

Castle Park Tulips Photo by David Lawrence

NEWSLETTER

SOUTHERN EAST ANGLIA AREA QUAKER MEETING

March 2022

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GLOSSARY
CLICK HERE

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)
SEAQM Correspondence Clerk: Chris Samuel

c/o Colchester Quaker Meeting House

6 Church Street, Colchester CO1 1NF;

email address: AMClerk@essexsuffolkquakers.org

Web Address: www.essexsuffolkquakers.org

Meetings for Worship

(Under COVID regulations)

CLACTON

Sundays 10.30 am

HARWICH

2nd & 4th Sundays
10.30 am

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

Rod Usher & Melanie Read

Notes from Area Meeting 12.02.22

Jenny Kay

Held at Colchester, 13 were present with an additional 2 joining on zoom. Of these 11 were members. John Greenwood joined the Clerk Anne Watkinson at the table.

Two attenders were accepted into membership. Simon Banks will continue as the Elder/Pastoral friend for Harwich for a further year and Jenny Kay takes over as AM Assistant Treasurer for Earls Colne.

Tabular statement

The annual count of members and attenders known as the Tabular

Editorial

Hello Friends!

Events have taken a horrible turn in the world. I'm sorry to sound so downbeat, but anything else sounds obviously crazy. I have been obsessively reading the news online – 'doom-scrolling' as it's called. What is happening in the Ukraine is shocking, horrific and with no positive end in sight.

But conversely there is beauty in amongst this desperation. We have all got to see what a magnificent country the Ukraine is, filled with brave and defiant people who are proud of their own incredible history. The President, a former comedian who voiced-over the film of Paddington for its domestic screening, and who won the national equivalent of Strictly Come Dancing, is a hero who has refused to save his own skin, for the sake of standing up to Putin's invasion and helping his country. Added to that, the West has united in its support for refugees and has come together to impose swift sanctions against bar-

barity, and governments are turning more towards renewable sources of energy. Companies and individuals are distancing themselves from Putin and Russians themselves are risking imprisonment to tell the truth and protest.

Where does that leave us though - when we know the situation is desperate and so dangerous? I don't have any answers. Nor do I feel any control. But I will hang a Ukrainian flag on our window. I will give help to the refugees and stand up for them. And while I can, I will appreciate every moment. I will thank God for the life we have, for the privilege of being on this wonderful planet, for the comfy clean bed I have, the food, the safety, the birds in our garden, my family and friends. And while I can, I will use the little routine of my life to stay sane. I will carry on skipping though Lent, and I will love as much as I can for as long as I'm given grace to do so.

At least I have the gift of knowing what I am here for today.

Statement was completed and returned to Friends House.

Clacton -16 members, 5 attenders;

Colchester - 65 members, 1 sojourning member, 26 attenders, 4 children

Earls Colne -12 members and 2 attenders

Harwich - 6 members, 4 attenders;

Sudbury -7 members, 7 attenders

The total membership at the end of 2021 was 100 with 44 attenders and 4 children.

Opportunities are available for children once a month in Colchester Meeting. All age Worship alternates with a children's class allowing parent/s or carer/s time in Meeting for Worship without their children.

Annual reports of our activities

These were received from Colchester, Earls Colne and Clacton. The AM report was accepted after minor additions.

Funeral wishes

Friends were reminded that forms are available to be completed with their requests for after life procedures giving some contact details and funeral wishes. These should be lodged with our funeral officers and copies given to their nearest Friends and/or relatives.

Funding for small needs

Pastoral Friends raised their concerns about supporting Friends in our community with small sums of emergency cash without having to apply to one of our charitable trusts formally. They will draw up

a scheme and put the details to Trustees. Friends were reminded of the funds available through the Richard Wainforth Trust, the Jack Fields Trust and the Greenwood Trust.

AM Gathering

We accepted Peter Whiteley's proposal for a weekend at Belsey Bridge, Suffolk in 2023 and asked him to make the booking for a residential gathering from 4pm on Friday 20 to Monday 23 October 2023. with accom-

modation for 25 people, at £223 each, £75 for 6 -15yrs and no charge for children up to 6 years old. Bursaries will be available and Friends who are able are asked to contribute. A group has been set up to plan this event with Peter.

