



Last Meeting for Eating at Colchester

NEWSLETTER

SOUTHERN EAST ANGLIA AREA QUAKER MEETING

April 2020

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)
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Meetings for Worship

CLACTON

Harwich

COLCHESTER

EARLS COLNE

SUDBURY

FIRST CONTACT
FOR FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS
Charles Bather. Peter Whiteley

Editorial

John Hall

We are living in dangerous times. We are facing what the eminent epidemiologist Neil Ferguson has described as “the most serious public health threat seen in a respiratory virus since the 1918 Spanish flu”, which is estimated to have killed between 17 and 50m people worldwide. That is a sobering thought. The actual number is in doubt because only the Spanish published their infection rates (which is the reason for its name). Fortunately, with the establishment of the World Health Organisation in 1948, the sharing of medical information is now very much improved. As I write, there are signs that the infection rate in China, where the virus is thought to have started, is showing the first signs of reducing, although the fall and rise of viral infection rates is a known characteristic. The coronavirus Covid-19 is affecting all our lives. With suggestions that social isolation may have to extend to twelve months, we may have to

be really radical in our approach to Quaker worship. Friends are trying different approaches. Elsewhere in the Newsletter, you will find a way of having Meeting via a smart phone. Elsewhere, Friends such as at Woodbrooke, Earls Colne and Ipswich and Diss are looking into virtual Meetings for Worship via computer. Of course, we can continue to have a silent Meeting at home when other Friends are doing the same in their homes at the normal times, we would have been at the meeting house. We need to keep in contact with each other even if we cannot meet face to face. Telephoning is one way, but text messaging and emails make use of modern technology and allow us to make sure that all is well spiritually and materially with our F(f)riends and families. We wish you and yours well. Please send articles and pictures for May's Newsletter to John Kay (gen@millrind.co.uk) or myself

(wittonwood2@gmail.com) by the middle of April.

Meeting for Eating

at Colchester LM

Anne Watkinson

These started 3 years ago when we were getting concerned about fellowship and community being a lost part of our life as Quakers. We first called them Foody Fellowship for Families but the title 'Meeting for eating', coined first as a bit of a joke, stuck. We hoped that other members of families where there were SQIFs (Single Quakers In the Family) would come and be part of the whole and that has proved a good thing for us all.

We have held four each winter, sometime with a theme as this last one was, sometime just what we fancied and was easy to prepare off site (our kitchen is small and the cooker not the easiest). Peter Whiteley and I have had fun working out menus and only charge for the ingredients we use. We have sometime fed ourselves for a few days afterwards from left overs and so deduct that from our charges. We ask for a donation of at least £5 towards these costs and so far, have sent over £100 each year to the food bank as Friends have been generous. We don't just eat, we share favourite poems, have a

quiz or two, puzzle over dingbats, but mainly relax, gossip, share ideas and stories and have time to know more of that of God in each of us. It has become a truly sharing time. I have always felt that eating together is akin to the meaning behind a communion service but we take longer over it. Eating is a bodily function which we all need and doing it together brings us closer. We are going to explore other such events, maybe reviving a 'bring and share' lunch after Meeting sometime? A party in the garden in the summer with the children? Maybe the BBQ idea

will come off this year? Suggestions and offers of help please.

This time, however, a new Friend, Oni Greenwood, also cooked for us this as we had a Spanish tapas theme. This theme lent itself to many small dishes appearing gradually through the evening - only they weren't always small, we certainly had more than enough to eat. You

can see the clear plates in the photo. We finished with a Spanish Blackberry Cheesecake, and while you can Google this I was asked to put the recipe in the newsletter.

Very simple and quick! You need a greased 20 cm cake tin with a loose base placed on a baking tray because it might leak, and an oven at 180°C Beat together:

300g cream cheese, 3 eggs, 200ml double cream & 200g caster sugar. Pour the batter into the tin, put 100g blackberries on top - they will sink! Cook for 30 to 40 minutes until a skewer comes out clean. Can be served hot or cold with an optional dusting of 20g of icing sugar. Hits the spot! (but not for dieters....?)

Secret Garden

Julia Usher

I never had a pet as a child. My Dad and I were allergic to cats; and Mother didn't like dogs, except one called Gus, who came to our garage for lamb chop bones after Sunday lunch. Here in Highwoods, there is so much to observe, including our neighbourly gardens. Over the fence, two foxes live at night. Recently I have two new experiences. First, the story of PERU; a beautiful pure white collared dove. It was attacked on our terrace by a sparrowhawk and magpies; - left maimed, one wing broken. I cared for it for four days, holding it gently between my hands;

calming its panic by cooing "Per-ooo" til it allowed me to give it water. I had to refind it, hiding anew each morning. On the last day it appeared outside the back kitchen door; it was very quiet and still; so I wrapped it in a cheesecloth. It was gone, finally, the next day.

