

NEWS & VIEWS

SPRING 2016



BOURNEMOUTH COASTAL AREA
RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS
(QUAKERS)



From the Editor

With Spring we can rejoice in buds that bring colour and new freshness. And as this edition is distributed at Easter we remember the good news of new life with our Heavenly Father.

Now that News & Views can be found on our web site in full colour perhaps readers may prefer the magazine paperless and so save in printing costs. Send me your email addresses if you would like this.

There is a good variety of contributions for this edition again, thank you so much for them. I would like to include some banter amongst us so it would be good to see some 'controversial' **Letters to the Editor** please.



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FRONT COVER

*MOYLES COURT
NEAR RINGWOOD*

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BRUSHES*

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THE TEAM

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Outreach at New Milton

New Milton Meeting is an affiliate member of the very active Community Centre in New Milton, and consequently we were able to set up a Quaker publicity display at the Centre's Open Day on Saturday the 28th November. We had been given a table near the entrance to the big hall on the ground floor of the Centre for the whole day. We provided pamphlets, booklets and information about our Meeting, in front of two or three appropriate and colourful posters. This proved to be a very simple project both in its preparation and its execution but it did require members of our Meeting to be proactive in a way that perhaps we are not used to. We soon discovered that there was little point in sitting at our table waiting for people to come to us - we needed to 'mingle' and 'chat'; we needed to capture the unsuspecting passer-by who might well turn out to be receptive to what we had to offer !

So surrounded by interesting and decorative tables exhibiting their 'wares' in connection with the many activities that go on in the Centre, we enjoyed the Saturday crowded atmosphere of visitors, uplifted by bunting and balloons, arts and crafts, hobbies and clubs. We made sure that the details of our Meetings for Worship were readily available. How glad we were to be able to hand out our own 'wares', like the free postcards illustrating the beautiful Quaker tapestry panel exhibition in Kendal. This encouraged people to ask questions, questions like "Why on earth would you sit in silence", "Why don't you sing hymns", "You don't drink alcohol, do you?", "Are you the same as the Brethren", and one interesting comment "Yes, my friend is a Quaker. I don't really know why I'm not !"



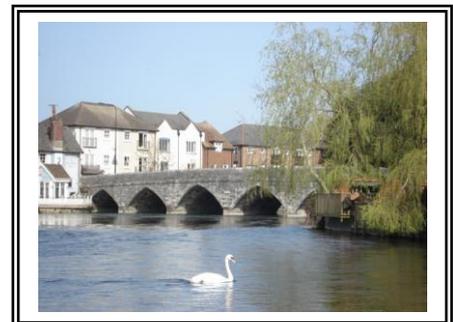
We offered another freebie in the form of homemade shortbread biscuits in the shape of "doves of peace" and this provoked our biggest surprise - a "grumpy old man" took one and later, sitting at a nearby table in the refreshment area, he clicked his fingers at us indicating his need for another biscuit - we obliged! Biscuits may not be the official way in to being a Quaker, but on this occasion it may have sparked an interest in these unusual folk called Quakers!

Thank you to New Milton Friends who helped in this outreach activity, and a most appreciative thank you to the Community Centre and in particular to our Friend Malcolm Swan, Chairman of the Community Centre, and his team, for offering us this happy opportunity.

Sue Wheeler & Kathleen Hall

HOW ARE FORDINGBRIDGE MEETING GETTING ON?

We meet on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month in the United Reform Church at Fordingbridge, and there are normally about a dozen of us. There is also a Sunday morning meeting on the first Sunday of each month. The Fordingbridge Meeting gives the proceeds from one collection a month to the Fordingbridge Food Bank, which opened this autumn in response to local need. Because the Food Bank needs the room we used to meet in, the Wednesday meetings now take place in the United Reform Church itself, which has a pleasant peaceful atmosphere though the noise from the road in front of the church can be a little challenging at times! In many ways we are lucky at Fordingbridge not to have the complications of owning and maintaining a Meeting House, and we can concentrate on our Meetings for Worship and our modest support for the larger Fordingbridge community. The Meeting is a great blessing in our lives.