Quaker Quest Working Group

A team of Colchester Friends led by Jane Herd has been formed. An afternoon session was held to explore the possibilities.

Future AMs

The Quaker Quest team asked for the afternoons of our next two Area Meetings to be given to exploring themes and ideas raised during the afternoon gathering.

The AM Opening Meeting for Worship will remain at half an hour but begin at 10.30am instead of 10.00am to facilitate the journey for those coming a distance.

News from Earls Colne

Jenny Kay

We took another step towards 'normal' on the last Sunday in February. I had prior knowledge of a visitor who would be in need of refreshment before the journey home. It was time to start offering this again. There were 12 of us gathered in deep quiet for the hour and time to share our sadness at the invasion of Ukraine and our thoughts for all involved

over tea, coffee and biscuits afterwards.

Another 'normal' event at the beginning February was our first Meeting for Church Affairs since the beginning of 2020. We recorded our report to AM for 2020, agreed one for 2021 and made a plan for catching up on any necessary maintenance of the building. We will hold a second meeting will in March.



Quaker Quest Update

Jane Herd

The first event of the new Area Meeting Quaker Quest endeavour was held as part of the extended Area Meeting on the afternoon of Saturday 12th February. Quaker Quest is an in-reach and outreach project whereby we share together our Quaker spirituality with each other and eventually with those outside the meeting. We are grateful to David Amos and Kathleen Bell from the national Quaker Quest group who facilitated the afternoon. They asked us to introduce ourselves by

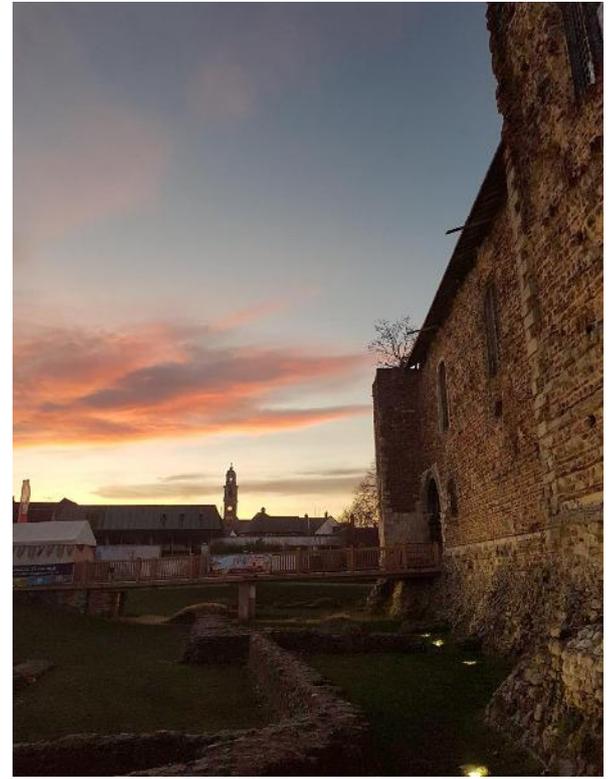
sharing our thoughts about the building and recent renovations. The toilets received particular praise! There was then deeper discussion in pairs about how we came to Quakers and about the themes we thought could be significant to share about Quakerism with others in small groups. The latter exercise created a list of possible topics which after a welcome tea break were chosen by small groups to discuss. This led to whole group discussion about what was important to us as Quakers and what struggles we had in our faith and practice. This was often heartfelt and we thank all

those who attended and offered so much of themselves.

The next Quaker Quest event will be held on the afternoon of the extended Area Meeting at Colchester Meeting House on Saturday 9th April from 2 to 4pm after lunch. The theme will be 'What nourishes you spiritually', and there will once again be pair, and small group exercises to encourage sharing and then large group discussion. We welcome everyone to join us from our local meetings and look forward to seeing many of you there.



