



*Final Clearout at Earls Colne*

*Photo David Lawrence*

# NEWSLETTER

**SOUTHERN EAST ANGLIA AREA QUAKER MEETING**

**October 2020**

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**RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)**

**SEAQM Correspondence Clerk: Hazel Jones**

**c/o Colchester Quaker Meeting House**

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## Meetings for Worship

### CLACTON

Sunday 10:30 am

### HARWICH

### COLCHESTER

Sunday 10,30 am

### EARLS COLNE

Sunday 10:30 am

### SUDBURY

Sunday 10:30 am

**FIRST CONTACT**  
FOR FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS  
Charles Bather.

## Editorial

John Hall

Earlier in the year, a study group, facilitated by Alison Parkes, looked at chapter 19 of Quaker Faith and Practice. John Kay, who designs the lay-out of our Newsletter, published the written thoughts of the members and sent me a copy of the booklet *Openings: Colchester Quaker Study Group 2020*. I was so taken with the contents that I thought I would share them with readers of the Newsletter and so here, in this edition, you will find many samples taken from that booklet. There is one which particularly speaks to my condition, but no, I am not going to tell you which one it is; perhaps having read them all, you will be able to guess. You may wish to contact John for a copy of the booklet, so that you can read all the contributions. As you will see, the articles I have included, and indeed all of them, describe the beliefs and motivations of Friends and Attenders. Of course, they vary, but what struck me was the depth of beliefs and experiences therein expressed.

Before coronavirus struck, at Clacton meeting house we held a monthly study group in which about 14 Friends and Attenders from Harwich and Clacton shared our beliefs. It was an education to me. What I learned was that while there was quite a wide range of beliefs, the

underlying faith was in the Religious Society of Friends. Much was founded on the early beliefs and experiences of Friends and, as a historian, it demonstrated a clarity which I had not previously grasped.

Now that we are being seriously challenged about how we can take our religious practices forward, I have been taken aback by the difficulties which our nominations committees are having in filling vacancies for jobs in our Area Meeting. As Ben Pink Dandelion said in his 2014 Swarthmore Lecture, 'Open for transformation: being Quaker', ours is a do-it-together religion. In this edition, you will see, uniquely in my experience, advertisements for two jobs. But they are not the only ones that need filling. Recently, in a Zoom Meeting, a younger participant asked if it was all right to put oneself forward for a job. In the past that might well have been frowned upon, but BYM now has the yellow form aimed at asking Friends who have an interest in a particular area of Friends' work, to let it know. Similarly, in Area Meeting, I think it would be very helpful if, given what is in this Newsletter about the beliefs and experiences of Friends, those who are able and willing to put themselves forward were to get in touch with the Nominations Clerk. (Details at the bottom of Page 5 and Page 6).

## Area Meeting

Chris Samuel

Seven Friends and 3 attenders attended Area Meeting for business on Zoom on Sunday, 13 September 2020.

Due to the indisposition of Hazel Jones, Anne Watkinson was appointed to serve as Clerk solely for this meeting.

### Membership matters.

With sadness the deaths were recorded of Kath Hewitt (94) of Brightlingsea and Clacton Meeting and Donald Hind (88) of Clacton Meeting. Their local meetings were requested to prepare testimonies to the lives of our late Friends, for publication in the Newsletter. Sally Sparrow of Colchester Meeting and Madeleine Powell of Sudbury Meeting had their respective

memberships transferred to Ipswich and Diss Area Meeting.

### Appointments.

Rachel Britton was appointed an elder at Colchester Meeting. Jane Herd was appointed overseer at Colchester Meeting, to replace Lucien de Leon whose term had come to an end. Hazel Jones of Harwich Meeting was released from Area Meeting Nominations and clerking teams, in accordance with

her request. Both Hazel and Lucien were thanked for their service in these roles.

### Trustees' report and accounts.

Jenny Kay and Liz Proctor presented the Area Meeting accounts for the period up to 31/12/19, which were duly received and accepted.

A copy of the accounts appears on the SEAQM website: [esssexsuffolkquaker.org](http://esssexsuffolkquaker.org) under Business/AM Documents.

