Faith Meeting

Anne Watkinson

I went up to the University today as Ecky was not able to go to take part in a short lunchtime interfaith event. I thought you might like the report that Mark Swires the catholic priest/chaplain sent round to us afterwards. He is putting this into some circulation at the University.

Faith Centre panel discussion on Prayer

Andrew Keeble, the University's Inclusion Champion for Religion and belief welcomed the speakers and guests to the discussion panel event.

Andrew congratulated the Sikh community on the 550th anniversary of the birth of Guru Nanak.

There were six speakers who spoke about prayer in their religion or faith. These were:

Silanathu Force from Colchester Buddhist Centre,

Father Alexander Haig, the University's Orthodox chaplain

Zack Absi, speaking about Islam

Amy-Julie Fogiel, president of the Jewish society

Anne Watkinson from Colchester Quakers

Dhaya Talewar, president of the Sikh society



In the question time the speakers were asked, amongst other things, about their experiences of having prayers answered and how they can believe, know or experience that their prayers are being heard.

My Mexico Trip

Jane Herd

As a member of Colchester Meeting I was asked by the International Centre for Therapeutic Care in the UK if I would present a key note address at a Conference in Mexico. This Congress was being organised by Juconi an NGO based in Puebla, Mexico who work for peace through interventions with Children and Family in extreme poverty and vulnerable to violence and exploitation, this includes street children, families and migrant children including many unaccompanied girls, boys and adolescents. Juconi could not afford to pay for my flight and accommodation and though I gave up all my time for free unlike most speakers I do not work for a large organ-

isations who could meet their speakers costs but run a small social enterprise which currently has limited income. I therefore approached SEAQM and applied for a substantial education grant which I was thrilled to receive.

The conference was over two days and the money was well spent, there was 500 delegates from 17 countries, the largest and most diverse audience I have ever had access too. I delivered a key note on Reflective Practice in Children's Services in the UK, a workshop where I ran a live, in action, reflective practice group, sat on a panel on foster care and presented on my work on therapeutic foster care, did another workshop on secondary trauma and burnout and a recorded an interview on reflective practice. This was all contemporaneously translated into Spanish

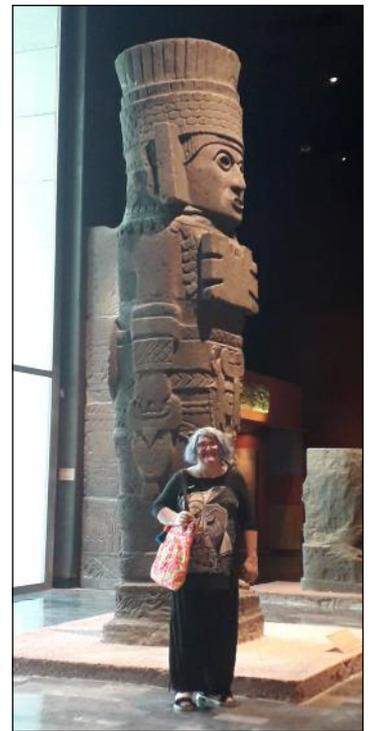


which was new to me, though the translators said feelings words are hard nevertheless everyone seemed to follow each other. Understandably, I was absolutely exhausted by the end but all was well received and I have already been invited back to their next conference in March 2021. There was a particular interest in my fostering work as this is a very new concept in Mexico, they have only had legislation since 2014 and there is still much to be done in terms of policy and practice so more may develop in this regard.

The conference was on the 25th and 26th of October and being that it was so close to the Day of the Dead, which is in fact two days in Mexico, Nov 1st and 2nd it seemed silly not stay on. I made contact with Mexico Quakers, there are about 800 of them. I was invited to stay with Paty a retired doctor in Mexico City and visited the Caso de los Amigos the Quaker Meeting House in Mexico City which provides housing and services to migrant adults and chil-

dren, I went to Meeting for Worship and met a Quaker from Shropshire who was doing a radical poetry reading! I saw lots of day of the dead altars decorated with marigold petals. The orange marigolds' specific role is to draw back the dead to be with their families this is via their bright colour and smell. There were lots of trips to a small pyramid in the Centre of Mexico City, the incredible anthropology museum, Frida Kahlo's house and the Trotsky museum as well as meeting Paty's families and friends who found how I said Mexico was hilarious.

It was fabulous, it has taken me a week to recover and here are just a few of the hundreds of photographs I took. I would like to thank the area meeting for sponsoring me and Peter and Anne for organising a Mexican themed Meeting for Eating for my return with lots of fabulous Mexican food. I will organise a proper talk probably in January, more details to follow.



