



David Burston and Alice

Photo: David Burston

NEWSLETTER

SOUTHERN EAST ANGLIA AREA QUAKER MEETING

February 2021

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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

Editorial

Well hello Friends! I've never written an editorial before but I hope this adds some value to your reading this month. It's a diverse and interesting newsletter and notably two late additions, from Ecky and Anne, strike me as important calls to action.

It seems that life is on pause. Not only our life as a Meeting, but in the myriad ways we operate as social human animals. As my family enters week three of home-schooling lockdown, nerves have become a little shredded. Each day, I worry if we lose momentum in doing daily schoolwork, all will be lost and we will be back doing none, as was the case in the first lockdown. But at the same time, I have been reading about how suicides among school children as young as nine in the US, eventually forced schools in one area

to reopen. The impact on mental health was deemed more dangerous than COVID. My son's mental health must be a priority as well as my own, but it is hard. Who could imagine navigating such anxiety and isolation as a mere six-year-old?

I do feel, however, that the last few weeks contain reasons for hope and seeds of joy to come. I took my 91-year-old father to his first inoculation against COVID and witnessed numerous of our most elderly and fragile uncurl themselves from their cars to take their first steps towards longed-for normality and the joys of human contact. It was humbling and moving. In our house, we didn't let a cause for joy go unnoticed and we celebrated "Biden Day" with chocolates, gifts and buns (Biden buns, what else?). Biden's inauguration was momentous. It has finally ended a dark and dangerous time for so many, and I believe a good man is finally back in charge. It was not certain to happen until it did, and then Phew! Relief, jubilation and all of us can sleep easier. And I do not have to explain to my children why the bad man is still in charge.

12 years ago, I was in Washington with my largely black American family on a pilgrimage to mark another inauguration, that of Barack Obama as the first African American President. As

a descendant of slaves through my mother, this was also a moment to witness, celebrate and savour and it was profoundly moving to me. I have always rejoiced in the role Quakers took in the abolition movement, So I appreciate the photos and poems about slavery from John Hall. Thankfully, at least now we have a black American leading the US armed forces and a picture of Harriet Tubman, hero of the 'underground railroad' who helped countless slaves to escape, is set to grace American \$20 bills.

Gender politics is a thorny challenge. I disliked the way JK Rowling was rounded upon for expressing her fears founded on her experience of sexual assault. But here too, I hope there is hope. Joe Biden has appointed Rachel Levine to be the first ever openly transsexual official to be confirmed by the US Senate. She will be Assistant Health Secretary and the simple fact of her appointment says so much more than any words or ideas can.

What did that wonderful poet Amanda Gorman say at the Inauguration? When day comes, we ask ourselves, where can we find light in this never-ending shade? And ends:

For there is always light,
If only we're brave enough to see it
If only we're brave enough to be it.

Meeting for Sufferings

5th December 2020

Robert Parkes

We were over 130 participants meeting online. This included

29 young people who uplifted us through their contributions expressed not only in words, but in pictures and in song - their testimony through music, possibly a first for MfS, deeply moved and enriched us all.

The main business before us was a continuation of *Responding to racism: next steps*. BYM Trustees cut to the chase. Racism exists within the Religious Society of Friends in Britain. They cited some disturbing examples. It is something we must tackle. This was

a shocking way to start our discernment, but we agreed that recognising the problem was an important first step to addressing it. There was sombre reflection that it needed to be stated and, sadly, some incredulity. Individually we are all on different stages of this journey. I sensed it was the young Friends present who were ahead of the curve.

The truth of the matter is that our Yearly Meeting has been struggling to engage with issues of racism for generations. Finally, hopefully, now is the time for us all to unfetter ourselves from the shackles of toxic history. In a powerful presentation by Edwina Peart (BYM's Inclusion and Diversity Co-ordinator) we explored the ways in which the facts of our – Quaker - history are relayed to succeeding generations and the deep feelings that are created by past injustice. Uncomfortable truths have been airbrushed away, words that seem innocuous enough still have the capacity to hurt and wounds that go unacknowledged remain unhealed.