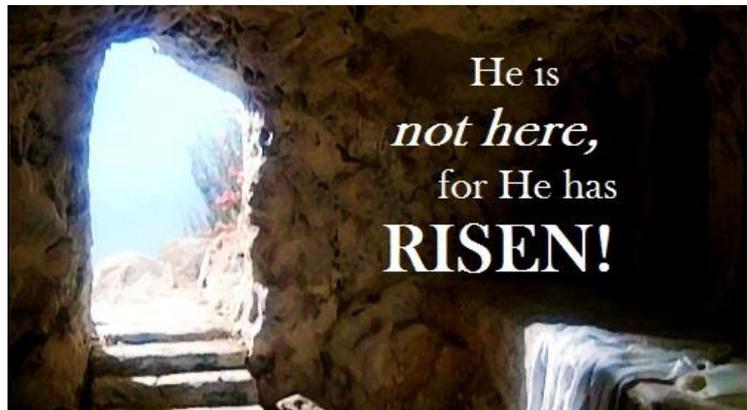


David Brown

The Empty Tomb

from Pam Schollar

Picture the scene on that first Good Friday; Roman and Jewish authorities rejoicing that the troublesome preacher from Galilee would bother them no more. Then, three days later, rumours that he was still alive were spreading like wildfire, and the simplest way to scotch them was to produce the dead body of Jesus from wherever it had been hidden. But they failed, because there was no body to be found.



Those of us who have experienced resurrection in our lives have many different ways of expressing the Easter faith, and God has provided us with many clues, often from the world of nature. Take, for example the dead-looking bulb we bury in the ground in order to produce a daffodil flower. Organically linked, they look completely different. But there the analogy breaks down because the bulb isn't empty - it will make a new flower next Spring.

Then there's the traditional Easter icon - the egg. Yes, the shell is completely empty when the chick hatches. But of course, the chick had no life before the egg was fertilised. Is there, anywhere in the natural world, a more complete model of resurrection? For me, it has to be the butterfly, emerging from a chrysalis which is left utterly empty, because every molecule that was part of the caterpillar has been re-ordered into the butterfly's body. This image mirrors beautifully the continuity between the pre- and post-death body of Jesus, as the one is transformed into the other.

There are, it seems to me, three main ways in which Christians interpret resurrection. There are the post-moderns who hold it that it was entirely spiritual, and if the authenticated bones of Jesus were to turn up today, it wouldn't matter a scrap. There are others who talk of 'bodily resurrection' as though it were, in the immortal words of David Jenkins, a former bishop of Durham - 'no more than a resuscitated bag of bones'. Neither of these theories does anything for me. My butterfly leads me with David Jenkins to a third interpretation, a fusion of the physical and spiritual, both to prepare Jesus for his return to the Father, and to encourage us that we - and all the loved ones we have lost, are on the same journey that he's pioneered. So I'm quite happy to believe, as St John hints in his gospel, that the body passed through the grave-clothes leaving them undisturbed in an empty tomb. Alleluiah!

Revd Canon Pam Schollar is a the Assistant Priest at St James the Greater, Polkesdown. She worshipped with us at Bournemouth Meeting for the 10 weeks of her sabbatical recently.

Drone Wars



Quakers for Peace : an update regarding our concern about the use of Unmanned Armed Vehicles (drones).

A recent article in the Guardian, 19/9, asks us to "meet the drone fans" the dronesters. It explains that these are the people who fly drones as a hobby : their numbers are exploding. So too is the number of commercial flyers, from the 200 licences granted a year ago to the current total of 1,200. But it is the drones which are flying unmanned armed missions, programmed to target those on a hit-list, which is our chief concern and calls us to act. They too are proliferating. They are 'must have' weapons these days.

The news of the assassination of Reyaad Khan, the 21year led British citizen, and two others is shocking enough....(What has happened to capture and trial? Was there an immediate threat?).....but what about the deaths of innocent civilians in the process? Can we believe in the 'precision' of these targeted killings? The campaigns against the use of UVA's have focussed on trying to achieve transparency of information but finding out accurate information is difficult at best. For one thing, the so-called reduction in number of strikes is a nonsense : the way of counting has changed! Apparently the method now used is the 'coalition' method. For example, in November 2014, 20 aircraft from 7 different nations hitting 44 targets ended up as being described as 3 strikes. In addition, in the case where two missiles are fired at one target and one hits the main point but the other misses and hits a separate building, 30 metres away, that will still be described as one strike. Calling a Government to account is also stymied because of the borrowing of drones between nations. This is termed "collaborative force management" and these arrangements make it even harder for civilian victims to report casualties. It was never easy.

In the meantime, what else are campaigners doing? Protesters blocked the Elbit-owned drone factory in Shenstone and Tamworth in July. (Elbit drones were used in Gaza.) In August there were protesters outside the court where 4 people were facing charges for daubing slogans on the runway of Llanber airfield where testing of drones was being carried out. In October 4 people, including Chis Cole (who came to talk at Poole LM), go on trial at Lincoln Magistrates Court accused of damage to the perimeter fence at RAF Waddington in Lincolnshire. Maya Evans from UK is currently walking across U.S. with many others in an anti-drone peace walk, "Let it Shine".