Letter from BYM

29 October 2019

Dear Liz,

Thank you for supporting Quaker work

Thank you so much for your generous contribution of £12888.41, please pass on our grateful thanks to the members of Southern East Anglia AM. Your donation will support the spiritual and pastoral life of our Quaker communities, and our collective witness in the world - promoting peace, justice, equality and sustainability. Your contribution helps meetings:

- to be more inclusive

- to address complex issues such as mental health and safeguarding

- by relieving some of the administrative burden through the Simpler Meetings project.

In the wider world your contribution supports:

- peacebuilders in the UK and East Africa to take nonviolent action against injustice

- local Quaker sustainability initiatives and individual Friends taking up national campaigning opportunities around climate justice

- Quakers to campaign for nuclear disarmament and challenge militarism and the arms trade.

We are grateful for your generous contribution, which will help sustain the life of our religious society and enable us to keep working for a more just, equal, peaceful and sustainable world.

In Friendship,

Maisa Monteiro

Donor Care & Fundraising Support Officer



From The Recording Clerk 29. 10. 2019

Dear Friends in Southern East Anglia

Just a quick note to add my personal thanks for your generous contribution to the work of Britain Yearly Meeting. It's great to know that Friends in Essex value Quaker work so highly. In the turbulent times we are living through, our country certainly needs driving, confident Quaker Meetings and bold Quaker work for a sustainable and peaceful world. Your contributions help us all work together to make that a reality. Thanks again!

In Friendship

Paul Parker

Trustees Report

Jenny Kay

AM on 10.11.19 at Colchester

Given by Jenny Kay, clerk to trustees on behalf of Sylvia Jeffcock, Eliza Jones, Ecky Prolinger and Liz Prockter, treasurer. John Lewis was released from service at the beginning of the Meeting.

This report comes at the time when Trustees are looking back at spending commitments for 2019 made in the Trustees Annual Report and Accounts 2018 and are considering the financial commitment for 2020 in preparation for the 2019 TARA. The contents of this document, a requirement of the Charity Commission, are the guide as to how AM uses its resources.

This follows the statement made in the November Newsletter which was intended to draw Friends' attention to the changing financial situation. Hopefully it also addresses a request from Colchester LM for more information

on trustee decision-making regarding the renovation plans.

The renovation of the Colchester flat is likely to be within the designated £50,000. The AM has met all previous charitable commitments except to the Colchester Food Bank, which will receive £5,000 when it is determined that this donation is still appropriate. The sum of over £17,000 was sent to British Yearly Meeting, to make up our contribution of £20,000 as agreed by AM. Please read the official letter of thanks and the personal note from Paul Parker attached to this report. Together with £30,000 delayed payment to Glebe House all of these payments are expected to form the overspend for this year. For the time being trustees do not advise giving to causes beyond the AM.

The figures presented to the AM intending to give an idea of available funds are a 'guess-timate'. Until the final figures for 2019 have been produced and checked by Whittles there is no

certainty. Available cash in AM and LM accounts has been depleted and £40,000 has been withdrawn from Rathbone Greenbank investments. The proposed £100,000 for Colchester, subject to AM approval will almost certainly necessitate further withdrawal of investments.

Good use has been made of the Jack Fields Fund with bursaries going for educational purposes to all ages of applicants for a variety of educational purposes. Trustees are continuing to designate the Kendal and Threshfield Fund to replace Jack Fields. This could be altered by an AM decision. There are possibilities for extending the use of the legacies restricted to Sudbury, approximately £96,000. This would need to be at the request of the AM and might need to involve the Charity Commission.

Trustees ask that we attempt to bring our future income and expenditure into balance, seeking to understand what this means and how we might achieve it.

Extinction Rebellion (XR) October Uprising.

Fragments from the frontline - Part One

Robert Parkes

The usual Monday morning London traffic was strangely quiet as I arrived at Lambeth Bridge to join in the Rebellion. XR had planned for faith groups to occupy the bridge and create an open-air ecumenical worship space. No-one knew how long this would be for. Unfortunately, the police must have got up earlier than the rebels as they'd held most of the bridge since before dawn. I heard one or two complaints that this was all rather underhand, but it was hardly surprising as the XR plan had been well publicised for days in ad-



vance. I felt it rather added to the good humour of the day. Undeterred by this early setback, a panoply of faith groups had gathered at either ends of the bridge. I met up with a Friend at the Lambeth Palace end and for the rest of the morning we sat in the road alongside others from other denominations, some I readily recognised, others who were new to me. We listened to prayers and to singing and to moving testi-

mony. Meanwhile, the police looked on calmly. Were they listening to what was being said or were they just bemused? It was hard to tell.

