



Sunset over Colchester

Photo by David Lawrence

# NEWSLETTER

**SOUTHERN EAST ANGLIA AREA QUAKER MEETING**

**June 2021**

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**GLOSSARY  
CLICK HERE**

**RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)  
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## Meetings for Worship

(Under COVID regulations)

### CLACTON

Sundays 10.30 am

### HARWICH

### COLCHESTER

Sunday 10.30 am

### EARLS COLNE

Sunday 10.30 am

### SUDBURY

Sunday 10.30 am

### AM ZOOM

Sunday 10.30 am  
Contact AM Clerk

### FIRST CONTACT FOR FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

Charles Bather. Alison Parkes

## Christian or Not?

– a personal view

John Greenwood

The reprinting of QFP 27.03 in the February Newsletter caught my attention, with its title of ‘Christian or Not?’ For having recently made my home at Quakers, after having been very active for many years in various, mainly evangelical, Anglican churches, I have been asked that same question by some of my Anglican friends, out of concern, I suspect, for my spiritual well being(!)

So, this has been something I have had to grapple with personally in recent times, and, in the circumstances, I thought I might offer my own perspective on this common voiced enquiry. However, as I do, I am acutely aware of the risk of stepping into a theological minefield and so I would like to emphasise that, in what follows,

## Editorial

Hello Friends. I loved John Greenwood’s piece in this month’s issue, *Christian or Not*, and am struck by John Woolman’s warning: “If we treat the earth as an object without divinity... our overthrow will be unavoidable.” Ancient civilisations appear to have learnt this long ago – but, perhaps dangerously, we are yet to catch up.

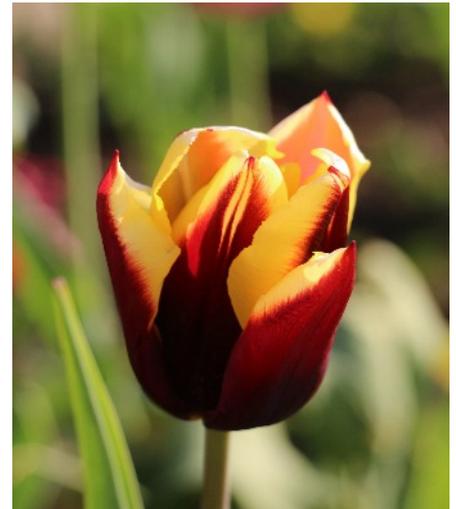
I was wondering what I was going to write about this month, and then something happened to really move me. Each week for several years and until lock-down abruptly put a stop to it, I led *Rhyme-Time* at Wivenhoe Library. It was a free group for parents and pre-school children and babies to sing songs, read stories, use their library, and feel friendship and a little community. I loved doing it and cared about it a great deal.

I make no claim for it having any greater authority than that of anybody else’s understanding. Thankfully, we have all been blessed with minds and hearts and the Spirit for us each to discern for ourselves where Truth and Light are to be found.

Personally, I have a two-part answer to this question. The first is a general observation, that ‘Quakerism’ is a repository, not of dogmas but of values, and although all these values are Christian ones they are also shared by many from other faiths and also by others with no religious affiliation at all. And so this question needs to be asked, instead, (*if it needs to be asked at all*) of each individual who has chosen to make Quaker faith and practice their spiritual home.

The second part of my answer arises out of my personal experience: What prompted my transition from ‘main-stream church’

Finding ourselves recently in need of a replacement lawnmower (!), our Friend Melody got in touch this morning to say that her dad will be giving us his old one for free. And that it is in recognition of what *Rhyme-Time* had meant to her and many other mums and babies when they were at their most vulnerable. I am so touched by this. What an honour it is to know something I loved doing meant a lot to others.



to Quakers was, primarily, my becoming increasingly uncomfortable with various doctrinal positions espoused, rooted in particular Bible texts, mostly concerning ‘salvation’ – put crudely, who was ‘in’ and, by extension, who was ‘out’. In the circumstances, I was left with two options; either the bible passages should not be taken literally, or had, somehow, been mis-translated, etc., (*not a stance compatible with a church where the primacy of scripture was central*) or the God with whom I had to do was not the epitome of love, truth, mercy, and goodness that I had based my faith upon.