What is happening locally? It will be interesting to find out how Bridport Quakers fared on 20th September when they took "Fly Kites Not Drones" to the Eggardon kite festival and how Quakers went on at Greenbelt when they were active in a similar way. We can watch out for the Strategic Defence and Security Review, due this Autumn, to see how much funding is allocated for future drone programmes. We can write again to MP's. Some are new! We are encouraged to hold vigils, blockades, protests, any form of non-violent action is called for. We must "Keep Space for Peace". We have to work against the increasing pressure from the Drone Industry lobby that wants a lessening of controls. The dire warning is of a new Arms Race, an Artificial Intelligence arms Race! We must 'Stop Remote War Now'.

from Pat Yates

To find out more:
Drone Wars UK - Drone Campaign Network



“What has the Red Book ever done for us?”

asks Mike Taylor

In worshipful contemplation of the invitation to give prepared ministry on 'Quaker Faith & Practice' I am surprised to hear the voices of Lewis Carol, G K Chesterton and the London Underground.

Consider this extract from a little known work entitled “Alicia in Quakerland”

At the trial of the Knave of Hearts the King concluded that enough evidence had been heard....”Let the jury consider their verdict” he cried. “No. No!” said the Queen “Sentence first - verdict afterwards.” “Stuff and nonsense!” said Alicia loudly. “Having the sentence before the verdict. That’s not in right order!” “Oh no!” said the Queen. “Not the Red Book again!”

Later Alicia found herself back at the little table at the foot of the rabbit hole. On the table were two pieces of paper, both headed ‘READING LIST’ and a notice pinned to the wall above bearing the words “TAKE ONE”. The first list read: Local Meeting, Area Meeting, Meeting for Sufferings, BYM, BYG, Standing Committees, Quaker Trustees Handbook, Quaker Stewardship Committee, QPSW, QUNO, FWCC, The Friend, Friends Quarterly, Quaker Voices, and The Swarthmore Lectures 1908 to 2014. Head swimming Alicia turned to the second reading list on which, to her relief, there was just one line which read “Quaker Faith and Practice”.

I wonder if Alicia will be daunted by this volume of some 600 pages, after all Stephen Hawking’s “The Theory of Everything” only has 132 pages? But no - Stephen Hawking is only just at the beginning of his insight, we have been learning from the insight of George Fox for three and a half centuries. This is no dusty tome from the past. It is a living thing regularly revised that records the history, development and experience of Quakers through the centuries.

And yet the wisdom thus evolved seems sometimes to be ignored or forgotten. The letter columns and articles in Quaker publications in recent times reveal anxieties about the conduct of friends in MfW and MfWfB, about Quakerism being a licence to believe what you like, about Friends unilaterally declaring Concerns, about the meaning of Membership,...even a heartfelt plea for a Quaker creed!

We talk of simplicity yet sometimes complicate matters

We talk of truth but often evade it

We talk of equality yet unwittingly discriminate

We talk of peace but experience conflict between Friends.

There is guidance and advice in QF&P that, if attended to, helps us to avoid such troubles, and all in a clear and simple language to rival that of the much praised Anglican Book of Common Prayer. In QF&P we recognise the essence of Quaker faith captured in such ideas as seeing that of God in everyone and conducting ourselves in right order.

The former is at the centre of the Quaker way of being and the latter is at the heart of how to remain true to that way. We know the way but we seem often to struggle with the how.

Right ordering is usually spoken of in the context of our conduct in MfW or MfWfB. But perhaps this concept can be applied in a wider context. Understanding and being true to our testimonies; understanding the nature of a true Concern; understanding Quaker experience of faith; these are all aspects of living in right order, living the Quaker way. That way is neither a rigid outdated thing, nor a set of rules, but a collection of timeless living principles.

In those famous words of the Elders of Balby in 1656, something to be “...fulfilled in the Spirit, not from the letter, for the letter killeth....”

Can we say (with apologies to G K Chesterton) that right order has not been practiced and found wanting, but is too often thought difficult and not practiced?

We would do well regularly to revisit QF&P, to look carefully at what we say, compare it honestly with what we do..... and remember the advice on the London Underground . . .

Mind the Gap

Ashram Experience

by John Gibbs

An ashram in India is a spiritual retreat.

Friends encouraged me to go to **Shantivanam** ashram with its blend of Hindu and Christian teaching.



Started by two French Jesuits in 1950 deciding to overcome cultural obstacles by adopting various forms of Hinduism. Today it is run by Benedictine monks, headed by Brother Martin, an internationally famed speaker and author. Bro Martin's mother was Hindu and father a Christian. He robustly continues the tradition that blends Christianity with Hindu mysticism.

Seeking the universal truth at the heart of all religions.

In India spiritual discoveries came originally through visions expressed in the divinely inspired philosophical poetry of the **Vedas** from about 1700 BC (slightly older than the earliest books of the bible). In Hindu scriptures God never speaks directly, unlike the Bible of Western traditions where God has much to say. The Vedas aimed to ensure the true welfare of all beings, material and spiritual.