Briefly, donations and contributions had gone up by £13,500, due to the generosity of Friends and attenders and the good management of hirings. The amount of donations and contributions paid out had increased by £30,000 and property expenses by £55,000, which included the cost of refurbishing the flat at Colchester MH. It was agreed to remind Friends and attenders that the Jack Field Legacy Fund is available on application by Friends, attenders and their children and grandchildren, for educational purposes, such as courses at Woodbrooke, etc.– just contact an overseer for details.

### Re-opening of Meeting Houses.

All of the Area Meeting Meeting Houses are now open, except Harwich whose venue is currently closed due to COVID. Clacton and Sudbury MHs are closed for hirers for the foreseeable future, but Colchester Meeting will be able to welcome hirers from 5 October.

Zoom Meetings for Worship have been very successful; Colchester Premises Committee will be asked to look into costings and logistics for blended Meetings for Worship. Jane Herd pointed out that henceforth, recording the names and 'phone numbers of those attending Meeting for Worship will be a legal duty on us. The Government's 'rule of 6' doesn't apply to Meetings for Worship, but no more than 30 worshippers will be allowed on the premises, and neither will socialising together afterwards.

Steph Felton thanked Friends for their consideration towards those, who like her, could not wear face masks for medical reasons.

### Colchester Elders & Overseers.

Julia Usher raised the question of how Elders and Overseers may support each other's work. This was an urgent question as numbers declined and it became increasingly

difficult to fill these posts. Friends were asked to consider how officers may support each other, and to ensure that those, say, who don't have Zoom may be kept in contact and not neglected.

The following ways forward were suggested:

1. Elders to consult with overseers to strengthen their work.
2. The circumstances of Friends can make nomination difficult. Blended MfWs may help.
3. Support Zoom meetings for those who cannot attend. For those who can, Wednesday lunchtime meetings had proved very successful.
4. Julia also recommended resuming Zoom study groups in the autumn, if a leader, or co-ordinator, is willing to come forward.

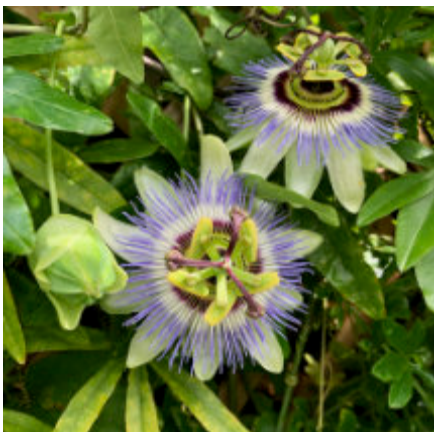
Jane Herd mentioned difficulties in providing two elders to attend MfW at the Meeting House on Sundays, to open and close the Meeting, but maybe this could be worked around.

The book "With a Tender Hand" was warmly recommended for its guidance to elders and overseers.

Jane Herd

A free event featuring top Quaker studies scholar Robynne Healey talking about the Grimke sisters

<https://www.freedomforum.org/event/religious-resolve-stories-from-our-past-for-our-future-program-5/>



### Grimke Sisters

Below is the link for a free Quaker talk about the Grimke sisters who, I have to own, I know nothing about. It comes from Ben Pink Dandelion as a mail out to his PhD students. I hope you will to put it in the newsletter as some people might be interested in joining the virtual talk.



## Together

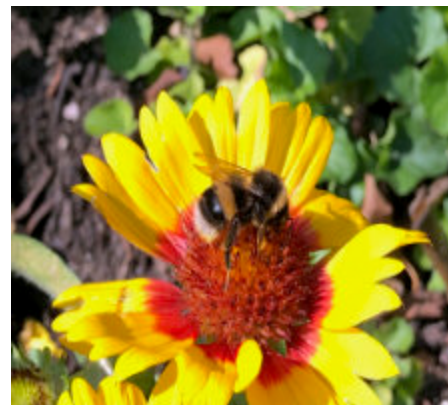
Alison Parkes

Quaker communities around the world vary in the ways they meet and worship. Yet there is an inner truth that draws us joyfully together, the deep understanding that there is “that of God in every one.” We know deep down that every human being can access “the light within”.