I think it is the pre-ambule to QFP 19.24 that best encapsulates the release I experienced when embracing the Quaker way – that the foundation of our faith is not the scriptures themselves but rather the Spirit that brought them forth. Jesus had some very harsh words

for the Pharisees, the fastidious Law keepers of his day, and was, himself, usually to be found at the other end of town among the people they had long written off.

*What does the Lord require of you? To do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.* I have always loved that Old Testament verse and, for me, it has found full expression in the Quaker setting. Justice and mercy are, for me, attributes of God's character and values and here we are similarly being called to be of the same mind and heart – to attend to what Love requires of us – to live in the Light.

And the final part of that OT verse speaks of our need of humility in these things. As St Paul

observed, we are restricted in this life to seeing eternal truths through a darkened glass. We are not given certainty - for good reason. Instead we are offered faith – not blind faith, but one informed by the promptings of our own hearts and of the Spirit and also of those who journey with us, as we seek to know one another in the things that are eternal. Very much a Quaker approach, I would say

So, in summary, I am very pleased to be settled in a fellowship of people seeking to live

by the universal Spirit of Christ, the Light of the world. It is beyond pigeon-holing or debate about definitions. It is the Light that shines in the darkness, which the darkness will never overcome.



## The Miracle of the Commons

John Kay

I have just subscribed to Aeon magazine, mainly on the strength of an article they published called The Miracle of the Commons which starts by quoting an essay of Garrett Hardin of 1968 in the journal "Science" called "The Tragedy of the Commons".

'His proposition was simple and unsparring: humans, when left to their own devices, compete with one another for resources until the resources run out. 'Ruin is the destination toward which all men rush, each pursuing his own best interest,' he wrote. 'Freedom in a commons brings ruin to all.' Hardin's argument made intuitive sense, and provided a temptingly simple explanation for catastrophes of all kinds – traffic jams, dirty public toilets, species extinction.'

'Hardin speculated that the tragedy of the commons could be avoided only through total privatisation or total government control.'

His largely misanthropic view of society 'widely quoted' has fuelled the stance of many autocratic regimes and seems to give them valid arguments for the repressive regimes they impose.

It then details the studies of a professor at Indiana University, Elinor Ostrom which proved him wrong.

She studied many collaborative schemes from different parts of the world which successfully preserved natural resources.

An encouraging and heartening essay which will cheer you up a little in these dark times.



*Elinor Ostrom, Nobel Laureate in Economics photographed in 2011*

You will find it at:

<https://aeon.co/essays/the-tragedy-of-the-commons-is-a-false-and-dangerous-myth>



*A Parliamentary Study of the conservancies, 2005 Namibia*

## John Woolman

Susan Duncombe

A Thought Experiment on an Extract from John Woolman's Journal

Epistle of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting 1759

This epistle was written in the context of military and violent conflict combined with a small pox epidemic which was being felt in the communities of the eastern seaboard of America. The theme is that the suffering and distress of the people is an expression of God's anger over the spreading of a "selfish spirit" and "backsliding" among the people. Although there is a sense that the troubles people are experiencing are the consequence of their actions, the text is explicit that their suffering is a punishment by God. The text was written 262 years ago; much of the language is now archaic and obscure and sometimes impenetrable so getting to grips with meaning is difficult. More importantly, the characterisation of a wrathful God who in anger will inflict pain on the people He loves to make them better, is perhaps alien and unattractive to modern sensibilities. John Woolman's life's work was to

persuade Friends to give up the practice of enslaving other people to exploit them for economic benefit. The things that he saw when travelling to the communities in Philadelphia and the neighbouring colonies must have made him deeply angry. Yet his strategy seems to have been to approach with sincerity and conviction those who did keep people enslaved, but never in an angry or judgemental frame of mind.

What message did John Woolman find so valuable and sympathetic in this epistle that led him to include it in his journal? It is hard to say. But the circumstances around that long ago Philadelphia Yearly Meeting strike a chord: an epidemic and violent conflict. In struggling to find relevance and meaning in this epistle, the passage below seemed to have resonance. Following the quoted passage is an attempt at an interpretation for our times.