We are all called to commit to becoming an actively anti-racist church. How can we make that active commitment to dismantling institutional racism within Quakers and society? Edwina

helped us reflect on the three stages of an approach to action on racism – learning, acknowledging, and acting. And, grounded in our testimonies, what is going to be our vision for this work? Part of the concluding minute reads:

“Our testimonies to equality and truth demand that we engage in a drive towards real change, turning our declared intentions into reality. We are called to commit to becoming an actively anti-racist church. Individually we are all on different stages of this journey, which is based on learning, moves through acknowledgment and on to commitment to action based on discernment... The time to act is now, personally and in our area meetings.”

We took heart in that momentum has been building, especially over the last year. We heard how Friends have been taking the first steps of this journey, for example, through learning about the darker recesses of our Quaker past, or by holding special meetings to acknowledge the truth, or by discerning an alternative to the word “overseer”.

In other business, we heard more about the moves towards simplified structures. There is no

easy way forward especially as the Society, ironically, seems to have created for itself a veritable cat's cradle of processes and structures. BYM, for example, is made up of over 70 separate charities plus recognised bodies. One Friend opined “radical solutions should not be off the table”. MfS, BYM, Trustees, central committees and Woodbrooke are working behind the scenes on our behalf to discern a way forward. We were directed to the dedicated web pages on simplifying meetings - <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/support-for-meetings/simpler-meetings>.

We heard how some meetings have been hit hard by lockdown with the loss of nearly all their income and donations. The Society faces some uncertainty as we go into 2021.

There will be no physical BYM gathering in 2021. It was supposed to be a residential at Bath University. It is now likely to be an event online, over several weeks in August.

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

All Things Considered

By Robbie Spence

Thursday 3 September 2020 on gender issues – the follow-up report

Gender was the topic of a special ‘All Things Considered’ meeting of Colchester Quak-

ers via Zoom on Thursday 3 September 2020. Kate Powis kindly convened it and several F/friends attended.

Most notably, an Attender in Devon called Norah joined us, such is the facility of Zoom and the power of the Internet that brought our meeting to her attention while she was

trying to look up [the Swarthmore lecture](#)! She asked to join because her young relative had just come out as a transwoman.

Unfortunately, there was no one at the All Things Considered meeting from among the F/friends who had ministered about inclusion or cautioned against prejudice at the Meet-

ing for Worship in May that had sparked this off. The reason for the All Things Considered meeting was mainly to be able to give more time and space to consider the ministry at the May Meeting for Worship. I must say that, the more I learn about the gender discourse, the less surprised I am about the absence of those who support gender ideology. It is the same when I ask them what they mean by saying that ‘Trans rights are human rights’. Of course they are, and of course trans people have human rights and nobody is trying to take them away. Hence, the standard response from gender ideologists and their supporters, when questioned, is to disengage from conversation. (Some go so far as to say that they don’t feel safe.)

Jenny Kay joined us and remembered there had been some important gender-related discernment during her time on Meeting for Sufferings. I looked this up afterwards and found a host of information on the pages of the [Quaker Gender and Sexual Diversity Community \(QGSDC\)](#).

The Meeting for Sufferings record shows that, in the consultation that preceded the Gender Recognition Act 2004, they wrote to the Department of Constitutional Affairs (the forerunner of the Ministry of Justice) to “fully support the provision in the [Gender Recognition] Bill which entitles transsexual people to full legal recognition in their desired gender.”

Since that time according to QGSDC, several meetings have undertaken discernment on transgender and non-binary inclusion. In the many examples, which are all well-intentioned and founded in our testimony to equality, there is the occasional statement that betrays the kind of misunderstanding and confusion that leads me to want to alert F/friends to our testimony to truth. Here is the North East Thames Area Meeting statement in February 2017:

“[We] want our Local Meetings to be safe places where each person can come as their own true self and find a spiritual home. We recognise that there is a growing awareness in society, and in the Society of Friends, that the terms ‘man’ and ‘woman’ prove incomplete when describing the diversity of gender identity and experience that exists.”

