



Devon Stream, Watercolour

John Kay

NEWSLETTER

SOUTHERN EAST ANGLIA QUAKER MEETING

April 2025

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RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)
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 Street, Colchester CO1 1NF
 Email address: AMClerk@essexsuffolkquakers.org

WebAddress: www.essexsuffolkquakers.org

Meetings for Worship

CLACTON

Meeting for Worship: Sunday 10:30 am

Contact: liz.prockter@gmail.com

Harwich Worshipping Group

Contact:

hazel.jones1@btinternet.com

COLCHESTER

Contact:

pwp.campion@gmail.com

Meeting for Worship: Sunday 10:30 am

Meeting for reflection:

Wednesday 12.noon

jg.greenwood@btinternet.com

EARLS COLNE

Meeting for Worship: Sunday 10:30 am

Clerk: Jenny Kay

earlscolne@essexsuffolkquakers.org

SUDBURY

Meeting for Worship: Sunday 10.30 am

Contact : Robin Hart & Catherine Moffat

cathmoffat@yahoo.co.uk

**FUNERAL
CONTACT**



Editorial

Hello Friends

Quakers have been making headlines. The police have apparently forced their way into Westminster Quaker Meeting House and arrested five women who were organising a peaceful protest. Of course, this is shocking especially for those involved, but it also brought our peace-loving religious organisation to prominence both here and overseas.

One news article I read about it, was from a member of the House of Lords. This liberal peer was not a Quaker herself, but talked about the way she

had learned Quaker values of peace, acceptance and service at her time at a Quaker school and credited that time as the reason she was involved in working for positive change through politics today. I had also visited one of these schools recently and found it inspiring.

It was a reminder that, though we are small in number, some of the organisations that Quakers work with are quietly changing the world for the better. Against the tide of so many negative things in the world today, there are subtle, but far-reaching transformations happening for the good.

Becky Hallewell

The Taylor Sisters

Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, the Quaker connection

Jenny Kay,

I learned about a Quaker connection with Jane Taylor, the Colchester author of this nursery rhyme from a talk given by Peter Jones at the Fordham Local History Society in March.

Jane and her sister had been composing verses since child-



Statues of Jane and her sister Ann were placed last year in Colchester High Street almost opposite West Stockwell Street where the sisters lived when Jane wrote the verse. From Jane's upper room she could study the night sky.

hood, educated at home by their mother who encouraged writing and their father a successful engraver who found a living as a non-conformist minister. Jane's writing career took off when she was first published the fine print publishing house at 55 Gracechurch Street, London of the Quaker Darton family, particularly known for children's publications as well as engravings of George Fox. In order to grow their publications for children they advertised for writers to send in their work for 'The Minors Pocket Book'. In the hope of publication both Ann and Jane offered their work with success.

Seeking Happiness

The Story:

There were 200 people attending a seminar on mental and physical health.

At one point, the speaker told the group they were going to do an activity. He gave each attendee one balloon and told them to write their name on it. Then, the balloons were collected and moved into a very small room.

The participants were then asked to go into the other room and were given 2 minutes to find their balloon.

It was chaos...

People were searching frantically for their balloon, pushing each other and running into one another while they grabbed a balloon, looked at it, and inevitably tossed it to the side.

At the end of the 2 minutes, no one had found the balloon that had their name on it.

Then, the speaker asked the participants to go back in the room and pick up one balloon at random, look at the name, and return it to its owner. Within minutes, everyone had been reunited with their original balloon.

The speaker then told the group, “This is what it’s like when people are frantically searching for [their](#)



[own happiness in life.](#)

People push others aside to get the things that they want that they believe will bring them happiness. **However, our happiness actually lies in helping other people and working together as a community.”**

The Moral:

You will get your happiness if you help other people find theirs. [The Dalai Lama](#) says, “If you want to be happy, practice compassion.”

Helping others makes us happy because it gives us a sense of purpose.

In fact, a [study from the London School of Economics](#) found that **the more you help other people, the happier you will be.**

The researchers compared the variance in happiness levels of people who don’t help others on a regular basis to the happiness of weekly volunteers. They found that the participants had the same variance in happiness as those who make \$75,000 – \$100,000 annually vs \$20,000.

Helping others brings us happiness for three reasons:

Diversion: When you worry less about your own needs—in this

case, finding your own balloon—the stress of that hunt decreases.

Taking your focus away from the fact that you can’t find your own balloon lets you divert your attention away from your own problem. **The feeling of compassion replaces the feeling of need.**

Perspective: Having concern for other people helps us remember that we are all facing similar problems in life—no matter what the individual severity of the issue is.