We might describe God in different ways, in such terms as light, or spirit,

or love. We don’t want words to put a limit on experience or to suggest that there is a single, ideal way to experience God.

We are open to a profound sense of awe, whether channelled through our experience of life, nature, the arts, science, people, Jesus, of powerful events or of “small things”. It is an awe that opens our hearts to the light within, to the miracle of our own existence and that of our planet. It is an awe that gathers us together in the spirit.



## Testimony to truth

Anne Watkinson

The testimony of truth is high on my agenda. The word integrity which is included in its meaning, is also helpful. It was the reason for Quakers standing up for what they believed in in the early days but also the advice applies to how we should behave as well as what we believe.

Thus integrity in business affairs especially during the 19th century has always impressed me. I like the Quaker Tapestry scene of the delivery of gold to a bank in a cart with three wheels as an example. If I say I will do something, even though it proves difficult, I will stand by it or explain why I can’t – attending

meetings, providing a cake.... Even punctuality is important for me.

As teacher and parent, I always tried to tell the truth. I would try never to use the phrase ‘I promise you...’ if I wasn’t sure if we could do it. If there was a death we talked about what we understood, never ‘they have gone to heaven’. If I don’t know, I say so.

QFP 19.37 (Friends also saw Truth as demanding honest, simple speech and a refusal to acknowledge double standards by taking oaths.) This came into play for me in Greece when my husband Frank died there suddenly from a fall. When giving a statement to the police after he died in hospital, I was asked to swear as well as sign. Despite my upset state, I refused which caused some consternation. I

can speak no Greek, nor could my son who was with me, the police could not speak English. We had an English-speaking Greek interpreter from the shipping office. I said I do not swear, my word is the truth, I do not need to swear, I am a Quaker. None of the Greek people present had any knowledge of this, 97% of Greek people are automatically Greek orthodox. Between us we had to explain why I made this stand. It was accepted. I signed but did not swear. Actually, it helped my state of mind at the time and gave me some encouragement that I would get through the ordeal. I think it gave my son a problem for a few minutes wondering if I was creating yet more problems for us but it didn’t.

## Paying a debt

John Hall

In his 1714 book *Memoirs* on the early history of what Friends were prepared to suffer for their faith, John Whiting describes on one occasion how, in 1680, both the men’s and the women’s Quarterly Meetings were to be held in the Black Friars monastery

in Bristol. Friends had purchased it as a meeting house in 1669. However, the magistrates had locked it against them. So, Friends met in Robert



Abbot’s inn (he was not a Friend but was sympathetic). The magistrate, Captain Henry Walrond fined Robert Abbot £40 for allowing the two Meetings. Robert appealed but he lost, and it cost him a further £20, “and he being no Friend, Friends could not let him suffer for his kindness in entertaining them” and paid him the £60 (£9000 in today’s money).

## In Search of a Clear Message

John Hall

If you have been affected in some way by the virus Covid-19 (and who hasn't?) and you are also intrigued by graphic design, you may be interested

in having a look at the website [www.stay-sane-stay-safe.com](http://www.stay-sane-stay-safe.com) With over 2000 posters from 86 countries designed for completely free use as part of a Dutch campaign to encourage the public world-wide to change their behaviour to help combat the coronavirus, the idea is that, as well as printing them out for

display in shops, museums, hospitals, doctors' surgeries etc., anybody with a smart phone or computer can see a whole range of designs. Here are just two to whet your appetite for a visit to the site. posters are by inamatt & Sebastian Pren.



## Ministering

Bob Brewer

This night, awake and doing my incessant internal monologuing with my friend the 'Babbler', I became AWAKE and was given to recall my experiences, as an Attender, of quaking in meeting. Here, when this physiological phenomenon demonstrates itself, 'one is beside oneself'. The body behaves like a hydraulic ram, like that used in a cherry-picker with its extending arms, or in this case the torso. The power rises up within oneself and there you are standing and do deliver the spoken word - which one rarely remembers afterwards - but one can feel them, and is so affected by them.

## Finding something other

Anne Watkinson

My journey is long and complicated and I'm still on it.