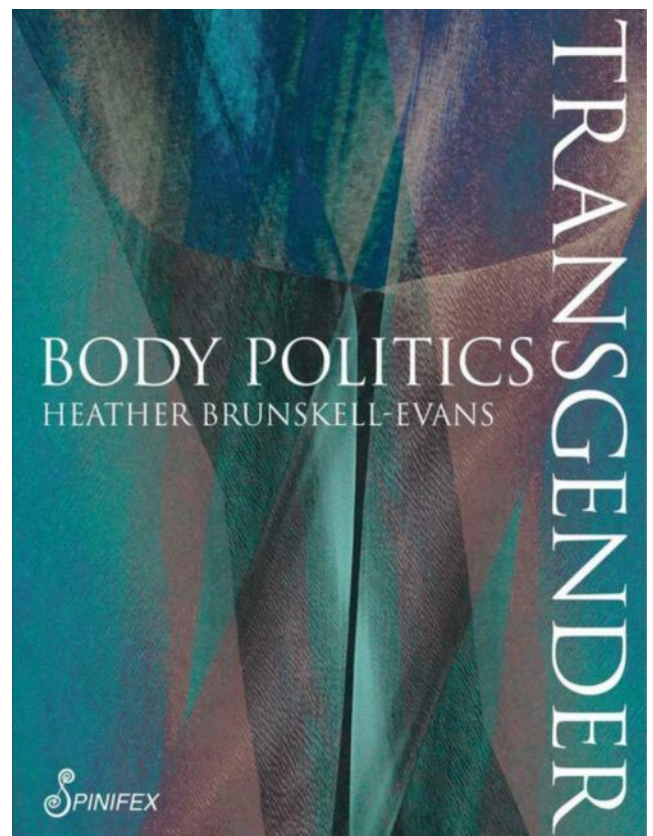
The problem is that ‘man’ and ‘woman’ are terms that describe sex, not gender identity, and when you conflate the two, the result is incoherence and confusion, which can lead to misogyny. The best known example of this misogyny is what happened to JK Rowling when she tweeted about how humans are sexually dimorphic: she has since been subjected to gross sexual threats and insults

from gender rights activists.

Last but not least, F/friends, I have discovered that there are some other Quakers around the country who are as concerned as I am about the way the gender discourse is going.

I have also heard that books by the philosopher and Quaker, [Heather Brunskell Evans](#), are not for sale at Friends House bookshop for ideological reasons. That is a shame because her latest book, *Transgender Body Politics* (2020), covers identity politics and queer theory and, from what I have seen and heard of Heather on YouTube, the book sounds like just what we need to better understand this strange new world of gender ideology.

Maybe we can get a copy for our library?



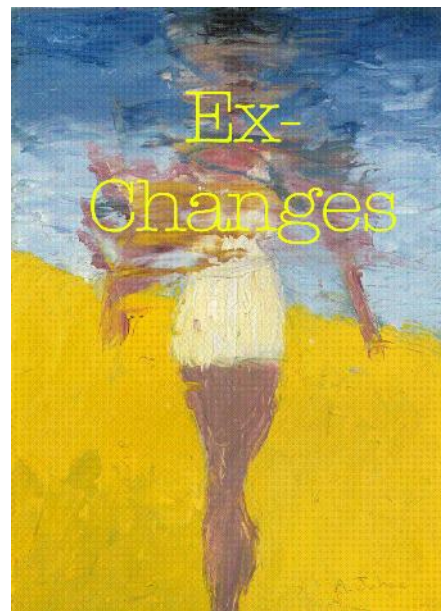
Ex-Changes

Antony Johae's collected early poetry and prose, *Ex-Changes* (The High Window, 2020), at first returns the reader to the author's childhood memory of the end of the Second World War. It then moves forward to his post-war family connection with Germany in the 1960s, and to his two-year residence there in the next decade. Then comes a sequence of love poems followed by impressions of university life

and learning in the 1970s and, more particularly, the influence of Dostoevsky and Kafka.