Sometimes when we are focused on our own issues, they get put into perspective when we encounter the true suffering of others (for example, bereavement or [a severe disability](#)).

It’s easy to then realize the excess amount of attention we’ve been giving our own problems. **Having compassion helps us put our problems into perspective.**

Connection: [Connecting with others by helping them](#) can bring happiness into your life.

Humans are social beings that need to have positive connections with other people in order to be happy. Connecting with other people enriches our lives and gives us a sense of fulfillment.

From:

<https://www.developgoodhabits.com/inspirational-stories/>

Lucretia Mott

Lucretia Mott (1793-1880) was a prominent American Quaker abolitionist, women’s rights advocate, and social reformer. She was born in Nantucket, Massachusetts, and grew up in a Quaker community that emphasized equality and social justice.

Mott’s involvement in activism began with her dedication to the abolitionist movement. She and her husband, James Mott, were both ardent opponents of slavery and worked tirelessly for its abolition.

Mott was an eloquent and persuasive speaker, known for her passionate anti-slavery speeches and her belief in the equality of all human beings.

In 1840, Mott attended the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London, where she faced discrimination and exclusion because she was a woman. This experience deepened her commitment to women’s rights and led her to become a leading figure in the emerging women’s suffrage movement.

Alongside Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Mott organized the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, which marked a pivotal moment in the struggle for women’s rights in the United States. She was a key author of the Declaration of Sentiments, which demanded equal rights for women, including the right to vote.

Mott’s activism was rooted in her Quaker faith, which emphasized the equality and inherent worth of all individuals. She believed that women’s rights and the abolition of slavery were interconnect-

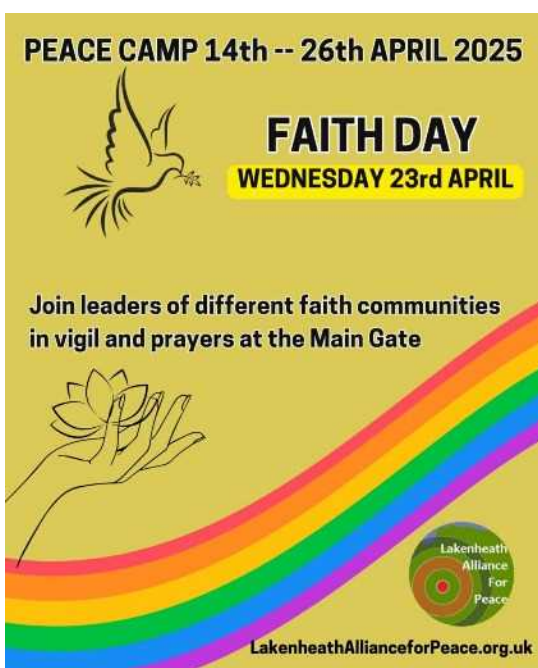


ed struggles for justice and equality.

Throughout her life, Mott continued to fight for various causes, including peace, temperance, and educational reform. She traveled extensively, delivering speeches and inspiring others to join the movements for social change. Mott's commitment to nonviolence and peaceful protest set an

example for future generations of activists.

Lucretia Mott's contributions to the abolitionist and women's rights movements were significant and far-reaching. Her courage, intelligence, and unwavering dedication to social justice continue to inspire and influence activists fighting for equality and human rights.



Lakenheath Peace Camp

Faith Day

Dear Friends,

Some of you may already be aware of the **Lakenheath Peace Camp**, taking place from **14th to 26th April**.

I wanted to especially highlight **Faith Day on 23rd April**, when leaders of various faith communities will come together to vigil, pray, and hold a multi-faith

service. There will be a Quaker presence, and I am planning to attend.

It would be wonderful to see as many East Anglian Friends there as possible!

For more details about the camp, please see the link below:

<https://lakenheathallianceforpeace.org.uk/the-camp-2025/>

In friendship,

Jenny Gant

On Prayer

Like many people, I had given up the practice of prayer as I had learned it when young, for it seemed to me at best a convention, at worst a superstition. It was George Gorman, in *The amazing fact of Quaker worship*, who helped me to see that I do in fact pray. When I go up to kiss my sleeping children and linger with them, in quietness and love, that is prayer. There is a wordless unity of God, myself, my children, a sense of gratitude and rever-

ence, awareness of my need for strength, shame for my failings, a promise to try again.