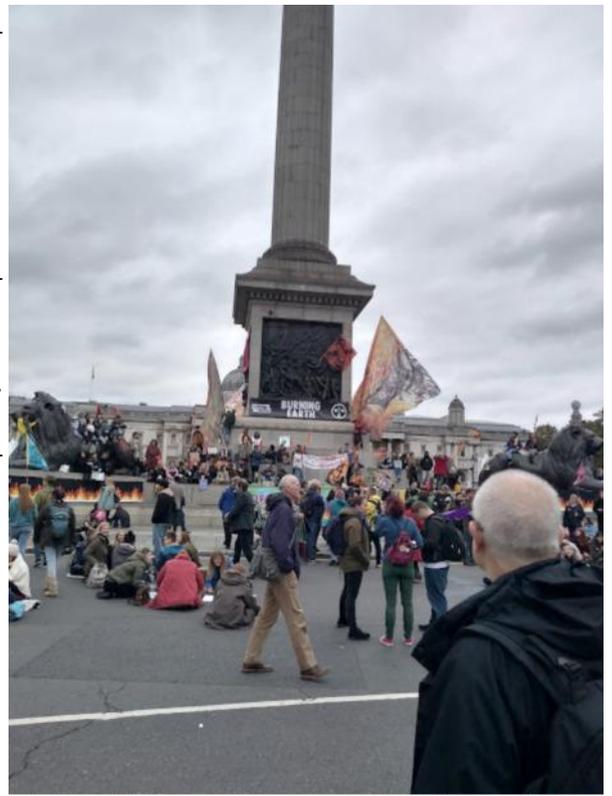
Even though we were in October the cold rising from the tarmac was numbing and by lunchtime I realised I needed to get up and move around. I bid farewell to my fellow Quaker rebel and set off for Westminster. I stopped to eat my sandwiches overlooking the Houses of Parliament, watching an XR boat bearing the banner "Truth Demands Action" plough up and down the Thames in front of the building. Were those inside taking any notice, I wondered. Westminster Bridge was occupied end-to-end by XR groups. They must have got up earlier. A large van was in the centre of the bridge blocking the road. Its tyres were let down and its occu-

pants padlocked inside. Here there were lots of police but they seemed in no hurry to clear the bridge. I watched as they arrested three protestors sitting in the road, but it all happened as if in slow motion. Cheers went up as each protestor was carried away. Were they for the rebels or for the police, or both maybe? It had all the flavour of a carnival. Tourists had gathered to watch and were keen to take selfies with the protestors, adding to the throng. The souvenir sellers were doing a roaring trade.

I was heading for Horse Guards as this had been assigned to XR groups from the East of England. The Parade ground as such was fenced off so protestors were gathering in the road alongside. I found myself standing between two students from Cambridge and a retired civil servant. Just like me. "I used to work over there" she mused, pointing to one of the Whitehall buildings. "Yes, me too" I replied. "I used to work around here as well". It all seemed rather ironic. Back then I'd probably have been wearing a suit looking for all intents and purposes like a part of the establishment. Now, I must have looked like just another rebel. Here the police were more vigilant, eying us warily.

I'd hoped to meet rebels from Bury St Edmunds but there was no sign of them. I was told other groups were expected over the next few days. I decided to head for Trafalgar Square and as I left people were starting to set up camp in St James' Park and those flaunting arrest were writing essential telephone numbers on their bodies in indelible ink. Two elderly ladies had taken up residence in picnic chairs in the middle of the road and two policewomen were patiently going through the step-by-step warnings prior to arresting them. A crowd had gathered ready to cheer them on when they did.

The sound of thunderous drumming was coming from the Square, echoing through Admiralty Arch, and as I got closer it was like climbing up to an Italian hill-top town to watch a festival of drums. Boom. Boom. Boom. People around Nelson's Column were waving enormous "Burning Earth" flags. This was the heart of the Rebellion. The police were struggling to keep the roads clear by forming up lines but XR protestors "flowed-like-water", first this way then that, then sitting down in the road enmasse. Out of the crowd ingenious structures made from large plywood cubes bolted together, started to rise like giant Lego towers, often with people locked inside them. It was going to be a long night and for or the time being the Police seemed happy to let them stay. Meanwhile, in another area a tower scaffold had risen, symbolically, out of the crowd like a fast-growing tree. Three rebels had glued themselves to the top. "Extinction" they cried. "Rebellion" the crowd roared in response. The drumming rose to crescendo. The police must have felt they had to deal with this. Softly, softly though. First, they surrounded it with officers and brought a van up close. Then, out of nowhere, appeared a team kitted out like rock climbers. Initially, I thought they were more protestors in strange garb but,



no, they were there to remove the protestors on the tower. Suddenly, we heard a siren over the noise of the crowd and the cry went up "Ambulance coming through". The rebels parted like the Red Sea to let the vehicle through only for it to be held up by lines of mounted police waiting in the wings that seem to take ages to step aside. Yet more irony, I thought. Was this the cue for the climbing team to go to work. Painstakingly and ever so carefully they began the process of removing the occupants of the tower. They were going to take their time. To no-one in particular I said, "I'm impressed" They were clearly paying close attention to the health and safety



both of themselves and the protestors. A final irony of the day, perhaps: many years ago, in my working life, the police had sought my advice on how to do this type of thing safely.