If we desire an inheritance incorruptible, and to be at rest in that state of peace and happiness which ever continues; if we desire in this life to dwell under the favour and protection of that Almighty Being whose habitation is in holiness, whose ways are all equal, and whose anger is now

kindled because of our backslidings, let us then awfully regard these beginnings of his sore judgments, and with abasement and humiliation turn to him whom we have offended. Contending with one equal in strength is an uneasy exercise; but if the Lord is become our enemy, if we persist in contending with him who is omnipotent, our overthrow will be unavoidable.

If we desire to pass on a whole and healthy earth, and to prosper on the earth into the future, if we desire to benefit from the divine spirit which generates all life, we must now look back at the origins and actions which have led to the events that threaten the well being of humankind and all living beings on earth. We must honestly examine and sincerely acknowledge the careless and destructive actions of the past and the present. Fighting with someone of equal strength is a hard struggle and the earth is so much stronger than we are. If we treat the earth as an object without divinity, if we insist on attacking life on earth, our overthrow will be unavoidable.

*The Journal of John Woolman and Plea for the Poor*, 1961, Corinth Books, Secaucus New Jersey



## William Penn Lecture 1946

Extract from *The City of God and The City of Man*

Is it not clear that in all the history of attempted progress there is a basic cleavage between those on the one hand who look upon man as the measure of all things, believing that man's is "the kingdom,

the power and the glory" and on the other hand there are those who believe that man's true dignity consists in making a daily sacrifice of self-will and who delight in seeing God exalted and glorified in all created things. It was because of this cleavage that Jesus likened His kingdom to a sheepfold into which some would try to steal, climbing

onto the roof or burrowing under the foundations, instead of coming in by the narrow, hard gateway. "What difference does it make how we get in," cries the world, "so long as we get in?"

Deceptions there must be; for the time being the sheep and the goats must lie down in the fold together. The goats sleep easily in the fold,

and why should they not — they got in by themselves and have no one to thank but themselves; they can lay themselves down in perfect self-assurance. Strangely it is the lambs, the saints of this world who are seldom at ease, who are always enduring the pains of growth, always alert in prayer listening for their good Shepherd. When He calls, they arise, but the goats sleep on in drowsy self-sufficiency — they got in by themselves, what need then to watch and seek for Another.

*Delivered at Arch Street Meeting House Philadelphia by Gilbert H. Kilpack.*

## The Path Not Taken

Antony Johae

A Kuwait newspaper has brought out a booklet for the Holy Month of Ramadan. On its cover is a slither of a moon, various stars, and a shining lantern. Inside gives notice of the Month's meaning. We are told that it is not just a matter of "skipping meals," but offers "a comprehensive program for our spiritual overhaul." Believers "get busy seeking Allah's mercy, forgiveness, and protection from Hellfire." It is also a time when they turn to the Creator to be renewed.

Shaikh Ahmed Farooqi once said that the blessings of Ramadan outweigh those of the other eleven to-

gether. In tune with it, LG makes "shining offers" in the Holy Month: tall fridges on "easy credit" and Al-Wazzan, holding diet in the balance, purveyors of milk, invite you to "change your life style." Ramadan's rules of fasting follow: what it is, what its purpose, what validates or undoes it.

"Fast to be healthy," said the Holy Prophet — and here's advice on fasting foods and hard words for fast breakers; still more for feasters. Then on the back cover I see it: the figure of a man with white hair to his shoulders and a wide-brimmed black hat and read: "Live well on the way to an active life with quick-cooking oats by QUAKER."

## Glossary

*We thought that all Friends might appreciate a fairly extensive glossary of the many Quaker abbreviations we have accumulated over the years.*

*I have also made this list into a PDF, when space is short there will be a link to this PDF on the front page of every issue.*