Exercise is good for us; prayer is the right kind for the spirit. As with physical exercise there are many kinds, to do by yourself or with other people, at different intervals, with different aids. It takes time and commitment to develop the right kind for each one of us.

Anne Hosking, 1984



Book Reviews

How Transforming Ourselves Can Change the World & Loving Corrections

What It Takes to Heal By Prentiss Hemphill & Loving Corrections by Adrienne Maree Brown

Reviewed by Lauren Brownlee

March 1, 2025

In early 2024, I was thrilled to learn that two of my favorite wise people whose words had supported me through COVID and the 2020 racial reckoning had books coming out with reflections on ways to most effectively learn and grow in this social and political moment. Prentiss Hemphill, author of *What It Takes to Heal*, and adrienne maree brown, author of *Loving Corrections*, are both healers who have worked within the movement for racial justice. They each offer, in the words of Hemphill, “Skills of connection and collaboration. Skills of authenticity, boundaries, and trust.” They each echo Grace Lee Boggs’s call to “transform ourselves to transform the world,” cited by brown as being influential to her own

work. These books share invaluable guidance on how to plant seeds of love in ourselves, in our communities, and in our world.

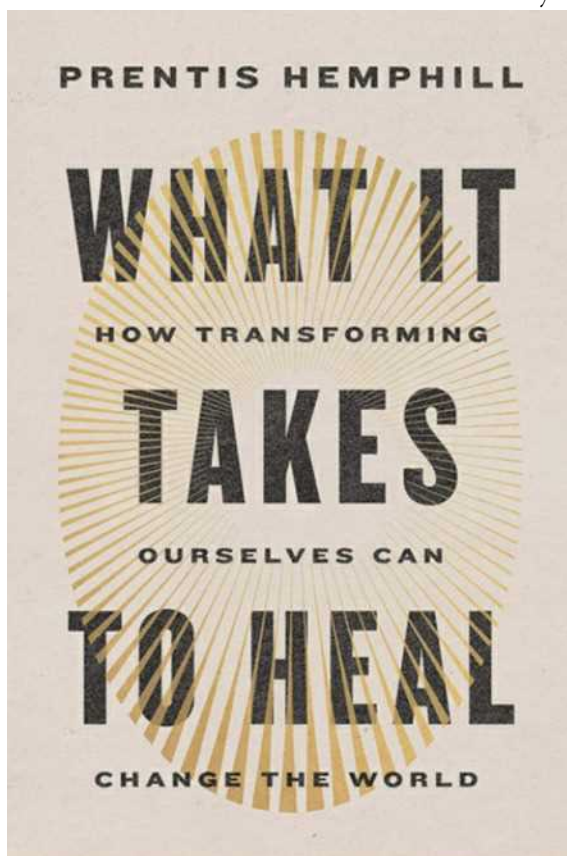
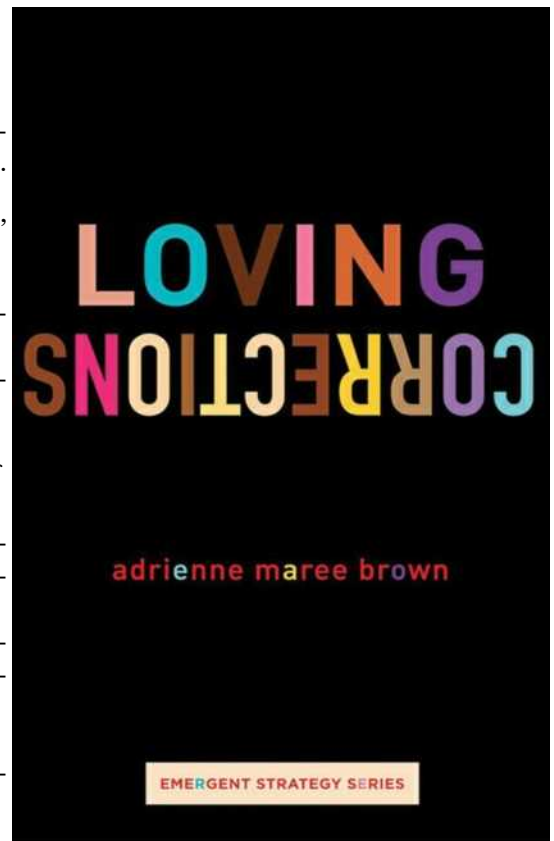
In *What It Takes to Heal*, Hemphill, a therapist and facilitator, connects the work of personal transformation with the impact it can have on social transformation. Each chapter focuses on a lesson from Hemphill’s journey of healing and social change that they believe is important to hold in these challenging times, such as visioning, feeling our emotions in our bodies, dealing with conflict, finding courage, and centering love in all we do. Hemphill offers guidance on ways to create cultures that cultivate healing and belonging. Friends will recognize the sentiment of answering that of God in everyone in Hemphill’s words that “each person possesses as much potential magic as the ones we already love.” Even when we are challenged by each other, there is light to be found. Every conflict holds a usable message or lesson, especially if we can create safety in ourselves and our communities in order to hold multiple truths and sit

“with that stewing of complexity until the next right action shows itself to us.” The book shares many methods for practicing these skills.

