

## Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> November - Thai Celebrations in New Milton – a view by David Mason

Having got up too late to walk my dog and attend Meeting, I decided to make an early visit (with Penny) to the Thai Celebrations in Fawcett's field.

We arrived at 10:15 where the event was just beginning to get underway. The field was still quite green with only a few muddy footprints showing where the early worshippers had trod.

I found the refreshment tent (inset), but all the notices were in Thai so stood with Penny until a helpful Lady offered me some Tea and a delicious Thai cake.



People were arriving all the time, I observed a young woman rather curiously with roll of bin Liners.

My curiosity was soon satisfied, when she gave a pair of white bin bags to a Lady in a long oriental silk dress.

Then I observed many other Ladies all wearing them! (See inset)



I went into the pavilion, handing Penny to a young Thai girl to manage and popped into the main Pavilion. I looked for information, but all the notice boards were beautifully decorated in elaborate Thai - so I was totally out of my depth.



A PA was giving out information (again in foreign) and there was not one sign in English. I observed a monk sitting cross legged on a trestle table smoking something (I could not determine whether it was a hookah pipe or a cigarette of some kind), but I am sure it was legal!

I made an executive decision that I would not be able to further the cause of Inter-Faith activities at that venue so I took some pictures and left.

The story continues with Malcolm's experiences, who with Dennis, further represented New Milton Quakers, and by lunchtime the monk on the Trestle table had been joined with six others who led a programme of enthusiastic chanting and Buddhist worship. The event was extremely well support by the UK Thai community - a clear indication that Barton-on-Sea Buddhists are clearly 'on the map' as a hub for most of the southern UK Buddhists.

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