



Castle Park Tulips Photo by David Lawrence

NEWSLETTER

SOUTHERN EAST ANGLIA AREA QUAKER MEETING

March 2020

Diary Dates for March

- 7th March Friends Fellowship of Healing Day at Clacton Meeting House 11-3pm
- 21st March Cafe Quaker Colchester Meeting House 10.30 - 12pm
- 28/29th March Friends House Dimensions of Spirituality
- 29th April Area Meeting for Worship for Business Sudbury 2.15 pm

Area Meeting Web Address: www.essexsuffolkquaker.org

Colchester Web Address: www.essexsuffolkquakers.org

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)

SEAQM Correspondence Clerk: Hazel Jones

c/o Colchester Quaker Meeting House

6 Church Street, Colchester CO1 1NF;

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

Editorial

John Hall

With the ink barely dry on the Area Meeting Clerk's signature, I find myself in the editor's chair, with, I am afraid, a slightly late edition. I hope that I can carry out the task of editor with a modicum of Valerie's flair, even if I do not have her expertise and experience. We are so grateful for her many years of service.

The other Sunday, a Friend and I were discussing after Meeting for Worship how we knew if/when a Meeting was truly *gathered*. It is a strange and peculiar feeling but when it happens, one knows. Years ago, at a medium-sized house-meeting in Singapore, I experienced my very first totally silent meeting having previously attended a very large meeting in Newcastle upon Tyne. At the end of it, our host said, "That was a really good Meeting", and we all agreed. How did we know? What had taken place? I have noticed this peace when visiting old meeting houses, but this is a mod-

ern encounter because, of course, early Friends will not have had this experience. It remains an aspiration, however, one which I think Friends and Attenders look for, but do not always find in every Meeting for Worship. I wonder if you any thoughts on this you would like to share.

In the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, Friends were well known for the voluminous number of pamphlets they produced. Friends House library has over 650 bound volumes of them. So, Friends in the past have not been backward in writing about their beliefs and experiences. At the time, when we would normally "put the *Newsletter* to bed", it was of some concern as to whether we would have enough material for this month's edition, so Friends, Attenders and visitors, may I ask you to put fingers to keyboard and/or pen to paper for next month and let me, or John Kay have your contributions by the middle of March? Looking forward to hearing from you.

Area Meeting Report

Jane Herd

The Area Meeting for Business was held at Clacton meeting on 23rd of February where there were attendees from several local meetings. Membership matters at a local level were discussed. There were some transfers out and deaths but there were also transfers in and new members, the overall change was a reduction of 5 members over the Area meeting with a total of 121 members a significant majority of these being in Colchester.

Appointment were discussed and John Hall was confirmed

at the new Newsletter editor, Di Naylor as an overseer and Rob Parkes will continue to attend Meetings for Sufferings as well as becoming a trustee. Chris Samuel will become part of the area meeting clerking team. Some further thought is required as to trustee nominations for The Greenwood Trust.

A written report from Rob Parkes was read out in respect of the last two meetings for sufferings. This included issues around equality and diversity, ethical investment and assisted dying. We agreed to invite a speaker to help us in exploring the latter issue.

Jenny Kay provided a report from trustees that included updates regarding the Colchester meeting house flat and management of Colchester and Sudbury buildings. There is still some exploration of designated funds. The trustees have undertaken a risk assessment and written a health and safety policy which is available and there will be a link person on this for each meeting. Data protection and safeguarding policies are next in line for review.

A report was given regarding the AM website which has over 1800 hits per year, about 5 per day. Meetings were reminded that events can be

placed on the AM website and it can be both an internal and external resource.

There will be a residential gathering for AM at High Leighs next March 26-28th 2021. A small working group was initiated to organise this. Currently this involves Colchester members only so we

would welcome involvement from other meetings, expressions of interest to Peter Whiteley please.

Many thanks to Clacton for being welcoming hosts with an excellent tea!

From the Archive

Following a series of five meetings on peace building organised by Rod Usher and other Friends, a major symposium of distinguished public speakers was held in a full Moot Hall in Colchester. As a result, in 2007, a follow-up meeting of 32 Friends from the Monthly Meeting discussed The limits of pacifism: the ethics of intervention at Colchester Meeting House. At it, Rod Usher introduced the draft doctrine of the 'responsibility to protect' (R2P) as introduced at the United Nations (not adopted by them, but vigorously pursued by Canada Yearly Meeting): "the understanding that people in extraordinary peril have a right to protection, and if their own government cannot or will not provide such protection, then the international community has the responsibility to try to provide it." The moral responsibility of humans to help each other is unambiguous and hardly new. The proponents of R2P suggested:

- that people in peril have a right to protection from genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity and other large scale atrocities

- that such a right has meaning only if there is a corresponding *obligation* to provide protection

- that, while the primary obligation lies with each state to protect its people, when a state is unable or unwilling to meet its obligations then that obligation accrues to the international community.