*Tapestry prints in Colchester Parnell Room
photo: Anne Watkinson*



Sunset picture

David Lawrence

Quaker Business Pioneers

John Hall

The Bewley family were Quakers who moved to Ireland from Cumberland in the 17th century. In the mid-19th century, they went into the coffee and tea business, initially importing 2,099 chests of tea from China but gradually increasing this to 10,000 chests at a time. By the early 20th century, they were highly successful with coffee and teashops across Ireland, in 1927 opening their flagship, Bewley's Oriental Café on Grafton Street in Dublin with stained-glass windows by Harry Clarke of the Irish Arts and Crafts movement and Pauline Bewick, a descendant of the 19th-century artist Thomas Bewick. The café is still there today. Milk for the chain was provided from the family farm of Jersey cows, the first in Ireland. In 1966, the family agreed to purchase coffee only from Fair-Trade suppliers.

From 1977 the family supplied coffee to third-party outlets in the hospitality sector starting with Trinity College and eventually supplying 4000 outlets in Ireland alone. The business grew because they supplied free commercial coffee-making filter machines, purchased in the Netherlands, to regular commercial customers who bought at least eight cases of coffee a month. At one point, following the example of their fellow Quaker, Ernest Bader who, in 1951 handed over his chemical business to his employees, the family gave the entire company to their employees as a cooperative. However, in contrast to the Scott Bader Commonwealth, Bewley's, under employee ownership was not successful and all the shops, apart from Grafton Street were lost and the family had to take back control to ensure the business did not go bankrupt. Now the family supplies coffee and tea to the UK, USA, and Ireland. Their instant coffee is quite difficult to find in England except on-

line, but it is, reputedly, the very best and most expensive that one can buy. In 2008 the roasting facility became 100% carbon neutral, surely a first, and in 2018 they launched 100% renewable cups. Now the last Quaker managing director of what is the Campbell Bewley Group, Paddy Bewley, has died, but they remain very much Quaker pioneers in business.



Truth

David Lawrence

To me one of the most attractive of all the values we aspire to is the Testimony to that of seeking Truth.

Then, in our seeking, coupling that with QF&P 17, "Think it possible that you may be mistaken", to keep our minds open, and the ego in check.

I like being a seeker for all the testimonies, justice, simplicity, sustainability, equality and peace.

Being a seeker means that our heart is in the effort we make to improve. All our Testimonies are aspirations and quite unlike many others we recognise how complex they are. No short one-line smart answers.

Like art and science we are on a journey towards the truth rather than reaching a goal or finishing line; a joint adventure rather than a competition and that endeavour is creative and exciting.

Quaker Faith & Practice 10.04

Belonging to a Quaker Meeting

The life of a religious society consists in something more than the body of principles it professes and the outer garments of organisation which it wears. These things have their own importance: they embody

the society to the world, and protect it from the chance and change of circumstance; but the springs of life lie deeper, and often escape recognition. They are to be found in the vital union of the members of the society with God and with one another, a union which allows the free flowing through the society of the spiritual life which is its strength.

William Charles Braithwaite, 1905

*William Charles Braithwaite (1862–1922), a lawyer and banker, was the author of *The beginnings of Quakerism and The second period of Quakerism*. He was active in establishing the Swarthmore lectures and in the transformation of Christian Doctrine 1883 into the 1921 Christian life, faith and thought.*

Ammonites

David Lawrence

There are about a dozen examples of these fossils around the Colchester castle walls: Ammonites lived during the periods of Earth history known as the Jurassic and Cretaceous. Together, these

represent a time interval of about 140 million years. The Jurassic Period began about 201 million years ago and the Cretaceous Period ended about 66 million years ago.

Reading the Newsletter on Line

John Kay

To all my people on my Newsletter receipt lists.

Not wishing to "teach Granny to suck eggs" I am assuming that many of you, preferring to read the Newsletter as "hard copy" lose no time in printing out the newsletter as soon as you receive the PDF as an attachment.

If this rings a bell you may be losing out on not scanning the N/L on the laptop or tablet screen first.

Carried in the text, or at the end of many articles will often be a Hyperlink (link to another website page) which will show the page referred to and give further information. If you click on this while you view the PDF online, it will go directly to that page. Of course this can only work if you are reading the PDF while you are still on line.

Hope you can still get the best out of the Newsletter. Do email me if you have any questions, preferably to one of my gmail addresses.



Kyiv Quakers

From Jane Herd

The following was read out as part of the ministry at Colchester Quaker Meeting House 27th February 2022

Tim Gibb, Quaker and human rights activist. General Secretary, Friends World Committee for Consultation.