I have a favourite place to rest and read; sitting facing a big patio window, looking out on the terrace. There is a bird feeder just to the right of the door, very close. Underneath is a large pottery plant bowl. Birds come fearlessly to the feeder above: robins, blue tits, dunnocks, coal tits.....and seeds fall down to the ground into the plant pot. A whole secondary activity then takes place. Birds scoot secretly along behind other pots, check for danger; and then feed on the seeds. Now there is a new dimension. A squirrel has learnt it can wait for birds to drop the seeds; then it too creeps into position underneath. Even better, to my huge amusement, it now climbs into



Peru

the large pot, tail and all, and disappears for some time. It brings out a seed, holds it in its paws, and turns it over in its teeth. Often balanced on the edge of another flower pot. All so very close to where I am sitting, in my natural "hide".



Quaker Busyness

Jenny Kay

As AM Contributions Collector I have tried to make sure that all Friends and Attenders who requested schedules have received them. If you have not been able to collect one from your meeting house it will arrive in the post. Many of you have already picked up your contribution schedules from your Meeting Houses. You may be able to respond or you may not. These are challenging times financially. Paying by cheque now may not be the best option as postal services may become unreliable. Friends House, now closed is asking us not to send

cheques. In my efforts to confirm Members and Attenders details in preparation for a 2020 printed List I have also sent out Data Consent Forms where these are missing from the records. I hope that it might be possible to get the booklets printed and to send them out by post to everyone listed in the book. As this newslet-

ter will not be available in hard copy in our Meeting Houses, John and I will endeavour to arrange for copies to reach those of you who do not have access to email.



A Fascinating Find

Kate Powis

The weather on Saturday 29th February was not encouraging for venturing out of an evening, but Colchester Meeting's Fundraising and Outreach Group (FROG) were happy to welcome a sizeable turnout in the James Parnell room to hear local researcher, Julie Miller. Julie, an enthusiastic and engaging speaker, presented findings arising from a placement with Essex County Records Office. They had presented her with 52 boxes of material presented by Saffron Walden Meeting which turned out to be a treasure trove of local, national and international Quaker heritage. The characters that particularly fired her imagination were John Farmer, a wool comber originally

from Somerset, and his wife Mary, a native of Saffron Walden, and they had settled for a time in Colchester. Both had felt called to travel long distances offering Quaker ministry in the late 17th and early 18th century at a time when travel was both uncomfortable and risky. While at times they were journeying together with their children, at others they travelled separately. Julie spoke of the touching letters that John sent back to Mary referring with tenderness to the little ones on his journeys to Ireland, America and the Caribbean. Mary did not go so far, but did make it to Holland.

John Farmer did not always make himself popular amongst those he settled with, due to his "indiscreet zeal", a description applied to him by The Friend Journal

of Philadelphia in 1855. In his journal he describes how a local in Ireland organised raucous bagpipes to be played while he preached; another time it was fiddle music. Although he had great sympathy for the Native American population, he found himself amongst, and apparently the regard was mutual, he managed to upset some of the Quaker Meetings in America and the Caribbean to such an extent that they withdrew their support. This was not a minor matter, as he was dependent on their goodwill for funds and introductions when he was so far from home. The issue that caused this rupture was slavery: many Quakers had become slave owners to further the successful industries they were establishing and while they agreed in principle with

John about “that of God in everyone”, many felt that they needed more time to overcome their dependency on slavery. Mary too was not a stranger to scandal. Julie discovered that there was controversy about how she had handled a will, although this did not appear to put off another renowned Quaker of the time, Benjamin Lay, to ask her to be executor of his will.

Another delightful find was a tiny prayer book inscribed by Elizabeth Fry as a gift for a Quaker Friend. The audience was made up of roughly half Friends and half visitors: around 20 people enjoyed Julie's talk immensely, as well as the cake and refreshments

available during the break. There was also a chance to examine facsimiles of some of the original documents that she had found and to discuss more of her findings with Julie. Then there was a formal opportunity for more questions, which was greeted with enthusiasm. It was a chance for Friends to explore our testimonies within a com-

plex historical context, with which many visitors were also familiar; a subtle and satisfying form of outreach. An unanticipated bonus for Julie as a researcher (and for FROG) was the loan to her, from a Friend, of a book on early Quakerism in America, complete with a very beautiful map. Julie was so pleased with this that she

waived her travel expenses. This meant that the event made £85. We would like to thank that Friend, and everyone else who contributed to a stimulating and enjoyable evening.