In the discussion that followed there was concern over the words 'rights', 'obligations' and 'intervention'. It was agreed that there are local people acting non-violently for peace in every crisis situation; that a large number of people world-wide have been trained in conflict resolution and related skills, so there is a significant human resource ready to be engaged.

Further points highlighted were:

- the importance in seeing every conflict situation as individually, culturally, geographically, demographically and historically determined.

- that a "one-solution-fits-all" approach will not work if generalised or moralised. Each situation needs case-specific practical interventions.

- attempts to make boundaries more permeable; long-

Women's History Month

March is designated as Women's History Month

The history and place of women in the Society of Friends is available on the Quaker Strongrooms blog which may be accessed at

<https://quakerstrongrooms.org/2019/06/18/respected-friend-women-and-equality-in-the-society-of-friends/>

term solutions should not be military, but must be multi-dimensional, including economic, social, political and diplomatic activities.

If there were to be interventions: *how? who? when?* and what would be the *consequences* of subsequent withdrawal from any location?

Some underlying reasons for conflict within state boundaries were seen as: Water (quantity, distribution, 'rights of access', quality); Oil; Tribalism (disputes between people with small, but significant differences and traditional rights; Fundamentalism; Unsettled historic conflicts.

In the final plenary session the following actions were suggested:

- support for existing, experienced activists and NGOs working in the field.

- support for provision and investment in basic resources and necessities of life, to be shared equally.

- raising awareness of conflict, peace initiatives and people working within countries.

- promoting the rule of law.

- allowing peoples to resolve their own problems.

- supporting attempts to blur national boundaries.
- working actively to prevent recourse to revenge within groups and nations.
- engaging with apparent extremists, to ensure diplomatic efforts continue.
- “Watching out” for all peoples at risk (environmentally, politically and tribally).

- aiming to buy time in conflict situations, whenever possible, and devising new strategies for effective, rapid intervention when events become critical.

- “Hold people in the Light”.

It was agreed that Robbie Spence of Colchester Meeting would call a further discussion in the late summer. There was a strong sense that important

views had been aired, and that Friends would follow news of conflicts with an enhanced understanding of some of the underlying causes of conflict and the attempts being made to resolve them.

Edited version of a report by Rod Usher 21st April, 2007

Leadings

Janet Thomas

Forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
Dear Lord and Father of Mankind, forgive our foolish ways...
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil:
Reclothe us in our rightful minds.

The Lord is my Shepherd
I shall not want.
He leadeth me.
He leadeth me
Beside the still waters;
He restoreth my soul.

Go placidly amid the noise and haste
And remember what peace there may be in silence.
Drop Thy still dews of quietness
(He maketh me to lie down in green pastures)
'Til all our strivings cease.

He restoreth my soul;
He leadeth me.
Take from our souls the strain and stress
And let our humble lives confess
The beauty of Thy peace.

He leadeth me, He leadeth me.
And I can't believe it true,
I can't believe it's true:
He leadeth me.
And whether or not it is clear

Preacher: The Vanity Games

Dr Adrian May
poet and song-writer



Saturday 28th March 2020
6.30-8.30

Colchester Quaker
Meeting House
Donation £5 at the door

A Comment on Dying

From Olwen Titchmarsh

March 2008 Newsletter

On reading “The Friend” of 25 Jan 08 I found myself overwhelmed by so much to absorb until I was arrested by a short letter quoting an observation from a child “I know why people have to die, it’s to make room for the babies”. The sender added that, pondering on those words, there is more than meets the eye.

Indeed!

The prevailing national thinking is to hang on to life no matter how diminished in quality. Are we no longer making room for the babies? I ponder on the enormous amount of expertise, energy and expense that is expended on resuscitation of the infirm elderly.

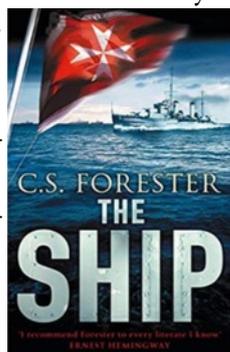
This is not a simple issue and raises many questions. Are we facing up to its implications? Query 30 asks “Are you able to contemplate your own death and the death of those close to you?”

The Importance of Doing Nothing

from Valerie Graves

This comes from a favourite book, by C.S. Forester: "The Ship" (1943), a splendid story, crisp prose, little emotion. Perhaps not what a Quaker would choose, being about a naval battle, but I was a teenager then.

You hear of the officer (Lt.Cmdr "E" —engineer) in a destroyer in a battle protecting an Atlantic convoy. He stands on a grating in the engine room, feet apart, hands clasped behind his back, the picture of relaxation. A communist-minded seaman thinks him the picture of idleness.