For me, a scientist, who finds words and feelings difficult, I just recognise there is something other, nearest to 'it' in the natural world but a silent meeting with other travellers helps.

## SEAQM Appointment

**WANTED Newsletter Editor.** Nominations Committee is seeking a Friend or Attender to edit the Newsletter from January 2021.

For further information please contact Jenny Kay, AM Nominations Committee) 0 1 2 0 6 2 4 0 9 2 9 , [jjk@millrind.co.uk](mailto:jjk@millrind.co.uk)

## Quote

Julia Usher

*There is a quotation I have found inspiring for very many years.*

Rainer Maria Rilke (Poet) Wrote:

I want to beg you to be patient towards all that is unsolved in your heart, and try to love the questions themselves like locked rooms, and like books that are written in a very foreign tongue.

Do not now seek the answers, that cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them.

And the point is, to live everything.

Live the questions now.

Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer.

## The Kingdom of Heaven (Francis Howgill)

Jane Herd

A 'modern' response to Quaker Faith and Practice 19.08: How does silence compete with all the noise? Stillness with frenetic activity? The world moves ever quicker, yet we offer the planet of the slow. People still turn to the noisy, clashing God, the God of certainty and triumph. Yet we offer

no clear path, no better way, a stony path to clamber ourselves and no peak with distant views. Fox's place is now hidden in cloud and yet we still stumble on, holding each other's hands for steadier footing.

Still humble, but if we don't reach out will we fade into the mist?



## SEAQM Appointment WANTED Custodian of Records (Archivist)

Nominations committee is seeking a Friend or Attender to co-ordinate the management of all records. You will not work in isolation but with AM and LM Clerks and Committees in the creation, care, use and disposition of SEAQM records.

An interest in Quaker records and an understanding of Quaker history would be useful. This administrative appointment offers a personal opportunity to explore aspects of the past and present life of the Area Meeting.

For further information please contact Jenny Kay, (AM Nominations Committee) 01206 240929, [jjk@millrind.co.uk](mailto:jjk@millrind.co.uk)

## A Guided People

Susan Rhodes

The testimonies: I find them all daunting. They speak powerfully because they challenge my way of life, in both large and small matters. Almost everything I do during a day, even now in the reduced sphere of lockdown, could be held up to the challenge of one or more testimonies.

The food I eat—simplicity, sustainability; the clothes I wear—simplicity, equality, sustainability; where I invest my

savings—equality, peace, integrity. Consideration of, and reading about, Quaker testimonies, and how they are lived by others, generally lead to feelings of inadequacy and 'could do better'. At the moment it is sustainability. I prefer the American 'stewardship' that occupies my mind and has actually led to action. The climate crisis affects every living being on the earth and, as human kind, we all contribute to the disaster facing our planet.

Back when the children were young I was involved with anti-nuclear protests, with CND and also

occasionally at Greenham Common. I read passages in Quaker Faith and Practice about individual's actions. So much braver than mine. I marched against the Iraq war. I protest with XR. All of this I find difficult. I am not a brave person; now I am not even, because of back problems and older age, very effective at physical protest. I look for an achievable and meaningful way to influence those who are in power and are failing to act to protect our world.



## Openings

Ecky Prolingheuer

The entire 19th chapter of Quaker Faith & Practice relives a time of religious fervour—based on Christian belief—which I am absolutely unable to understand, having grown up in the second half of the 20th Century. I can only accept that that was how people felt and thought.

What is particularly contrary to my understanding of ‘God’ is the apparent disdain in which people held their own and other’s lives. 19.18 describes what happened to the American Quakers Robinson, Dyer and Stephenson [*also, in fact, William Leddra Ed.*] who, despite a local law which banished Quakers on the pain of death, went there and were promptly banished. They went back and the [three] men were hanged, while Mary Dyer was reprieved and

banished again. She never-the-less returned and was hanged.

My God isn’t a personal God who intervenes in events, personal crises or rescues. It (and to me God is always ‘It’, there is no need for an eternal spirit/being to be male or female, nor has ‘It’ any human attributes) is a creator, has created from the beginning of time and is continuing to create, whether that be new stars, new flowers or new human beings.