Ex-Changes (Swindon, The High Window, 2020). 94 pages. ISBN: 978-1-913201-18-0 £10 (plus £2 p&tp)

Copies can be purchased directly from the author at antonyjohae@hotmail.com



Earls Colne News

Jenny Kay,

Unable to gather in person or on Zoom as a Meeting for Church Affairs, I drafted the report to Area Meeting and circulated it by email and post. The following is in the process of being approved and could be amended before being read out in AM on Zoom.

We have read Quaker Faith and Practice (Fifth edition) 4.33. From March until August 2020 the Meeting House remained closed. When possible, it was prepared for use

under Covid 19 regulations. We took the opportunity to clear all non-essential and unclaimed articles by donating and recycling them. When restrictions were lifted, Meetings for Worship were held from August until the end of the year when by consent Meetings ceased. Maintenance work, building checks and cleaning were carried out as required.

Arrangements for hire by community groups proved too difficult to manage. A grant of £5,000 through Braintree Council has mitigated the loss of income. We thank Jayne

Meleschko for her service as treasurer over the last three years and seek new arrangements for managing future hirings with John Kay as treasurer.

We have each found ways of nurturing our spiritual lives and keeping in touch. All aspects of the life of our meeting are seen to be 'on hold'. We look forward to a time when we can get together and act collectively again, to make full use of our Meeting House to our benefit and to that of the local community.

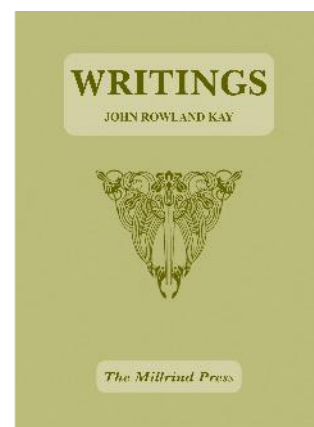
Writings

John Kay

If you are fairly happy reading from a computer screen you may possibly want to see the latest book I've put together from various articles I've written over many years. To relieve the large amount of text I've also reproduced some of my paintings with a few illustrations as well.

If you want to read it full screen don't forget to click on the broken square in the top left, you can return to your original screen by clicking on the escape key. You'll find the book by holding down CTRL (or CMD) and clicking on this URL. You'll be asked if you feel you can trust this site, please answer yes.

<https://en.calameo.com/read/00650332737cc16e0e204>



SONG OF THE FREE.

TEXT—*Susannah.*

I'm on my way to Canada,
That cold and dreary land,
The dire effects of slavery
I can no longer stand,
My soul is vexed within me sore
To think that I'm a slave,
I'm now resolved to strike the blow
For freedom or the grave.
Oh, righteous father, wilt thou not pity me,
And aid me on to Canada, where colored men are
free.

I heard the Queen of England say
If we would all forsake
Our native land of slavery
And come across the lake,
That she was standing on the shore
With arms extended wide,
To give us all a peaceful home
Beyond the rolling tide.
Farewell old master, that's enough for me,
I'm going straight to Canada where colored men
are free.

Grieve not my wife,
Grieve not for me,
Oh, do not break my heart;
For nought but cruel slavery
Would cause me to depart,
If I should stay to quell your grief,
Your grief I would augment,
For no one knows the day that we
Asunder may be rent.
Oh, Susannah don't cry after me,
I'm going up to Canada where colored men are
free.

I served my master all my days
Without a dime's reward,
But now I'm forced to run away
To flee the lash abhorred,
The hounds are baying on my track
The master just behind,
Resolved that he will bring me back
Before I cross the line.
Oh, old master don't come after me [free].
I'm going up to Canada where colored men are

I heard old master pray last night,
I heard him pray for me.
That God would come and in his might
From Satan set me free,
So I from Satan would escape
And flee the wrath to come,
If there's a fiend in human shape
Old Master must be one.
Oh, old master while you pray for me
I'm doing all I can to reach the land of liberty.

Ohio's not the place for me,
For I was much surprised,
So many of her sons to see
In garments of disguise;
Her name has gone throughout the world
Free labor, soil and men,
But slaves had better far be hurled
Into a lion's den.
Farewell Ohio, I'm not safe in thee,
I'll travel on to Canada where colored men are
free.