In *Loving Corrections*, brown offers reflections on engaging in loving accountability with ourselves and those around us through a range of lenses, including gender, race, ability, finances, and family. brown encourages readers to see themselves as lifelong learners, committed to practices of acting on their values, asking questions, and listening deep-

ly to those around them in order to grow. In a section on solidarity, she writes, “I recognize that my liberation is tied up with the liberation of all oppressed peoples. I invite you to join me here and learn as we go.” She shares concise tips and invitations for various people and contexts, such as for philanthropists wanting to fund good work (“Trust the people. Move at the speed of trust.”); for those wanting to practice accountability with their words (“Speak what is kind, necessary, and true.”); and for anyone in the midst of a difficult transition or change (“Slow down and embrace awe.”). In the conclusion, titled “From Fragility to Fortitude,” she speaks to the importance of meditation, mediation, boundaries, and truth telling as ways to build and practice loving accountability. brown shares both a vision for the world that many Friends will appreciate and practical steps we can take to build the beloved community we seek.

Both Hemphill and brown’s books are filled with timely wisdom that reflects Quaker principles and practices. I discovered in their writing consistent dedication to peace, integrity, community, equality, and stewardship, and



I appreciated their clarity on the ways we each have agency in manifesting these values. Hemphill's chapter on engaging mindfully with the world especially resonated with me and my work at Friends Committee on National Legislation. When considering where to put our energy, Hemphill reminds us that "we can start by taking a moment to listen in to ourselves. What is within your purview to do, and who can you join with to extend your reach and build your power?"

Quakers so often want to be on the right side of history that it can hurt our self-image when we learn we have done harm. Hemphill challenges binary thinking of "innocent and guilty," and instead asks, "What if . . . we could see ourselves as both harmed and

harming?" A similar sentiment of brown's also stood out as being meaningful to Friends: "I take feedback in as something currently true to someone who loves me. I let it simmer, distill, and keep what is useful to me, what I can work with and grow in." These books invite us to stay open to continuing revelation. There are many thoughtful queries throughout both that may help ground Friends in discovering their own truth.

As we enter the second term of a presidential administration that previously did harm to the most vulnerable in our communities, we are called to be agents for change in alignment with our values. Both *What It Takes to Heal* and *Loving Corrections* provide tools, grounded in love, to em-

power us in this moment. Hemphill writes: "The love this book speaks to, the love that it takes to heal, is a verb to be practiced out loud. . . . It is the love of showing up for one another." Hemphill speaks to the impact "empathy, mutuality, and connection" can have on injustice, and invites readers to "begin where we are." brown reflects that each person is "an individual practice ground for what the whole can or cannot do, will or will not do," and she believes that "[t]his is a time to be brave in our learning, and in our interventions." I am always eager to show up with love in service of justice, and these books make me feel all the more equipped to do so.

Biodiversity

Ann Kurra

Over the Equinox Friends across East Anglia gathered together in Bury St Edmunds to discuss the twin Earth crises of climate breakdown and worldwide loss of biodiversity.

At the equinox, the light and the dark fall equally on everything on Earth so as well as the joys of meeting friends old and new both at night and in the spring sunshine, we also reflected on the equality of all things - human and nonhuman - which make up the web of life and the Spirit on which we all depend.

Sessions included looking at our experience of Witness in relation to Climate Change. We used the Support Circles approach to explore our own particular concerns. And Tracy Sharpe from Songrise led us in a chorus of singing "Peace Salam Shalom".

The Friday evening plus all day on Saturday format worked well for



us and using a meeting house meant we kept costs down for everyone. Some of us even slept in the meeting house.

Bury Meeting supported the event magnificently with help from a local vegetarian cafe and we would really encourage other Area Meetings or Regions to use this kind of approach.

Photo credit: Graham Gosling



Finding Inner Stillness

9th January 2024

To say that Quakers hold silent meetings may be misleading. We don't just sit there keeping shtum – the absence of noise has to go much deeper.