Spring flowers in Castle Park Photo:David Lawrence



In Westminster Square

Antony Johae

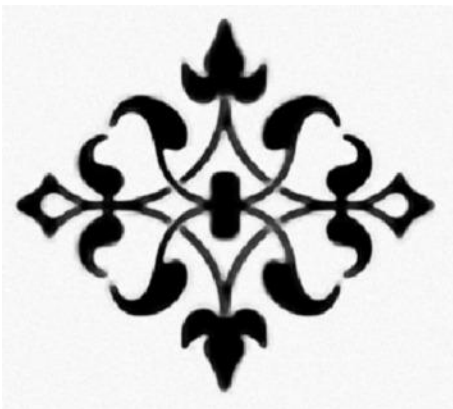
From Crystal Palace I took a 3 through the town's encumbered boroughs past Lollard's Tower, over Lambeth Bridge to mock-gothic palace and the land of sovereign ministries.

From the top I saw them ranged by a manly statue, Star of David waving blue and white in the wind and a banner bearing telling words: “We will never stand alone.”

I thought of refugees withheld in Arab camps left alone, waiting to go home; should have got off and questioned them, these men and women chanting for their nation,

listened in a Quaker way, friendly and attentive, but sat still on the upper deck mentally unmanned as the bus headed up Whitehall to high hero guarded on four corners by his fighting lions.

Aboard the 3 next day, I had in mind to act, found the statue unmanned and across the road, flag-free peace tents placed in long vigil on the square's hard foundation.



Number 3 Photo: from Creative Commons



John Lynes at Colchester Meeting House in March 2014

A pair of demonstrators

Jacky Hall

Delighted to read an article in the Guardian under the Experience heading by John Lynes. He was a member of our meeting when we lived in London. I went on an all-night vigil at Marble Arch (cruise missiles)

and John was there. At the time he was designing runway lighting for Thorne EMI, and also protesting outside their Head Office against their involvement in the arms trade. This must have been some 30 or 35 years ago.



Spring Garden

Photos: John Hall



WhatsApp Colchester

Jane Herd

We have been discovering new ways to connect in these strange times. We have set up a whatsapp group called Colchester Quakers. It is open to anyone who would like to join us including from others meetings, friends and family. If you have a smart phone it is really easy to set up, just down load the whatsapp app. If you then contact me (Jane Herd) on 07800970049 and let me have your mobile number I will join you to the group. Some people like the notification beeping and it helps them feel connected, others find the beeping intru-

sive. For those in the latter category when you're on the what'sapp page go into the 3 dot menu on the top right hand side of the screen and click on mute notifications, you will still get the messages but not the pinging. As part of the group we are gathering in spirit at some point between 12.00 and 1.00 everyday for as much or as little time as you wish and will also do so 10.30 to 11.30 on a Sunday. This has felt really connecting and upholding of each other, the meeting and the world and we would encourage friends to join us. As Kate contributed, I had a chance to look through Quaker Faith and Practice earlier and thought that this

might speak to those of us who cannot gather together in person, but might find it heartening to know others are there for us in Spirit: QF & P 21: 35 - Worshippers are like the spoke of a wheel. The nearer they come to the centre of all Life the nearer they are to each other. Having reached the Centre they become united in a single life through the creative love of God. Hope you are all able to keep your spirits up Friends... xk We are sharing Quaker quotes, poetry, music and musing, for those of you who don't have smart phone we hope you might like something which was really appreciated this

week. Keep Calm and... Rethink the Beatitudes From Tony Jaques at the Othona Community Blessed are the gel users - with them you are in safe hands Blessed are the sneeze-catchers - for they will bin their tissues Blessed are the shelf-stackers - for they mitigate panic-buying Blessed

are the ventilator makers - yesterday they built cars or weapons Blessed are the stranded tourists - may their minibars never run dry Blessed are the epidemiologists - for they will crunch the numbers Blessed are the caring neighbours - for they will spot who needs some help Blessed are

the asymptomatic carriers - for it is not their fault Blessed are you when you self-isolate - for you shall re-read every good book, eat every tin of beans and maybe even tidy the attic Blessed are the frequent handwashers - for their touch is welcome and their conscience clear

Bob Crowley

Hazel Jones

The following is from Bob Crowley who recently moved from our Area Meeting to Devon Area Meeting to be near family. His wife Julie McCreadie sadly died soon after the move. Bob was active in many Quaker ways during his time with Southern East Anglia AM, not least as a Trustee in recent years, and both Bob and Julie are lovingly remembered by Friends in Harwich and Clacton Meetings. He has produced a CD following the loss of Julie which includes song, music, poetry and readings including one from *Quaker Faith & Practice*.

“I was emotionally very sad and missed Julie terribly and still do, talking to her often, telling her what she’s not missing - particularly at present. Anyway, watching such a cruel illness as vascular dementia take hold of such an energetic and charismatic person, I felt the need in her memory to do something.