I've now embarked for yonder's shore,
Where man's a man by law,
The vessel soon will bear me o'er
To shake the Lion's paw;
I no more dread the auctioneer,
Nor fear the master's frown,
I no more tremble when I hear
The baying negro hound.
Oh, old master, don't come after me,
I'm just in sight of Canada, where colored men
are free.

I've landed safe in Canada,
Both soul and body free,
My blood and brains and tears no more
Shall drench old Tennessee;
Yet I behold the scalding tears
Now streaming from my eye,
To think my wife, my only dear,
A slave must live and die.
Oh, Susannah, don't grieve after me.
Forever at the throne of God, I will remember
thee.

Song of the Free

John Hall

A poem by the escaping slave Joshua Simpson. The references to Ohio are relevant to us as Vestal and Levi Coffin were the

two leaders of the Underground Railway who passed escaping slaves through Ohio to freedom.



Winter Shadows

Photo: David Lawrence

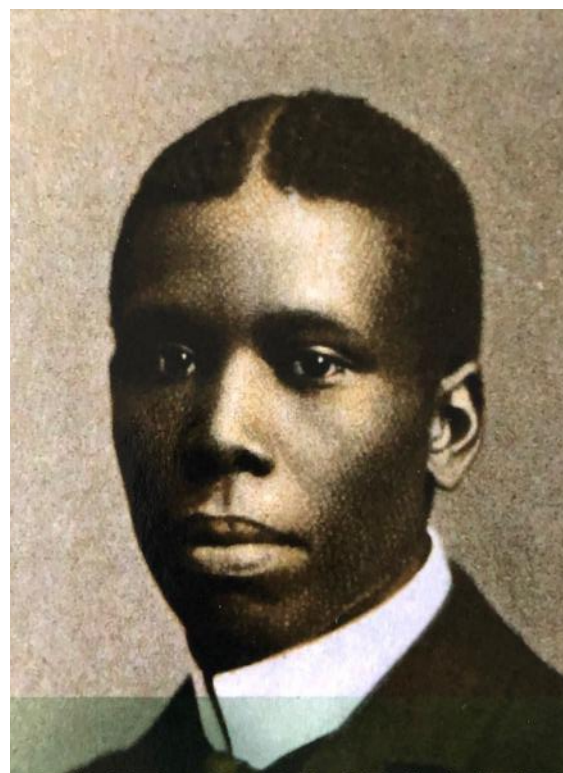
My Sort of Man

John Hall

The following is part of a poem called *My Sort 'O Man* by Paul Laurence Dunbar who, son of two former slaves, was the first African American to gain wide renown for literature in the United States:

But I jedge no man by his clothes, -
Nor gentleman nor tramp;
The man that wears the finest suit
May be the biggest scamp,
An' he whose limbs air clad in rags
That make a mournful sight,
In life's great battle may have proved
A hero in the fight.

(jedge and air are the original spelling)



David and Alice

I wrote to David Burston, partly as part of ensuring we are in touch with all Friends in our 2018 book, and on the Lists.....

He and Alice live in Santa Monica, Florida, where they are members of the local Meeting!

Rod and I were good friends with him, and Alice, when he was over here some years ago, working with a number of British football clubs' Youth sections.

Teaching them values!

This is just lovely.....

Julia, how lovely to hear from you!

Alice and I are both well... As a nurse she received her vaccination first shot three weeks ago and so that's a relief we are nearly there with her... As a healthcare worker over here I do actually qualify for the vaccine so that will begin next Sunday for me... We are both doing well and have maintained contact with the local Santa Monica meeting here...

We are selling our house at the moment so it's been very busy, what with clinical commitments and all of that to deal with but we are nearly there... We had an apartment on the side of the house which we used to rent out for Airbnb but they changed the ruling so we were no longer able to do that and rather than get a long-term renter we decided to sell the house and move to land a little way if we can...

I want you to know that I do often think of you both and send you my love and best wishes. I know there may be protracted times when I'm not in touch but I do think of you

both and so appreciate the influence you have been over me and the friendship we have had and have now...