We'd been sitting in the road for what seemed like ages and it had started to rain. A young woman offered me shelter under her umbrella. It was getting dark and I was getting cold. I'd taken time out earlier for a cup of tea at Pret and this had kept

me going but, as I reflected, it all seemed a lot easier when I was 18. Time to head home, I decided, and a hot bath. "I'll be back" I reckoned as I sat on the tube back to Liverpool Street.

Part 2 next time – Boris Johnson calls us "Uncooperative Crusties."

Note from the Contributions Collector

Jenny Kay

I am using the words written by Derek Crosland in the December 1990 Newsletter, as they are appropriate for us 29 years later. I am not sure that the national work is now running with a large deficit but I know that SEAQM still is.

Our financial year ends on 31 December. If there are any Friends or Attenders who have not yet given the donation that they intend for this year, it would be helpful to receive this before the year ends. The Society's national work is still running with a large deficit and we are using up our reserves.

Please send your contribution to me, or give it to your LM treasurer for forwarding to AM.



The Life of Dorothy Seraphin

Dorothy was born in Hadleigh in Essex on January 12th 1928, but soon afterwards her parents moved to Hampshire, and she was brought up in the village of Cliddesden near Basingstoke. Until the age of 11 she attended the village school, and then obtained a Junior County Scholarship to attend the local girls' high school. At 18 she went to what was the then University College, Southampton, where she obtained an External London degree in English, and trained as a teacher.

During the following 38 years, Dorothy taught English in secondary schools, working in a total of 10 different schools for periods ranging from one term to 11 years, in-

cluding state, independent, girls', mixed, grammar and comprehensive schools. She experienced the full range of English teaching from remedial classes to A-level, and sometimes also ran school libraries, albeit in an untrained fashion! She also taught evening classes for adults for a number of years.

At 54, Dorothy married for the first time, too late to have children of her own. After 13 years, the marriage ended in a friendly divorce, and the relationship continued on a different footing.

While working in London, Dorothy has had some experience of helping children from abroad to learn English, and after retirement in 1988, and further experience as a volunteer teacher in Colchester, she attended a course at Colchester In-

stitute and obtained a certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. Subsequently she spent three very interesting semesters teaching English to training college students in Poland.

In retirement, she pursued various interests, in languages and in art, for example, for which she had had less time previously, and also did some volunteer work locally with refugees. Dorothy became a member of the Religious Society of Friends in 2000, after four years as an Attender. She found the community of Colchester Meeting both challenging and supportive, and it became an integral part of her life.

Extinction Rebellion

Jayne Meleschko

This month I joined the Rebellion.

Like many others I have become increasingly concerned about climate change, but 2018 was a pivotal year for me. The long awaited IPCC report was published. As expected the predictions were dire, but for the first time it gave us a timescale – 12 years to bring about the dramatic changes needed. A feeling of urgency crept over me. Now is the time to act before we reach a tipping point of no return. 2018 also brought the birth of our first grandson. Suddenly it was all very “up close and personal”. What sort of a world would he live in? If we failed to act, would he know hunger and civil breakdown?

In April XR gave me some hope. I believe they achieved a great deal – a lot of media coverage, reaching far more people than before, and the government declared a climate emergency. However, since then not much action and a total pre-occupation with brexit. And so this October I joined the Rebellion, helping to run a First Aid tent in Horseguards Road.

Did we achieve as much as in April? No. This time the police were given increase powers under Section 14 of the Public Order Act. We were moved on 3 times until we were all corralled in Trafalgar Square. Did I agree with all the demonstrations that took place? No.

So I returned with mixed emotions. But, having had time to reflect, my over riding impression was of joy, exuberance and a shared purpose. The music, particularly the samba bands, the colourful costumes, the cheering as yet another rebel was arrested and carried to the waiting police van. A movement of people of all ages and backgrounds, who realise they have a common cause and who believe they have the means to achieve their goal using non violent direct action. Would I go again? Yes. Will I end up sitting in the road, glued to the tarmac?

Probably.