From about 700 BC a collection of spiritual teachings called **Upanishads** record intensive question-and-answer sessions revealing concepts of the Absolute Almighty (Brahman), mankind and the universe and the ultimate nature of reality. Through the contemplative life of meditation one realises awareness that one's soul is one with all things and Brahman. The Upanishads yielded the 'science of self', helping man to leave behind the body, the senses and the ego, which are all temporal, to find the divine heart of man.

The final source of Hindu faith is given in the 700 verses 'Song of the Lord' called **Bhagavad Gita** which describes a battlefield discussion between a hero charioteer Krishna who was an incarnation of God, and his dearest friend and disciple, Prince Arjuna. The *Gita* revolves around the relationship between the Self and a personal God. Krishna elaborates on how role actions, performed without desire and attachment attain freedom from material bondage. Self-realization can be achieved by selfless action and dedicating all activities to God, i.e., surrendering oneself body and soul to God.

The ashram is a place to seek God within a contemplative way based on the traditions of Christian monasticism and the Hindu tradition of renunciation of the world, '**Sannyasa**' (liberation through asceticism). I asked Brother Martin about this in practice. "It's like a tree", he told me.

THE TREE (Taken in part from his book 'The Four O'Clock Talks' - Dr J Martin Sahajananda.)

The **leaves** are a symbol of our physical body and individuality. Each of us is a leaf on this tree of life. He calls this Individual Consciousness.

The **branches** symbolize the religions and denominations we attach ourselves to. He calls this Collective Consciousness.

The **trunk** is what holds everything together as one - the Universal Consciousness.

The **roots** are the symbol of God reflecting the Unitary Consciousness Hindus call '**Advaita**' or non-duality. The central message of traditional Hinduism is 'The whole universe is permeated by God; renounce and enjoy'. God is within all and if God is everywhere then the whole of humanity and creation are in God. Subjectively this means '**I and God are one**'. In practice eternal reality is within us - God is my true self.

I wasn't sure that I understood the Trunk symbol so asked Br Martin for clarification. Was it God's love and compassion that Christ showed in his ministry? No, he replied. The **Universal** level is beyond time and space, where humanity and religions come together reflecting both our image and likeness of God. Bro Martin writes, 'It's a journey of dying to oneself: dying to our limited identity

and moving into *the universal divine identity*. To be one with God means to be united with the whole of humanity and creation. I am everything. God is Unity. It means that the whole of humanity and creation is acting in and through us. We feel a sense of union with the Divine. I am in God and God is in me. We discover that freedom only when we move on from the Collective (belonging) Consciousness. God is this whole humanity acting in and through me. Christ did not love others as though separate from himself; he loved others as himself. And this is the gateway to **Unitary Consciousness** - unity with God where **I and God are one**.

Unitary Consciousness : The Oneness of Existence - **Vedanta** (Otherwise known as **Interiority**)

To clarify this concept Vedanta, from ancient Hindu philosophies, affirms the oneness of existence, the divinity of the soul and the harmony of religions. It concerns the ultimate identity of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul. The goal is for the seeker to have the direct experience of his or her true nature. It is held that each of us is qualified to have that highest illumination if we are willing to put forth sincere and intense effort. Thereby is the harmony of religions. God is both formless and with form, the Personal God of the devotee as well as the Impersonal Absolute of the philosopher. Vedantic teaching is that the Lord dwells within all beings and all people. **Interiority** is the name given often to the awareness of God dwelling in the heart of every human person and every creature. It is fostered through prayer, meditation, contemplation and the ascetic **Sannyasa**.

Christ at one with God

For Brother Martin, Jesus was the manifestation of God. Jesus reached the pinnacle of Unitary Consciousness, the ultimate stage in the Divine-human relationship 'I and the Father are one' Jesus said. But the claims that Christ made, according to Bro Martin, are not limited only to him; they are valid for all human beings. There is no more external God; the authority is within oneself.

Born as a human being Jesus had **Individual Consciousness**. He became a Jew so acquiring **Collective Consciousness**. At baptism Jesus entered the **universal** presence of God, outgrowing religion to belong to the whole of humanity. Christ represents both humanity and divinity speaking as if in the name of God, 'I am the way, the truth and the life'. Finally he achieved the highest Divine-human relationship: 'I and the Father are one'. This is the most humble statement, for the Individual Consciousness has completely emptied and what remains is God. The uniqueness of Christ is his radical love of God and radical love of neighbour. In this way his teachings present a marriage between the Wisdom (eastern) and Prophetic (western) traditions. All people were included in Christ's teachings (with the answer to 'Who is my neighbour?', a non-Jew Samaritan). Christ became one with God and one with every human being and creation. He took love of God and love of neighbour each to the highest degree - exemplifying **non-dualistic nature**. If we do not come to the realisation of this oneness with God we have to be born again, reincarnation, perhaps with hundreds of births. Thereby ultimately we are God.