AFSC American Friends Service Committee  
 AM Area Meeting (Group & Group Meeting)  
 Appt. Appointment  
 Asst. Assistant  
 BYM Britain Yearly Meeting (All Friends in UK)  
 CAAT Campaign Against the Arms Trade  
 Clerk 3 yr appt., servant of a Meeting who prepares and subsequently writes the minutes of that Meeting for Business to show the Spirit of the Meeting on each item on the agenda.  
 Convenor The 1<sup>st</sup> on the list of appointees, to clerk only the

first meeting of that committee.  
 Elder 3 yr appointment looking after the Spiritual aspect of the AM  
 FAU Friends Ambulance Unit During WW1 & 2)  
 FMH Friends Meeting House  
 FSC Friends Service Council  
 FWCC Friends World Committee for Consultation  
 JYM Junior Yearly Meeting  
 LM Local Meeting ( Group & Group Meeting)  
 MfS Meeting for Sufferings (representatives from all AMs of the BYM)  
 MH Meeting House  
 MM Monthly Meeting (previous title of AM)  
 Overseer 3 yr appointment looking after the physical & mental Welfare of the AM  
 PM Preparative Meeting (previous title of LM)  
 QAAD Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs  
 QBL Quaker Bolivia Link

QCEA Quaker Council for European Affairs  
 QfP Quaker Faith & Practice  
 QHA Quaker Homeless Action  
 QIAP Quaker International Affairs Programme  
 QPS Quaker Peace and Service  
 QPSW Quaker Peace and Social Witness  
 QSA Quaker Social Action  
 QSS Quaker Socialist Society  
 QUNO Quaker United Nations Office  
 QVS Quaker Voluntary Service  
 RSOF Religious Society of Friends  
 RYM Residential Yearly Meeting  
 SEAQM South East Anglia Quaker meeting  
 TED (talks) Technology, Entertainment, Design (less than 90 minutes)  
 TTT Turning The Tide  
 YF Young Friend  
 YFGM Young Friends General Meeting  
 YM Yearly Meeting (usually a week)  
 YMG Yearly Meeting Gathering



All Spring flowers Photos by David Lawrence



## Schmaltalk

### Experiments in Teaching, Learning, Understanding

(Roman numerals refer to footnotes at the end of the piece.)

What is Quaker? Faith, Practice, Community, and Egalitarian Governance

To be Quaker is to become convinced of the rightness *for oneself* (i) of a particular way of seeing, thinking, and understanding, and then to endeavor to live internally and relationally in harmony with those received truths. Collectively, these are called *Faith and Practice*. [ii]

Underlying “*the way*” are theologies or philosophies that vary among individual Quakers and between branches, [iii] but they converge on a spiritual egalitarianism among all persons, and a direct (i.e. mystical) access to the source of all peace, love, and understanding, [iv] Who [v] may go by many names including God. Originally Christocentric and still almost conventionally so among the majority of Quakers worldwide, inward faith among “liberal” and other Quakers may be partially informed or grounded in pantheism, the God of Einstein and Spinoza (pantheism), Buddhist tenets, non-theism, rational agnosticism, stoicism, or elsewhere.

Typically, there is little or no emphasis on sin or salvation as these are commonly understood. Fixed beliefs including creeds are anathema, as Truth is considered to be in a state of *continuing reve-*

*lation*; consequently, invariant (or frozen-in-time) interpretations of holy texts or unconditional deference to persons of authority can rightly be viewed as unhelpful idolatry. Outward sacraments (including baptism) are considered harmless “notions” that are non-essential and not practiced at all among Liberal Friends. If this sounds anarchic, it is not. Coherence is guided by queries and advices, not dogma, guilt, or fear. A peculiar Quaker jargon (patois) is useful in emphasizing how Quaker understandings may differ from the commonplace, but can also make things seem either quaint or even more mysterious than they actually are. [vi]

Practice—the inward and outward way of living—is inseparable from Faith. Each informs and inspires the other, and each is strengthened in community. Named principles (testimonies) shared and celebrated by the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) include integrity, simplicity, nonviolence, active peacemaking, equality, and stewardship. Silence and deep listening—listening for the “*still small voice*” [vii] of God and listening to one another—are highly valued; many communities meet primarily in silence, punctuated by unprogrammed vocal ministry. In such Meetings, there is no single priest or pastor, and no paid clergy, Friends having eliminated not the priesthood but the laity.

While the theology of Quakers is outside the mainstream, it is not altogether unique: most of its threads are found in other reli-

gions, many of them older than Quakerdom’s origins in the 1660’s. But from this theology Quakers derived a model of organization and self-governance that is an exceptional departure from the familiar domination schemes of hierarchy or voting.