But he would be wrong. That officer knew exactly what all the dials showed, what the various pressures were. He would note the smallest deviation and know what to do if anything changed, or any emergency - which did happen as the story progressed. He might appear idle but he was completely in charge.

This is what we miss nowadays: in hospitals, schools, you name it, the empty bed, the spare desk, ready for the inevitable emergency. Everywhere we hear of "fat being trimmed off" and every bit of vital slack being cut away. Watchful vigilance with its feet on the grating is nowhere to be seen. The consequences are dire.

June 2011 Newsletter

Is this the Quaker Way

I was first introduced to this at a Trustees Conference, Jenny Kay

There is a little story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody.

There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it.

Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it.

Somebody got angry about that because it was Everybody's job.

Everybody thought that Anybody could do it, but Nobody realised that Everybody wouldn't do it.

It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

Anonymous

Earls Colne News

Jenny Kay

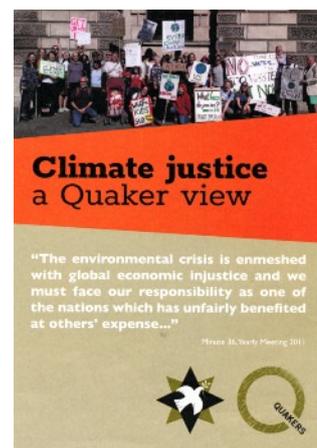
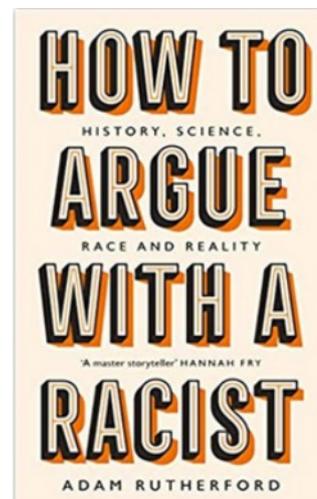
We clerks receive a monthly mailing from Friends House to keep us up to date with new information leaflets, events, courses at Woodbrooke and 'Books of the Month' available from the bookshop. Some months this information has no relevance to us at Earls Colne and it all gets re-cycled. The envelope always comes in use.

I could say "no" to the mailing and just access it online but would I? This month the catalogue for outreach resources was included, a reminder that we could use some more leaflets. The new leaflet 'Climate Justice a Quaker View' is helpful and supportive and doesn't make us feel too guilty. I'll send for some more. In the minutes of our Annual Local Meeting we recorded the name of our Friend Jayne Meleschko to confirm our

support for her as a Climate Change activist.

I was interested to see that the book by 'How to Argue with a Racist' by Adam Rutherford is included this month. I listened to his BBC 4 broadcasts from the book, currently still available on BBC Sounds. Adam Rutherford, biologist and geneticist is an honorary Research Fellow at University College London and a BBC presenter.

He offers a scientific toolkit to separate fact from myth in understanding how we are different and how we are the same. In the final episode he tackles the fraught subject of whether there is a genetic factor in how our cognitive abilities vary. I'm thinking about buying a copy, though not for the Meeting House Library as we are currently restricting purchases to Quaker publications and books on Quakers and Quakerism as these are not readily available elsewhere.





Children's Room Curtains

Anne Watkinson

Colchester Meeting turning up the Children's room curtains at Saturday's Café Quaker (Feb 15th) Phyl, our clerk, Marjorie and Ros our new manager.

They were too long, and hung over the radiator sending all the heat outside so we cut the bottoms off and then had to hem them again!



*Castle Park Berries
Photo David Lawrence*



Holocaust Memorial Day

John Hall

When we lived in Germany in the 1970s, Quakers met in Friends' homes once a month. The day would be Meeting for Worship in the morning, with a separate one for the children, then a shared lunch followed by a social or spiritual afternoon. As we lived only 5 miles from Belsen Concentration Camp, when meeting was held at our house, the afternoon was taken up with a visit to the camp. Sundays at Belsen were crowded with coaches of visitors from German churches from all over Germany. We frequently had to visit the camp with visitors and found it quit distressing.



In the 1980s as part of my studies of medieval art and architecture, I visited Cracow to view the oversized, wooden alter figures carved by the German Veit Stoss. On one Sunday, there was a church parade in the main square and included in it were a group of Auschwitz and Dachau concentration-camp survivors. Cracow is only a few miles from the site of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp.

Through the 16-year-old granddaughter of one of the survivors who had learned English at school, I had a conversation with the veterans. They were all Roman Catholics whose families had been imprisoned in the death camps for their faith. They asked for copies of my photos which I sent once I had returned to England, and we shared a short correspondence about living for one's faith.



Auschwitz Veterans Cracow