I was in touch with Quakers in Kyiv yesterday, who say thank you for the prayers and messages of love and encouragement from around the world. Usually they are small in number, but today are joined by so many internationally for Meeting for Worship that they are at capacity.

The message expresses: "Huge gratitude for the light that shines through Quaker lives, through their love, their support. It's a great discovery how powerful is Quakers' willingness to empathize, how strong is Quakers' anti-war stance and desire to express its solidarity."

The message spoke about the spiritual effort of maintaining a peaceful stance: "It's hard to love your enemies when they lie, but we try and do it. Because we know that when the time comes and the light of God shines over the Russian Federation, so too will we live in peace."

In response to the great heartfelt upswell of feeling and in keeping with our Peace Testimony,

Colchester Quaker Quest Group, are inviting Friends, other local churches and anyone who feels so moved to join us in a Peace Vigil out the front of the Colchester Quaker Meeting House, on Saturday 12th March 2 to 3pm, on the paved area of the front garden of the meeting house. You are welcome to bring candles, readings and please dress for the weather. Tea and cake will be served in the meeting house afterwards. Do tell others, whether Quakers or not about this and encourage them to come along with you.

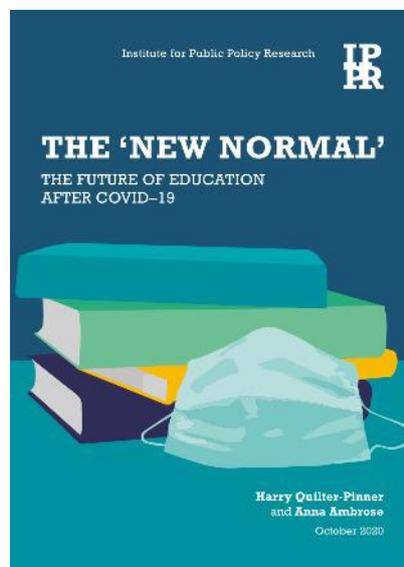
The New Normal

John Kay

This starts with an article I wrote in 2012.

Some highly prized person in education, probably a successful headmaster who rescued a "failing school" came up with a brilliant idea to end truancy in junior schools. Parents would be fined for each instance of truancy to the tune of £60.00. If this was not paid within 28 days it would be increased to £120. If necessary this would be docked from the children's allowance.

This is just the latest in many ideas of how to improve the education system. Perhaps it is cynical of me to say but it does strike me as to how far removed from actual classroom experience these ideas are generated.



Some might say that a headmaster was not removed from the classroom, although many years ago my experience supports this. It does seem however that the more draconian the measure, the further away from the State System a person is removed, the more simple the problem seems.

Further musings on my part suggest that the whole ethos of education has slowly and inexorably moved its focus. When I started teaching it was continually stated and impressed upon me that education was first and foremost intended to develop the individual as a person, focused on personal growth, training for citizenship and independent of commercial pressures. To this end teachers were given the privileged position of largely being completely in charge of the methods they used and the syllabuses they followed.

Teachers were "in loco parentis" and providing they behaved in the manner of a good parent they were left alone to do the job they were employed for.

They were completely supported in the classroom by their head

teachers and deputy headmasters who were in turn supported by their governors and the Local Education Authority.

Nowadays it seems that whenever the shortcomings of the education system are being considered by the media, the Minister of Education, the newspapers, random parents, the local society, and finally the governors may be consulted. As an afterthought sometimes the Headmaster's Association is approached. Teachers and their unions are usually the last to be approached, and then only to answer criticism by the social media.

It is interesting to hear many people refer to the "arrogance" of pupils nowadays. Throughout my teaching career any arrogance on the part of a pupil

was quickly nipped in the bud by the opposition of senior staff, headmaster, other parents and the whole of the rest of society. It seems normal to me that if you remove or soften the authority of those in direct contact with a child, it is not surprising that he or she understands the situation and takes full advantage of it.

Nowadays education has completely changed with the help of SATs and active encouragement of competition between schools for some fictitious ranking of excellence, the League Table.

From the education of the whole person to fit into society, as it used to be defined, it has become completely a Vocational Education, its direction being entirely to meet the requirements of future employers."