At this point I'm booked to come back in mid March for the football. Despite the Covid there has in fact been more work for me to do as online sessions and education requirements have become more important and not less... I have just written another piece for a book called 'Holy Ground Holy Game' Which the authors tell me my second book inspired!

It's funny but I was very happy that Crawley Town beat Leeds United the other day...

I worked with the young Nicks rather a lot so his newfound notoriety is very pleasing! He scored a marvellous goal for them... And I'm sure Rod knows about it

We are currently in Palm Springs out in the desert... It's very quiet out here at the moment so it felt the best idea while we could to get away from the city...

I will be getting to the meeting in April and I will be looking forward to seeing you then...

Love and best wishes David and Alice

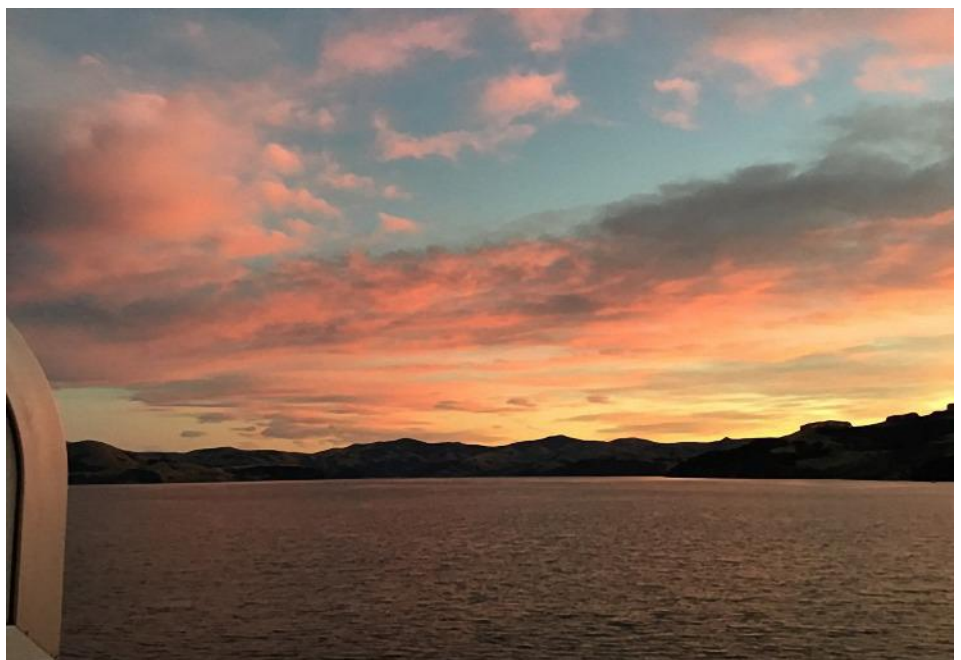
Christian or Not?

Can we settle the question, 'Is the Society of Friends Christian or not?' In the historical sense the answer is Yes: but that does not preclude the possibility that we may now be called to a new and wider perception of the Truth. We have the witness of the Society itself, as well as the example of Jesus, against turning yesterday's inspiration into today's dogma. Today's world-wide knowledge of people and their religions does present a challenge which our universalists are right to try to meet – just as our Christians are right to remind us

that the insights of the past must not lightly be thrown away. It may be valuable to live for a while in the tension between the universal and the specific; and if so, there may be a special vocation here through which our Society (with its tradition of respect for the divine

Seed in everyone) can minister to the church at large. Or it may be that a synthesis is possible, once we can agree on what is essential to being a Christian.

John Lampen, 1985 QFP 27.03



Sunset

Photo: David Lawrence

Finding a Home

John Kay

In the many years between attending a Methodist Church as a teenager and getting established into Secondary teaching I could best describe myself as a 'seeker'.

I had struggled with the concepts of 'God in three persons', 'virgin birth', 'original sin' and 'life after death' and found them all completely unacceptable.

The whole idea of making Jesus Christ a divine person seemed to make a mockery of his example. How could anyone use his life as a pattern to follow if he were anything but human? That applied to the fact of his conception as well.