Quakers invest the time and care to labor toward a sense of the group—beyond consensus and typically finding unity—with individuals offering their views via plain speech and integrity, yet listening deeply and subordinating their egos to a greater wisdom. “Right action” is prioritized over speed and expediency. [viii]

In a given community, “Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business” (a.k.a. Business Meeting) is traditionally held monthly, and the community itself is known as a Monthly Meeting. Representatives from a dozen or so Monthly Meetings may gather Quarterly, and each of several multistate groupings of 50-100 Meetings gather annually in open sessions (for example Baltimore Yearly Meeting or Philadelphia Yearly Meeting) to sustain relationships and consider shared issues and programs. Additional networks of national and international Quaker organizations tether Friends in activism, lobbying, and service. However, decision-making authority and assets (including properties) remain the purview of Monthly Meetings except where intentionally ceded.

Who then can identify as Quaker? Some Friends assert a necessity to hold membership in an established Monthly Meeting. [ix]

Others feel just as strongly that identity is existential, a recognition and declaration of True Self in the context of Faith, Practice, and Community. Either way, newcomers are welcomed and embraced, as even the most established Quaker communities know new “seekers” to radiate the joy of finding their true home, and to provide the community with new talents and perspectives.[x]

Take note that, despite rhyming, Quakers and Shakers have very different origins and theologies: Quakers are neither celibate nor known as great furniture makers. Nevertheless, a favorite song among Quakers is the Shaker hymn, “Simple Gifts”.

Quakerism is simple. And complex. The essentials revolve around faith, practice, community, and egalitarian governance.

#### FOOTNOTES:

[i] Paradoxically, community is essential but cannot thrive unless each individual knows themselves to be in a best-fit situation for personal spiritual growth. Personal responsibility for one’s own faith and practice is at once liberating and challenging; it is not for everyone, not the “easiest” path, and this is reflected in Quakerism’s relatively static membership numbers. “Defined rules of belief” and a promised route to personal salvation are far more popular, and not offered by most Quaker communities. There does exist an evangelical branch of Quakers, but recruitment and “conversion” of others is not a historical priority for Quakers.

[ii] *Faith and Practice* is also the name given to a published set of guidelines and resources formulated by each Yearly Meeting (a territorial grouping of communities), revised every couple decades for purposes of harmonizing the agreed-upon commonalities between the participating communities. Most of these are available online.[iii] see

<http://www.quakerinfo.org/quakerism/branches/today>

[iv] “(What’s So Funny ‘Bout) Peace, Love, and Understanding” is a 1974 song written by English singer/songwriter Nick Lowe and subsequently covered by many. I like the Keb’ Mo’ version <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z6Eje4poJ1U>

[v] The rare E.E. Cummings devotee will recognize the personal pronoun “Who” as an intended reference to God, lifted from E.E. Cummings’s essays: “... mysteries alone are significant ... love is the mystery-of-mysteries who creates them all” in *i: six nonlectures*

[vi] Quakers speak of “the Light,” once took care to use “Thee” and “Thou” in speech, “affirm” rather than “swear” to be truthful, are “convinced” rather than “converted,” etc.

[vii] From *1 Kings 19:12*, also translated as “a delicate whispering voice”; this is how God spoke to Elija. Quakers find it an apt description of what may be discovered by deep listening. Are Quakers prone to auditory hallucinations? Rarely. How does the still small voice differ from imagination? In Scene 1 of George Bernard Shaw’s play *Saint Joan*

[https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/s/shaw/george\\_bernard/saint-joan/complete.html](https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/s/shaw/george_bernard/saint-joan/complete.html), the following exchange occurs:

Joan. “I hear voices telling me what to do. They come from God.”

Robert. “They come from your imagination.”

Joan. “Of course. That is how the messages of God come to us.”

[viii] In my view, the practices of corporate discernment are the most important legacy and example the Quakers have provided. The general concept of seeking unity is not unique, as it was embedded in many indigenous cultures and is arguably the way in which many families

decide things as simple as where to go on vacation. But Quakers have provided a framework that succeeds in the modern era, so long as participants care more about the community and the rightness of discernment than they care about “winning.” I recoil and rebel in the secular world when some egoist declares “let’s call the question,” insisting that—right or wrong—a vote and majoritarian dominance on a divisive question is better than delay. The flaws of hierarchical decision making are too many and too obvious to recount (see Trump).