Personal reflections *Being very aware of millions who seek God, pray and find Divine love but have not known Jesus, it seems clear that we all have a spiritual Father who cares for us each and all creation. But deep in my being I believe God to be 'other', mysterious, greater than I. Yet in humility and love it is possible to be 'at one' with God in spirit. His Holy Spirit, the living spirit of Christ, certainly responds to the prayers of our hearts. To me Christ presents the this personal God and gives some limited comprehension into what will always be the Divine mystery.*

*Learning about Hinduism and my study at the ashram of The Wisdom of the Sufis leads me to think that all religions share a call for the abandonment of self, the ego, personal ambition. But just sheer negativity is not appropriate for this wonderful life on this amazing little blue planet. Jesus, with God's on-going wisdom and light, promised his followers '**Fullness of LIFE**' - a radical and different way of selfless service to make the most of opportunities whilst at one with God. Also, as a Quaker I rather value the spiritual bond with friends, and so uninclined to move towards Unitarianism. We are, after all, just like Jesus, open to those of any faith.*

Bournemouth Goings On

Once again Bournemouth Meeting experienced both joys and sorrows on the onset of winter. We were privileged to welcome **The Journeyman Theatre** who performed “Red Flag Over Bermondsey”, the inspiring story of ADA SALTER , Quaker. Over £300 was raised for Palestinian charities.

Our garden received first prize in the Bournemouth in Bloom competition, Religious Buildings Section for which we received a plaque and a £50 voucher.

We were deeply saddened to hear of the death of Dick Woods, much loved member and former elder of our Meeting. A large number of family members and F/riends gathered for a thanksgiving meeting and heard of the many facets of his life, - former Anglican priest, his time in the West Indies, his love of cricket and of his finding a spiritual home in the Society of Friends.

Our Overseers are discussing how we can help rough sleepers in the future. We ceased providing meals on a Thursday evening in Bath Road as a charity is offering full cooked meals on a Thursday evening for up to 70 people at Richmond Hill St. Andrews URC church in the town centre. We will pass on to this charity the sum of £469 that has already been donated.

It is good to welcome visitors and new attenders and our children continue to be a joy.

We'll thank Him for all that is past
Well TRUST Him for all that's to come.

Connie Hazell

VOLUNTEERS FOR CIRCLES

More volunteers are needed across Dorset for a scheme that holds to account people who have been convicted of sexual offences. It radically reduces sexual re-offending.

‘Circles of Support and Accountability’ is a community intervention proven to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from sexual harm. A ‘Circle’ is a group of 4 or 5 volunteers who meet regularly with the offender. Most sex offenders are released from prison back into our communities. Circles help prevent further offending by working with the offender, holding them to account, by challenging attitudes and behaviours that signal a risk to the community. Essentially they support their safe re-integration into the community. Concerns are reported to the public protection agencies and acted upon which can result in the core member being returned to prison.

Circles’ volunteers are community-minded adults of all ages, from all walks of life. Volunteers need to be non-judgemental, emotionally stable and approachable people who have life experience and a mature outlook. All volunteers must pass an assessment, have excellent references and will be subject to checks. All volunteers receive training, support and supervision from professionals.

Circles South West values the extra-ordinary commitment of our volunteers who make a real difference to people’s lives, supporting community safety and helping to prevent further victims.

For information on volunteering, please contact Circles South West at
volunteering.circlesw@gmail.com

oooOOOooo

The grandson of a friend started school this September. It's a C.of E. school & he told his parents that they had a prayer 3 times a day. His mother asked if he could remember the words of any of the prayers. "Yes," he replied eagerly, "Amen."

Prayer is not an easy subject to talk about. Aside from set prayers & "Amens", I think my experience started with talking to God inside my head, confiding my fears & problems & asking for help. The devil, if he exists, might reasonably object, "but you also did that with your pet rabbit - & out loud too!" I suspect that what I'm going to call TALKING PRAYER can be of psychological importance and many non-religious folk resort to it spontaneously in emergencies. Even when, in such cases, it sounds a bit close to swearing, I believe it is of value.

Of course, we all know that LISTENING PRAYER is of greater importance. If we can clear our heads of everyday concerns and empty ourselves of all thoughts of self, we can tune in to some spiritual force that is both deep within and also far beyond us. It brings us into fellowship with those around us; it gives us both peace and challenge; and if we wait patiently, it gives us some clues as to the way ahead, though that is sometimes through the closing of pathways that we expected to follow.