I sing with a natural voice harmony choir which I joined to get me out and about while Julie was in care and they really are a lovely group of people, very caring. After one session the choir leader circulated a song we had sung and I thought it was really good and

moving. This gave me the idea of producing a CD. So off I went, completely out of my comfort zone, talking to recording studios, PRS and licensing people, CD manufacturers, cover design, copy writers to help bring my diatribe to order and more succinct, marketing etc etc. I also needed to contact artists whose



Julie McCreadie

recordings I wished to steal. I also wrote to song writers for use and licence for their material.

The final recordings were completed by 20th February 2020 and the CD was produced by 3rd March -the day I had booked for a launch party. It was attended by 100 people

and some who had recorded for the CD sang and played. Major artist recordings were also played. The sequence of the CD follows our journey from the beginning, through love, to Julie going into care, and then to her passing. Artists such as Kate Bush, Annie Lennox and the others appear at the relevant point rather than chronologically. The CD is intended for Carers. The evening was covered by a local newspaper and will be syndicated in Aberdeen and Inverness. I have set up a bursary at Aberdeen University in Julie’s name for marine biology students who do a field course at Cromarty where we went frequently to see the dolphins, and Inverness covers Cromarty.”

The CD It will be offered online (more details on robert@crowleyprojects.co.uk) in return for donations to Alzheimer’s Society. Bob has a new dedicated account with Santander who are also supporting the charity this year so cheques can either be payable to R Crowley and sent to his address at 1b The Mews, South View, Bovey Tracey, Devon TQ13 9AQ, or they can be sent to Alzheimer’s direct.

Colchester Meeting House

and the coronavirus outbreak
Anne Watkinson

As Friends know, we let our premises to over a hundred organisations through the year as well as it being our place of worship. We like to think we are an oasis of calm in the middle of the town and many people appreciate this, as well as having a relatively cheap place to meet.

Never more so than now, we hope. Unless we have an edict to close from either Friends' House or the Government we shan't close. We are very lucky in have two members of staff who are willing to continue in post who will keep us as hygienic as possible and open. If either are ill we will close, we cannot continue with volunteers, we now know what that entails! It is for each hiring group to decide their action and encourage their clientele to behave sensibly and hygienically.

We also now have tenants in the flat, a young couple, which means we do have a source of income, not enough to cover our expenses but a help, and also we know there are people in residence.

A group of us - conveners and clerks of the various groups and committees - met and drew up our contingency plans. We hope to still provide that peaceful place to be. Meeting for Worship and our Wednesday Quiet Time will continue to function even if the premises are technically closed to the public—as we now have the convenience of a keysafe, we can do that without staff. 'Where 2 or 3....' (See Matthew 18:20 an Qf&P2.43) We will also try to make arrangements for our 3 AA groups to continue whatever.

We have cancelled our groups, committee meetings, Local meeting for Worship for Business and sadly postponed the next in our series of lectures set up by our FundRaising and Outreach Group (FROG):

"The vanity games" on March 28th. But, we can take decisions by email and phone. Those of us who are my age or older, remember life actually went on during the second world war, polio outbreaks, miners strikes, oil shortages and the rest. Some may even remember the depression of the 30s. We can be that oasis of calm, common sense and Friendship throughout all this and hold each other in the light.

We are determined to keep in touch, Jane Herd setting up a Whatsapp group, Phyl Reid continuing her email communications. We want everyone to be more aware than ever of the housebound and now possibly the self-isolating. Don't forget the phone, if you have a computer you can use Skype or Facetime. Some good may come of this mayhem generally, if more people wash their hands and fewer travel to work every day at peak times. We can ensure our oversight procedures work and improve.

News from Earls Colne

Jenny Kay

Sunday worship for Earls Colne Friends and presumably almost all of us in the AM has now become a private occasion taking place in our homes. Today, fourth Sunday, John and I spent a quiet half hour in our 'sunshed' with the sun streaming in the windows, gently buffeted by the wind, with a view of spring flowers in the garden and birds visiting the feeder. Feeling fortunate to be a Quaker couple it felt like a Meeting for Worship with Quaker Faith and Practice and

a bible on the coffee table in front of us. I do find quiet times to hold Friends in the Light but we have never sat together in this way before.

During breakfast while listening to Aled Jones on Classic FM I heard this Gaelic Blessing as arranged by John Rutter. Following our quiet time I sent it out by email and post to Earls Colne Friends. You can listen on to it youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8MKEpXqGko> . It reads well without the word 'Christ' if you find that difficult or uncomfortable.

A Gaelic blessing

Deep peace of the running wave to you
Deep peace of the flowing air to you
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you
Deep peace of the shining stars to you
Deep peace of the gentle night to you
Moon and stars pour their healing light on you
Deep peace of *Christ* the light of the world to you
Deep peace of *Christ* to you