[ix] Traditional importance of defined membership was rooted in expediencies that were more important in past centuries. For example, in the earliest years, self-proclaimed Friends could potentially overreach (in heresy or violence) and bring the King’s army (or other government) down on all, so a way was needed to disavow such persons as non-members. In the U.S., it was easier (as recently as the Vietnam conflict) to assert pacifist status (re the Selective Service draft) if one were a longtime member of a Quaker community, with paperwork to show it. For the “institution,” there remain several legalistic reasons to have a defined membership cohort, but they have little if anything to do with colloquial self-identification of one’s faith and practice.

[x] If anyone visits a Quaker meeting and finds it to be insular, inhospitable, and resistant to the possible change wrought by new members or attenders, such a meeting should be considered an outlier, and seekers should look for a healthier nearby meeting.

*Reproduced by kind permission from the online Blog of Alan Schmaljohn, Quaker and Doctor at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, Baltimore.*

## Colchester Gazette

18 March 2021

By PapeGueye Trainee Reporter

### Colchester resident protests Leidos contract with Census

A PEACE loving Colchester resident has decided to fill in his census form in the most annoying way possible – in protest over the company which owns part of the contract for it. The Office for National Statistics awarded the Census Questionnaire



*Protest - Robbie Spence, who is protesting against the company handling census forms, with his copy of Peace News*

Management contract to Leidos Innovations UK in October 2018.

Leidos Innovations UK, a subsidiary of Fortune 500 company Leidos, was

awarded a contract with potential value of up to £65.1 million for the 2021 Census. However, Robbie

Spence, 59, of Heath Road, Prettygate, is joining environmental activists in a creative protest against the Leidos due to its involvement in defence contracts.

It is a legal requirement to complete the census.

Mr Spence said he will obey the law but is going to make it as costly as possible for Leidos to process his census form. As a subscriber to Peace News, Mr Spence saw the idea for the protest in the publication and decided to join in. He has ordered a paper census form and will write his answers upside down to make it difficult to process by computer.

Mr Spence said: “There are lots of interesting ways to make it more costly for Leidos to process our information including stapling the correct answers to the form instead of writing them in the boxes provided. “I don’t advocate people do this around petty things like potholes. I would only advocate doing this sort of thing for a bigger principle.”

Leidos Innovations UK is a company under the umbrella of Leidos focusing on IT. Dynetics, a subsidiary of Leidos focuses on defence and works with US Government customers including NASA and the branches of the military. Leidos UK was contacted for comment but did comment at the time of going to press.

### Oldest Comment

ColonelChester

18th March 07:56 am

User ID: 1208898

I can see where this retired CND hippy is coming from, surprisingly, but while it may cost Leidos this year, in future government contracts all bidders will now beef up the costs to cover manual elements required and we will all pay more, and the winning bidder will make more profit at their standard percentage, so this is a typical loony left publicity stunt and own goal.

## Quaker rules

### About boys and girls on overnight trips

Robbie Spence

Back in March, I wrote about the policy capture by gender ideologists of parts of the Society of Friends with regard to rules about boys and girls sleeping together on overnight trips.

I asked what our Area Meeting safeguarding policy was. Ecky Prolingheuer looked it up and kindly referred me to ‘Quakers in Britain Policy, but unfortunately, among the numerous links to numerous documents, it is hard to find out if there is anything that spells out Friends’ rules to prevent boys and girls sleeping together on overnight trips.

In order to cut to the chase, I phoned Britain Yearly Meeting’s Safeguarding Officer, one Mark Mitchell, on 020 7663 1103 (safe@quaker.org.uk). I started by saying that I was worried about the Quaker London Link Group committee minute 2017/20 about young people’s boundaries and sleeping arrangements. Before going any further, just to check what kind of person I was speaking to, I asked, do you think that boys can change into girls? He said this was irrelevant and put the phone down.

I would welcome any Friends trying to find out on my behalf more about the Society of Friends’ rules about boys and girls sleeping together on overnight trips. I also suggest that it would be good if the Area Meeting could clarify what its view is.