Before we can be open to receiving new insights, inspiration, a renewed vision of what life and our part in it is about – call it what you will – there needs to be an inner stillness. We need to get away from endlessly producing thoughts, memories, worries, plans, doubts, internal arguments...chatter, chatter, chatter. It's 'receiver mode' we need to switch our minds to. But how?

Calming your mind, emptying it? Easier said than done. It may not even need that, though. Here's an example of the sort of exercise that helps me get closer to achieving inner calm: imagine your endlessly rabbiting thoughts as an ocean surface full of choppy waves. Now picture yourself slowly sinking to the bottom of this ocean. The chattering waves are still agitating away up there...let them! Instead, shift your focus downward, to the stillness at the very bottom of the sea, where no disturbance can reach. Even the toot of a passing car outside is now only a far-off thing of no consequence. Turns out you haven't calmed or emptied anything, only shifted your mental focus to a place of stillness that was sitting inside you already, always is.

We can access that place at any time, in all sorts of circumstances. Mind-

fulness is often mentioned as a route to it. Mindfully doing the dishes, feeling you're in the flow, in the Now. And being fully conscious of your breathing, controlling it even, is often part of reaching a different state of awareness: calm, peaceful, composed. There are many different physical practices to aid contemplation or meditation.

So what is happening there? How is concentrating on the physical, the body, the dishes (!) going to help you find an inner space of calm? Try it: concentrate on some repetitive work or exercise and soon it becomes pretty...mindless. Literally, you leave the more thoughtful part of your mind behind, stand aside from it, distance yourself. The same happens if you gaze at a stunning view or a beautiful object long enough, or intensely enough. Vibrant flowers, field of waving corn, sky at sunrise, a wide vista of sea. Maybe that is why so many of us find nature 'inspiring'?

It clearly works, but it's still a mystery to me how the mind's innermost place of calm can somehow be the same one, in effect, that we delve into when we concentrate deeply on something out there. I suspect it may have something to do with simplicity. Both the mind's imagined 'sea bed' and the inspiring night sky up there seem to have that in common. Or maybe it's something like purity, essence, getting away from all distraction, superficialities, 'the wrapping'...drilling down to the core of. That kind of mental decluttering can be both internal and external. I'm speculating. I'll leave you to experiment to maybe find answers that make sense to you.

There are other situations where accessing inner stillness can be of real benefit, especially if you can 'find the switch' at short notice. Say an argument is brewing, a fight is about to break out, you are faced with a distraught person needing you to really listen. Deep breath. And suddenly you are both totally 'present' to what is happening around you, and in a state of detached mental stillness, the sort that'll stop you firing off opinions of your own (not helpful) and has you in receiving mode instead: processing without your personal desire to take this side or that, maybe able to transmit your own calmness, or advise from a position of neutrality. Genuinely helpful.

Genuine – truth, core, essence? And all that coming out of 'simply' being still inside yourself? I'd invite you to experiment with finding your own individual route to this place of tranquility, composure, spiritual centre, transcendence even, in a sense. As they say in interfaith circles: there are many ways to the mountain top.

This may take time and practice and may also change over time, as your spiritual path takes its twists and turns. But when we meet together in the communal stillness of a gathered meeting, I find that some transformation into a different mind state just seems to happen, without having to do all that much, beyond the initial effort to 'centre down': letting go, or even getting lost (telling phrase!) in contemplation of the shadow patterns on the carpet.

Angela Arnold – Oswestry Quaker Meeting and North Wales Area Meeting

Please support our new Local Development Worker for East Anglia.



Jenny Gant

Local development workers can:

- Signpost to resources and support
- Accompany and work alongside (short term/long term)
- Make connections and share good practice
- Listen, encourage, and enable
- Help to facilitate
- Help source support for mediation

Contacting Your Local Development Worker

Individuals, committees, small groups, Local Meetings, Area Meetings, and Quaker representatives in East Anglia can reach out at any time.

If you are working with a nominated group, it may be helpful to minute their involvement so they can be included in emails, even though they have not been formally appointed.

Local development work covers spiritual, pastoral, and practical support, aligned with the six themes of *Our Faith in the Future*:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/our-faith-in-the-future-leaflet-2016>

To find out more about how Quaker faith translates into action visit the Quaker Communities website:

www.quaker.org.uk/communities

Contact Jenny:

Email for general inquiries or to arrange a call/online meeting:

✉ JennyG@quaker.org.uk

☎ 07591 441993

For General Meeting Support email: supportmeetings@quaker.org.uk