Everything It creates has a lifespan and eventually dies, but to extinguish



a life which has not yet reached its natural time of death is an affront to ‘God’s’ creation. Therefore, Mary Dyer’s voluntary going to her death for nothing better than to ‘try Boston’s bloody laws’ (as it states. QFP 19.18) is a pointless suicide, on a par with the pointless death of Muslim suicide bombers, though at least without taking other lives, as those are wont to do. I at least wonder what a woman of such a clearly determined character could have achieved had she lived for another few decades?

How many children’s, fellow Quakers’ and non-Quakers’ lives could she have enriched, turned positive and mature in the best meaning of the word, and those people could in turn have changed the lives of others. Dying a needless death serves no purpose other than to become known as a ‘martyr’. Leading an exemplary life leaves a legacy for the future!

## Donald Hind

Rod Usher

Friends will have been sorry to hear that Donald Hind has died, a year after his wife Audrey. Both had been committed Friends in South East Anglia Area Meeting for a great many years. As well as working consistently within their Meetings, they were generous benefactors to the Society of Friends.

Donald and Audrey were members of Clacton Meeting for many years, until their move to Dovercourt. Eventually the drive to Clacton proved problematic for them and they initiated Harwich Local

Meeting, a short walk away from their lovely house on Marine Parade. In both Meetings they played an active role, until infirmity prevented them.

I came to know Donald and Audrey in 2000 after Julia and I retired to Colchester. Over the years since then I worked closely with Donald in keeping and presenting accounts for the Monthly Meeting, as it was then. For generations Donald had overseen the accounts of the various Meetings in this Area. Doing so was second nature to him, as he was a Chartered Accountant. He lived and worked in Clacton, before the move to Dovercourt. While I was Treasurer of Monthly Meeting, I needed to

work alongside the treasurers from Clacton, Earls Colne and Sudbury. Donald knew the Meetings better than I and helped me to shape an approach to the consolidating of accounts, in order to present them to Area Meeting, as it is now.

At that time Monthly Meeting Accounts had to be ‘examined’ by a Friend, who had the ability to accept them as an accurate record of financial affairs in that year. Donald had not only done this for many years, but he had offered advice and support to the various Meeting treasurers. Initially, Monthly Meeting accounts were seen as a separate record, but while I was Monthly Meeting Treasurer

'consolidation' of all the Meeting accounts began and Donald oversaw this additional work, which I undertook.

Earlier Donald had advised Jack Burfoot and Hugh Gunton, Monthly Meeting Treasurers. For a great many years, Monthly Meeting accounts were made up of a combination of property interests, trust funds, some of which dated back over 100 years, and current investments, as well as month by month income and expenditure—largely to do with the Meetings Houses and their fabric and maintenance. The Accounts Book was an impressive document - dozens of separate incomes from all those different accounts. This preserved the names of Friends who had made considerable gifts, and the 'trust' nature of the sums of money—some large, some tiny. But all were recorded each quarter in the book, which was examined by Donald.

John Lewis became Convener of MM Trustees and he considered the large number of separate funds and trusts were too arduous to maintain. The Charity Commission agreed that

these could be consolidated into two major accounts: one which could be used for the maintenance and improvements of Meeting Houses; the other was for general year by year upholding of Quaker values. Donald, as Examiner was happy with this and I worked closely with him to effect this major change.

Subsequently Donald reached an age when he, as a Chartered Account, was no longer able to practice. At this point John Lewis and I decided that our Monthly Meeting Accounts should be properly presented and audited by a professional firm. Donald had overseen Quaker accounts in this area for a great many years and fully supported this move. In addition, at that point it was agreed that funds for investment were placed with the ethical investment company Rathbones Greenback, based in Bristol.

Donald had every reason to be pleased with the way he oversaw these major changes of what is now South East Anglia Area Meeting. He had set a high standard of accounting, carried out by us willing amateur treasurers. From that point Donald

was able to play more golf and Audrey make music with Friends and others.

Unfortunately, Donald was diagnosed with glaucoma, which developed into a serious handicap. For the final years of his life he was unable to drive. Audrey continued to drive them around; she was a determined but unwilling chauffeur. They continued to attend Area Meeting in each of our Meeting Houses, until that became impossible.