Sarah Everard and Sisters Uncut

The UK news in March was dominated by the tragic murder of a young woman, Sarah Everard, and the vigil that followed on Saturday 13 March at 6pm at the bandstand on Clapham Common. The vigil turned violent at some point, with some witnesses blaming the police for being heavy-handed, and others saying that it was hijacked by a group called Sisters Uncut.

For now, I just want to focus on Sisters Uncut, a faux feminist group that campaigns for men’s rights, including the sexual exploitation of women, surrogate motherhood, and porn and sex work as just like any other job. They also promote gender ideology.

They did so during the 2018 trial of Tara Wolf, a trans-identified

male, who was convicted of “assault by beating” of a 60-year-old feminist, Maria MacLachlan, at Speakers’ Corner in Hyde Park on 13 September 2017. Maria was there to attend a meeting about proposed changes to the Gender Recognition Act 2004. Here is the Tweet to defend and support Wolf on 11 April 2018:

“@SistersUncut#Freetheshewolf Tomorrow & Friday, Hendon Magistrates Court 9am. Please join Trans Survival, Trans Defence to show your support in and outside court for the trial of a young trans woman, support your sisters not just your cisters.”

### My trans agenda

I saw Maddie Powell’s item on Transgender Issues in April. She wrote about “arguments that may on the surface look to be about something seemingly straightforward such as boys not being al-

lowed to share sleeping areas with girls”. She said, “Very often those issues are about transphobia, the fear that someone different from yourself might be a threat.”

I think it is very straightforward that boys are not girls. It is not just “seemingly” straightforward. Yet, in our woke culture, I know that people are called transphobic for saying that men are not women. That is what the current Maya Forstater High Court case is about.

I don’t know what Maddie is really trying to say here. It is so vague. If she thinks I am transphobic, she should say so explicitly. After all, there is no place for transphobia in the Society of Friends.

Maddie also suggests that trans people are “a vulnerable and already discriminated against group”. I agree. My point is that the peddlers of trans ideology –

rather than trans people themselves – are neither vulnerable nor discriminated against. They are in large part men who feel entitled and have the financial backing of Big Pharma and the medical industrial complex (see [www.the11thhourblog.com](http://www.the11thhourblog.com) for more on that topic). They are in large part a veiled men’s rights movement, as exemplified by Sisters Uncut.

I’ll conclude with the Tweet of one Alessandra Asteriti, Professor of Law at the Leuphana University in Lüneburg (@AlessandraAster before Twitter banned her):

“Nobody really believes a man becomes a woman because he says he is. But most men, and a depressingly high number of women, believe a man should get what he wants.”

## Dorothy Foundation Appeal

Jenny Kay

An appeal from the Dorothy Foundation came through the letter box at Earls Colne Meeting House and most likely all of our Meeting Houses received the mailing. I’m writing about it here as it may not have reached all of us. The appeal is to raise £150,000 to help tackle Covid and Ebola in Sierra Leone. The Dorothy Foundation is a Quaker peace charity set up to provide grants, equipment and other items to charities and not-for profit organisations working in this, one of the poorest West African countries, with the aim of improving all aspects of social welfare.

In the past Friends had played a role in the events leading to the establishment of Freetown as a settlement for freed slaves. This led to Sierra Leone being the choice of country

for this charity. In Bradford Village, the foundation has a college, a clinic, hospital, a home for 40 Ebola orphans merging with a boarding school and a farm. The school has links with Sidcott.

Dorothy Crowther is a retired Medical Practitioner and a past governor of the Retreat. Much more more information about this Quaker Charity may be found on the website: <http://dorothyfoundation.org>.

This appeal spoke to John and me for family reasons. For over ten years, from 1948, John’s father, a shipwright and joiner worked for the Colonial Service in Sierra Leone, first in the prison service as a carpentry instructor, then as Permanent Way Inspector for the Sierra Leone Railway which ran upcountry to Bo. His mother went out later in 1952 with his sister Marian whose first



three years of secondary school were spent at the Freetown Secondary School for Girls while his mother taught at the Annie Walsh School. John joined them for a year working in the office of J. Pauling and Sons, contractors for the building of a new deep-water quay at Freetown.

I had hoped that we might be able to visit Sierra Leone sometime but that now seems rather unlikely. However it is such a joy to know about the work going on there and to be able to make a contribution.