I also like to think there is WALKING PRAYER. Of course, you can be literally praying while you walk, but I'm really thinking about having that ongoing sense of being tuned in to the divine, so that it feels as if God is a companion through life. Inevitably there will be times when we feel utterly alone: I think that, just as no human companion can be there all the time, we have to be able to cope by ourselves sometimes - just as we enter and exit this life individually.

Mysteriously prayer generates power. When Desmond Tutu was elected Archbishop of Capetown in the 80's and moved into his official residence, he was breaking the law, because it was in a designated white suburb. The Apartheid government advised him to apply to them to be an "honorary white", but he refused. He commented that, when he visited America, he met an old woman living in the woods in North California, who told him that she prayed for him every day. "I have an old woman praying for me every day in the woods in North California," he said, "how is P.W.Botha going to withstand that?"

CORPORATE PRAYER is probably even more powerful than individual prayer. Monasteries and convents used to be regarded as powerhouses of prayer, and, as they have declined, the rest of us have to do more. When I heard that we are not going to bomb Syria, I thought, "that is an answer to prayer." Then I thought about all the people who don't pray who have worked hard for that outcome and I wondered if our prayers had given them the power to manage it. There is continuing pressure to reverse that decision - so keep right on praying!



QFP 20.08:

"Prayer is an exercise of the spirit, as thought is of the mind. To pray about anything is to use the powers of our spirit on it, just as to think clearly is to use our mental powers. For the best solution of every problem, the best carrying out of any action, both thought & prayer are necessary. To pray about any day's work does not mean to ask success in it. It means first to realize my own inability to do even a familiar job as it truly should be done, unless I am in touch with eternity, unless I do it "unto God." It means to see my work as part of a whole, to see myself as not mattering much, but my faith, the energy, will & striving, which I put into the work, as mattering a good deal. My faith is the point in me at which God comes into my work; through faith the work is given dignity & value. And if, through some weakness of mine or fault of others, or just unavoidable circumstances, the work seems a failure, yet prayer is not wasted when it is unanswered, any more than love is wasted when it is not returned." *Mary F. Smith 1936*

Simplicity and Sustainability

10

We live in a society in which consumerism and consumption is destroying the Planet. Already we are consuming even renewable resources like drinkable water, timber, and fertile soil at a rate that would need about 1½ planets the size of the Earth to be sustainable. We are also consuming non-renewable resources as if there was an infinite supply. There's not and we are in danger of running into shortages of many non-renewables. Global warming/Climate Change is already devastating the lives of millions of people. On any realistic basis of assessment already we are virtually certain to breach the 2°C temperature rise limit. Our government has presented this as a "safe" limit, though in fact scientists have said that it was an unsafe limit - one that we would be very foolish to exceed. Kevin Anderson is the Dept Director of East Anglia University's Tyndale Centre, which is one of the UK's two major centres for studying Global Warming. He now estimates that to have even a 50% chance of staying below 2°C the developed world economies have to cut their emissions by 8-10% per year starting immediately. Regrettably there is no realistic prospect of that happening.

The rampant consumerism that has landed us here is driven by the Neo-liberal philosophy of unregulated free market capitalism. Neo-liberalism sounds quite a cosy term, but it would be better named "Neo-fascism" since it is designed to promote the interests of the rich elite at the expense of the poor. It promotes unending growth and manipulates us into the constant demand for more and more, newer and smarter goods, bigger and better homes, more travel to more distant, exotic places. Similarly our society is encouraged in the attitude that local travel should be fast, convenient and unlimited - virtually that it should all be made by private car. We must oppose this approach to living with all our power.

The New Meeting House.

The thoughts above are relevant to the proposal for the redevelopment of the Bournemouth Meeting House. Given the problems with the existing building, the shortage of development land and the great need for housing - particularly for the disadvantaged, it makes sense to make better use of our existing site by starting again.

But we must beware of being sucked into consumerist thinking.

Personally I am disgusted on the occasions when I walk through the City of London by the vastness and opulence of the "temples to money" that are the premises of the banks and traders. They are maybe, magnificent buildings, but their space and luxury is obscene in a world where nearly half the world's population is desperately poor. I feel the same reaction to Kingston Lacy, when I recognise it as a family home for a small number of people. These buildings proclaim their dedication to consumerism by their size and lavishness.

When it comes to deciding what we need for a new meeting house we need to keep hold of our Quaker testimony to simplicity. While it is true that people who come to our existing meeting house comment on its attractiveness. "What a wonderful Meeting House -aren't you lucky". Does not this to some degree enhance the general consumerist approach to living, that bigger and more is better? We should be striving to promote the idea that we should be setting out to meet our needs - not our desires. This is, of course not to say that we should not aim to make a meeting house that is as flexible, useful and attractive as is possible within constraints of meeting needs, minimising the use of resources, and maximising the use of scarce urban land.