I had reflected on how we established the concepts of good and evil during childhood and afterwards and came to the conclusion that the only way was through the sole experience of those qualities in the people we met, not in the ideas that were constantly fed into us by church and school.

So I muddled along, thankful for the wonderful example of goodness given me by an excellent mother, not only how she treated us but also how she nurtured anyone she met as a primary schoolteacher or socially.

When teaching I was lucky enough to meet up with one or two teachers who earned my respect and only later found out that they were Quakers. I was recently separated from my first wife and became inter-

ested enough to get involved with a Quaker Summer School.

This involved a meeting of the organisers at Sutton Meeting. At my first Meeting for Worship I was struck by the sincerity and devotion shown by the silence.

As I learned more about the Society I began to feel a growing sympathy with them and the principles that seemed to guide them. I was impressed by the respect and love that they felt, not just for fellow Friends but also for all people.

The more I learned of Quakers, the more I realised that being part of them, I could be confident that there was nothing in their history that I need to feel ashamed of.

Other factors also became apparent to me, other religions were given full respect and there were no 'us and them divisions' adopted, judgement of others was not expressed and everyone was able to feel valued.

A real plus was that at all times due consideration was given to the opinions and the self-respect of others. Votes were never taken.

Very soon it became apparent that Friends were all rather awkward characters with their own set of values. Trying to organise Friends was equated

with 'trying to herd cats'.

All of this seemed to offer a secure environment to me where I was able to feel at one with the whole ethos of Friends and belong to a loving and supportive community.

Thankfully there were no articles or rules that I felt I had to comply with yet I was able to look to other Quakers for examples of good practice. Quaker Faith and Practice proved a useful help in this.

Being able to take full responsibility for myself. Although giving my full attention to incorporating my own ideas, it was up to me how I should behave as a good person. This made me very aware of the difficulty of self-judgement, with the assurance that, being human I would often fall short of my ideal.



Old Problems and New Beginnings

Ecky Prolingheuer

One of the wonderful qualities of the Quaker 'family' is that we don't have priests who tell us what to believe in, nor do we have to pay staff who do the work of running this 'family' for us and make us stay within the family rules (well, with the exception of and apologies to Melanie).

But one of the problems of living in the Quaker family is that we have to find and live our belief individually, and furthermore that we have to do ourselves the work of keeping our family going...

However, our Quaker family is getting older, and smaller, but the tasks required to run the family are not! And so we try and muddle along, with ever shrinking Committees and finances but increasing work and responsibilities. And that is entirely understandable: we are all busy keeping up with an increasingly complex life, (grand)children, work demands, financial needs, the urgent need to support deserving causes, and so on.

Some stalwarts are nevertheless trying to keep our Local and Area Meetings going, but they are relatively few, and many of them are getting weary of their commitments and the time they have to sacrifice for the tasks, and there's a constant turnaround of the same Friends trying to cover the necessary 'jobs'. But we can't find anyone to take over from them, or at least support them, and so our Nominations 'Committee' consists of one person; clerks to LM and AM are octogenarians, albeit active ones; we are sorely in need of overseers and trustees; nor do we have a designated Contributions Secretary, Membership Clerk, Archivist or other posts. That's the 'Old Problems' of the title!

We cannot and must not hope that it all will somehow go away – with time it will only get worse, and our SEAQM 'family' may have to give up and disperse altogether. So we have to search for 'New Beginnings', ways to do things differently but more successfully. That might even mean breaking with parts of our Quaker tradition, but moving with the times and accepting the Zeitgeist has always been a

mark of Quakerism, contributing to Quakers still existing and – in places – even going strongly.

Our Area Meeting is not alone in having to deal with these problems; Friends' House is aware that many Meetings experience the very same pressures. They have therefore set up 4 new Development Officers for England who will discuss these issues with individual Meetings and help finding workable solutions. But we have to set our own minds to it, too! Trying to find a way out of our Old Problem is something which our next Area Meeting will start to discern, so please give it some thought, try 'blue sky thinking', and shine the Light on this important matter. We must consider simplifying Meetings (but how?), maybe employing more people to do some of the work (can we afford it?), or work together with neighbouring Meetings in joining certain Committees, tasks and working groups.