With the after effects of Covid-19 affecting education provision in the the whole of the UK I was very pleased to read the latest from The Institute for Public Policy Research who published what they call "a conversation" about three aspects of this very timely subject. I would strongly recommend this to anyone who cares about education as much as I do.

You will find their website at: <https://www.ippr.org/research/publications/the-new-normal>

Go there and you will be able to download a PDF which deals with an up-to-date and pertinent summation of the present position.

Great News Friends

At last the prospect of a rewarding weekend away together!

Please put these dates in the forward planning pages of your diary:

**Friday 20th to Monday
23rd October 2023**

Please also email Peter Whiteley peterwhiteley133@hotmail.co.uk immediately to express your interest in joining us all.

(We will ask for a firm commitment and a deposit after Christmas, yes - next year)

We need your expression of interest now as there is

a brief opportunity to alter the booking numbers.

Belsey Bridge Conference Centre just north of Beccles, which we have been to before is now looking forward to welcoming us. This is half term weekend so families can join in which is important for our community. We have more time available –

16.00 on Friday to 16.00 on Monday so have the opportunity for a full, rich, and varied programme.

Costs: £223 per adult. £75 per child up to 16 Under 6yrs free.

Put your thinking caps on and let me know your ideas for a focus for the weekend, and for other activities you would like.

We have a few offers to help with planning the weekend but more are welcome.

More information in due course.....



How relevant is the Bible to Quakers today?

Report of an account from their website of a discussion, this reproduced by kind permission of Beccles Quaker Meeting:

<http://www.becclesquakers.org.uk>

Over the winter a group of Friends has been meeting on-line to consider this topic. What follows is an attempt to capture the essence of our discussions.

We agreed initially to focus on Mark's Gospel and to consider Jesus' use of metaphor, parable and story to teach a new way of being; one of challenge, love, peace and compassion.

We began our inquiry using unstructured conversation. We brought a mix of willingness to adventure into the unknown, and to share our own doubts, questions, certainties and fears.

Our conversations have been wide ranging over the course of our meetings. In particular we have talked of the value of understanding the importance of story-telling and how stories are transmitted across time. We were invited to try to write the obituary of a loved friend. We realised that knowing that person as a whole relies on all the stories of individual 'knowings' which together add up to a more complete, multifaceted and real picture. We considered how this might be the case too, in trying to get to the true representation of what Jesus said and was trying to say all those years ago.

Sometimes stories need to be told more than once before the fullness of the inner meaning becomes accessible. Such a story

is the one where Jesus is challenged by the Pharisees for allowing a woman, thought to have been a prostitute, to oil his feet. As the story has been told sometimes it is said that Jesus is forgiving the woman for her past misdeeds. However, Mark seems to be making a point in his retelling of the story that Jesus tells his disciples that it is **because** she has already been forgiven **by God** that she is able to offer the kindness to Jesus. She has been freed from guilt and censure. It changes the emphasis. We are already forgiven! Realisations like this through our conversation circle is balm for the bruising of the past and present.

We talked about how the language of the stories has changed over time. We have appreciated the poetic language of the King James bible and the immediacy of up-dated versions which make the stories accessible in modern times.

We enjoyed the simplicity of the message in an illustrated booklet called *The Unintentionals*. The imaginary creatures depicted delight in the unexpected that is often under our noses, but we don't see it because we are too fixated on our own agendas: a delightful representation and reminder of Zen mindfulness and being open to the unexpected. Is this true of our understanding of the Bible too?

We noted how Quaker Faith and Practice (which is full of stories) is regularly reviewed and updated, honouring the seasoned truths of Quakers across time as well as including new ministry.

We kept returning to the story Mark tells of Jesus and Forgiveness .

We were reminded of the potent, simple truth that Love is the answer.

As we have met fortnightly, we have grown in our trust and knowing of each other. There was no road map for our journey together in our conversations into the unknown. There are some signposts on the way and companions on the road.

At the end of our review evening, a Friend was led to remind us of the first of Quaker Advices :

'Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts. Trust them as the leadings of God whose Light shows us our darkness and brings us to new life'

And all this has been done through the medium of Zoom which has brought us together when we have been unable to meet in person. Because we have been asking the question through conversation: 'What relevance does the Teaching on the Bible have for me in my life today?' we have opened a space for the Unknown to reveal itself more fully, little by little.