If we are to live within the planet's resources with a population projected to be 10 billion by 2050, then we must beware of more of the world becoming uninhabitable because of climate change. The desire of people to have a nice house with its own lovely private garden is unsustainable. We have to accept higher density multi-floor living, both to prevent towns and cities spreading all over the land and, to minimise travel by having larger numbers of people living close to the facilities they need to use. This is not to deny the importance of open natural space for people's well-being but this should be fitted into higher density living. Green corridors into the hearts of our towns and cities and communal gardens, like London squares will be an answer.

With these thoughts in mind it would be quite wrong in my view not to design a new meeting house and social housing using multiple floors.

Tony Hamilton

Song of the Wild Geese



The wild geese are flying, from the old lands, the cold lands,
Where north winds are freezing and sun is no more,
With their strong steady wing beats onward driving, and striving,
They come in their thousands to Lymington shore.

O'er mountain and forest, over moorlands and poor lands
And cities where people look up to the sky,
For glimpse, between building, of the far light, of the star light
And shapes of the wild geese above them so high.

I stand on the sea-wall, on the stone wall, the lone wall,
Where daylight is fading and gold turns to blue,
And my thoughts keep on turning, with yearning with yearning,
To years that have passed and the love that we knew.

And if I could fly, like the wild fearless sea-birds,
I'd ride on the wind, make a path through the stars,
And find you once more, where the darkness is never,
And light everlasting will one day be ours.

Laura Sunderland

TALKING TRUTH PEACEFULLY

'Our peace testimony is about paying attention to all our relationships'

Many Friends will be aware that relationships in our local meetings can be difficult at times. In some ways this perhaps is not surprising. It takes time for Quaker values and practices to be absorbed by new attenders so there is quite a lot of room for misunderstandings to develop. Then, of course, established Friends have many different approaches to spirituality, and we have the freedom to think for ourselves, so there can be simmering unresolved conflicts and disagreements. It has worried me for some time that in ten years of Quaker membership I can recall several situations of unresolved conflict in my own meeting which have resulted in members and attenders leaving, and even memberships being terminated.

It is obvious that Friends do not always handle conflict well either in their relationships within their own meetings or with families, friends or colleagues. Perhaps an interested outsider would be surprised that a group of people who value peace, and are largely identified by their peace testimony, are not always good at handling conflicts at the grass-roots level. We know that some Quakers train to become mediators in international conflicts and this gives us a profile as peacemakers. This surely makes it all the more important that we should be seen to be able to handle our local conflicts and disagreements more creatively.

Why are we not better at handling conflict in both our meetings and our family relationships? In *A Spirit-led Approach to Conflict in our Quaker Communities* (April 2015) Izzy Cartwright quotes from Susan Robson's 2006 thesis which suggested that it is our 'behavioural creed', emphasising restraint, verbal moderation and harmonious relationships, which makes us conflict averse in our own communities. 'There is a feeling that conflict is wrong. If detected at all, it is swept under the carpet.' It seems that our love of peace may be part of the problem if we concentrate on peace at the expense of integrity. Of course, it is always difficult to get the balance right, and this is where skills in communication are important, together with the application of emotional intelligence in support of all our testimonies.

The well-known psychologist, author and trainer, Anne Dickson points out that if tensions and disagreements are ignored they do not go away, they get worse. If, instead of speaking up and expressing hurt or resentment, we regularly opt for silence it means that these feelings accumulate. The consequences down the line emerge in the form of serious disagreements and eventually unhealable rifts (in all kinds of relationships) all because of habitually opting for silence. If feelings are never truthfully conveyed, clear communication between mutually respecting equals becomes impossible. Does this sound familiar?

Better communication skills can be learned. There are some simple techniques that are very useful. However, be warned, we were told that changing the responses of a lifetime can be challenging! Recently at our local Bournemouth Meeting eleven of us took part in a six-week course in communication, facilitated by Anne Dickson, a local Friend. We practised, in role play, situations that we found difficult, ranging from the everyday interactions with strangers, to situations in close relationships. It was quite illuminating for us to realise that even in awkward everyday contacts where we thought we were treating others as equals, and trying to be straightforward with them, that we were in fact dealing with the conflict by being indirectly aggressive. We also caught ourselves acting as a critical parent with adults, and trying to be manipulative - all guaranteed to escalate conflict, not resolve it!

As participants on the course we were asked to be more aware of what we were actually feeling: many of us have learned to repress our feelings so we are not aware of them until later, or not at all, so cannot take them into account. We learned to improve our skill at self-disclosure which is essential in clear communication. Other essential skills included how to make specific requests and refusals clearly, learning to express anger and also, when necessary, to release accumulated feelings of frustration. We also learned how to criticise other people constructively, and as equals, by being very clear, specific and realistic about the change required.