For once, let us all work together for a better future of our own, in addition to striving for a better future for others!

AM Clerk's Report

Anne Watkinson

I took over as AM Clerk for 2021 in November, largely because no one else would or could. I have just read Ecky's piece about problems and would like to add a few things for you to think about. This

problem of Friends to do things for our meetings is not new and very much exacerbated by the pandemic. However, we are really reaching crisis point.

While our overall finances look healthy and we are not collapsing as many charities, worried about that side of

things, we are custodians of four meeting houses and two burial grounds. Three of these are listed properties and all need attention from time to time with Colchester needing considerable attention. And no hiring income of significance for a year – or more?

Actually being active in helping those outside our fellowship, let alone supporting those in need in our community as we should, is beyond us – how can we witness to others and grow spiritually if we can't even run ourselves?

But we are not daft, or defeated. We can certainly simplify things but it means individual people doubling up on roles – will this work? Sharing out the work and employing people is how we manage Colchester Meeting premises.

There are other ideas afoot in our region – we are not alone. We have had a modest approach from our neighbour-

ing area meetings to consider amalgamating – is this an answer? Would you like a few of us to pursue this?

Britain Yearly Meeting recognise we are nationally a shrinking organisation yet are funding development officers after the success of the three-year Vibrancy project. One will start in our eastern region in April. But we are the only AM in the area not to have anyone on the appointments set-up although I do attend the meetings about the progress of it. The job description includes supporting 'worship, community, organisational management, social action, collaboration in the

wider community and outreach.' But we need to know where and what we need help with, he/she will not be there to tell us what to do.

Even if you can't be active you can still think of ways to ensure Quakers continue in Southern East Anglia AM. Seriously – we are struggling to continue as we are and need some creative thinking and your discernment as the way forward. Ideas to or further information from me and then try to come to the AM meeting on February 14th.

anne@watsnees.co.uk 07947 059279

Poster

John Hall

Part of a pro-slavery poster which sought to show that Quaker anti-slavery campaigners were deceiving the public.



Friendship and Sport

Teamwork or Winning Challenge

Julia Usher

Rod has been explaining a great deal to me about the intricacies of the sport of cricket; we have watched parts of several matches this season.

Sunday morning, January 24th, in the Zoom Meeting for Worship, a Friend lamented the current political battles in the US and UK of recent weeks, which have exposed lying, slander, corruption, and even insurrection.

I was suddenly struck by an alternative model of human achievement and approach to teamwork: the Test Match series, currently being contest-

ed by England with Sri Lanka.

Cricket teams of course are each desperate to win. Each side develops powerful relationships of respect and support within the team. This requires unswerving practice and full commitment, building up to each contest. National pride runs very strong; and supporters are fierce in their loyalty.

But alongside the Friendly rivalry, there is equal respect of differences. Teams are multicultural; cricket is a common language of rules and practice, shared by all who take part. There are fierce demands of energy, of giving your all, and putting highly refined skills to use.

Defeat must be accepted, even when there is disagreement - and the dispassionate video eye of the mechanical “third Umpire” is the one that resolves appeals - was it out? was it in? No juggling of the truth for your own gain. Technology therefore plays a

key role; just as Zoom now does for us.

A final incident inspired the analogy of Quaker Faith and Practice with cricket. This morning, the entire match was brought to a halt, when a very large Komodo dragon wandered onto the pitch. This alligator - like creature is a relic of the dinosaurs. It is dangerous to mammals, small and large - including humans. It brought the entire match to a halt, until it could be lured away safely.

Thus in one moment, an entire international encounter, its cultural sophistication, long accepted values of fair play, respect for right ordering and

truth, was brought to a halt.....
...by a prehistoric creature of another age, from survival only of the fittest and most aggressive, willing to attack and destroy to live.

This vividly illustrated to me, how our best practices and civilised relationships are fragile, and vulnerable to leaders and politicians who cast aside truthfulness and cooperation when their power is threatened; and dissent exposes their shallowness.



Sparrows



John Hall

How many sparrows can you see?