The Hinds had given a great deal of their time to the management and leadership of Meetings over many years. Such Friends are missed. Those who knew them recognised generous, loving and committed members. In their final years living on Marine Drive they delighted in observing ships - massive, large and small. Many times, I waved to them as I sailed out from Walton Backwaters - they knew me. I see them both as still cheerfully waving, even though my sailing days have also come to an end.

## Earls Colne News

Jenny Kay

Ten of us met on third Sunday for Worship in our now simply furnished and uncluttered Meeting Room. With the benches now in use, the atmosphere of over 300 years of Friends worshipping in this place transcends 2m distancing and the wearing of masks deepening our spiritual experience. In ministry, thanks were offered that Earls Colne Friends continue to meet in person recognising the support that this small meeting has

offered to so many over the past years. This spoke to John and I as we have been so grateful to this Meeting which has provided a quiet sanctuary with close friendships over the past seven years. We hold in the Light those Friends who are unable come to Meeting.



After the worship we spent time considering whether we continue with plans to re-open to hirers. After considering our commitment to the Earls Colne community, and reminding ourselves of all of the present uncertainties and our own vulnerabilities we decided to review

the situation next year. Having since spoken to our hirers, mainly art and craft groups, we found that they are content with this. For the time being we feel safe as the sole users of the building which is primarily a place of worship.



## Inspiration From an Unlikely Source

Rod Usher

Julia and I were in the far north of Scotland visiting our son, who had worked there for the past 3 years. When Friday came he flew back to Preston, close to his Lancashire home, for his usual weekend with his family. This provided an opportunity for Julia and I to use his local car and take the ferry across from Scrabster to Stromness, on Orkney.

It was the 24th September, 2017 - our son's 48th Birthday. No Quaker Meeting in that part of the world, so we entered ( for the second time) the magnificent St Magnus Cathedral, in Kirkwall, for Morning Service. Along with a large congregation we wondered how it would sit with our over-riding need for a peaceful reflection on our two sons and their families, so far away in Preston and Colchester, and a general sense of thanksgiving. We knew that the cathedral has a reputation for an ecumenical focus. The Church of Scotland clergyman was clearly aware of the hundreds attending that morning were from a wide range of religious and cultural backgrounds.

Unusually the service included many lengthy silences; we had time to focus

on our own responses to the challenges he posed. We spoke to the Vicar afterwards and he sent us a draft of his notes for the service. The Gathering Prayer was a clear challenge: I offer it now.

Gathering Prayer from St Magnus Cathedral, 24th September, 2017  
Imagine a spiritual community that brings people together from all sorts of backgrounds and traditions.

Imagine the unity.

Imagine a community that celebrates diversity, seeing difference as strength.

Imagine the excitement.

Imagine a community that creates heaven on earth, rather than waiting for another life.

Imagine the integrity.

Imagine a community that invites questions, rather than forcing answers.

Imagine the openness.

Imagine a community that honours inner wisdom and collective imagination.

Imagine the empowerment.

Imagine a community that seeks to be the change it wishes to see in the world.

Imagine the spiritual awakening. We rejoice that we live in a world of such diversity and difference.



## Chris Mort,

died 17.09.2020

Jenny Kay



Chris Mort and her close companion Hilda Taylor, members of Colchester Meeting lived in Wivenhoe and ran the Wivenhoe Quaker meeting from their house.

Following the death of Hilda in December 2013, Chris spent some years in Silver Springs, Thorrington before moving to Cleveleys in Lancashire to be near her sister Carol Hill and brother-in-law Colin.

On 17.09.2020 Colin wrote to Anne Watkinson that Chris had suffered a fractured hip in a fall from which she did not recover. On their last visit

Carol and Colin found Chris asleep, content and out of pain. 'It is with a very heavy heart that we have to inform you that our lovely Chris passed away at 15:15 hrs today. She will be buried at Oakfield Wood Wrabness, on Tuesday 13th October at 3pm. Charles Bather is 'officiating' so all other details from him. Donations to Alzheimers Soc.