This short course gave us an awareness of the importance of caring for oneself as well as other people. When you express your feelings you need to avoid blaming the other person for those feelings, which most of us tend to do automatically. In balancing a care for your own needs with those of the other person this allows an authentic equality in relationship. There is no doubt that with an

ability to communicate more directly at an earlier stage we are able to handle conflict more creatively. If we can be truthful, with equality of respect, in our dealings with others, well-being will increase. We will be better 'Friends Together' for a start.

Felicity Carter, Bournemouth Meeting

RAIN

Sarah Early

Rain, rain, endless rain,
Drowning thought, bringing pain.
Flooding our communities time and again.
What have we done to deserve this?

Fourteen inches in twenty-four hours!
Nothing prepared us; we expected just
showers.
Panicking, hurrying, saving what's ours.
Battling to get out in time.

Fierce consolation, the kindness of strangers.
The young work in teams, sharing the
dangers.
Now we're a community, no longer strangers.
Blessings earned through hardship.

Our world getting warmer, means more rain.
Warm air holds more moisture, scientists
explain,
Cyclones and hurricanes will scare us again.
This is manmade global warming.

Logged out hillsides can't hold rain.
Earth ripples, shudders, plummets to the
plain.
Can you recall Haiti, Philippines, India again?
Whole Pacific islands disappearing!

Our obsession with objects is destroying the
world,
Tearing down forests, more toys for nerds,
Oceans acidify, skies lose more birds.
Nowhere is safe from our greed!

Grey, grey, always grey,
Clouds surround us, monotonous days.
Gloom and murk can't keep sadness away.
Oh, how I miss the sunshine!

Rain. rain, blessed rain!
Quenching the fires, greening the plains.
Granting us hope of a harvest again.
Our patient Earth again saves us.

BUSY

Heather Lewis

Thirty minutes to spare. Rare
luxury. Thirty minutes is
an eternity in which
to be free,

to do as I like:
drink three cups of coffee,
despair at the crossword,
stare out at damp dahlias,
waste every second
shamelessly.

But I don't like
the empty space,
the bare bland clock-face.
It frightens me.
A time-bomb ticks
away the seconds
while firework fancies,
fragmented, flicker
to ashes, uselessly.

I want to be told
how to parcel my time
with ruler-sharp edges,
no crevices left
in which to be me;

for that's what I'm
accustomed to,
you see.

Breaking the Rules by Eddie Askew

When Jesus asked the Samaritan woman for a drink of water, he was shattering convention. Creating a storm in a water cup. Jews and Samaritans didn't mix.



Jewish men never talked to women in public, and this particular woman wasn't likely to be received in the best of circles, not with her reputation. But Jesus was never inhibited by convention. Not when he saw human need. Somehow he recognized a human being whose relationships were in a mess. Someone going about the routine of ordinary life, but whose life below the surface was dislocated.

To reach her he broke the rules and opened doors locked by centuries of tradition. Even she found it hard to accept at first. She hid behind the common prejudice. She misunderstood and prevaricated by changing the subject, trying to divert Jesus' attention. She didn't want to face herself as she really was; as Jesus saw her. Eventually, she did and, in facing herself, found Christ.

(With permission, an insight into John 4.4-10 taken from Eddie Askew's book 'Breaking the Rules', available from www.tlmtrading.com)

A Quaker's Fate

(to the tune of "A Policeman's Lot" from *The Pirates of Penzance*)

When a Quaker's not engaged in his employment
Or wistfully reviewing future plans,
His or her expected pathway to enjoyment
Is not the same as any other man's.
They are waiting for that call from Nominations
With proposals which they simply can't refuse,
And they know their duty without hesitations:
It's to put their talents fruitfully to use.

When there is a Quaker duty to be done
A Quaker's fate is such a happy one (happy one)!

They may reflect that it would be a pity
If Noms suggest a task that isn't right;
They may wonder should they sit on Peace Committee
Or turn to Eldership or Oversight?
And if they have a moment of frustration
We must pray that it will vanish speedily;
For none will say that word of liberation,
"That name would never have occurred to me!"

When there is a Quaker duty to be done
A Quaker's fate is such a happy one (happy one)!

John Lampen (after W.S. Gilbert)

oooOOOooo

GEORGE FOX & 'THE STOCK OF MARTYRS'

As we get older we may look back over our life journey and notice how it has been influenced by members of our family and the intimate culture we grew up in. The sentence in the second paragraph of George Fox's Journal has intrigued me. 'My mother was an upright woman; her maiden name was Mary Lago of the family of Lagos [in Mancetter] and of the stock of the martyrs.' (*Journal of George Fox* ed. J Nickalls p1) Dr Geoffrey Nuttall's Introduction in the same volume (op cit xix) has 'At Lichfield where to Fox's vision the market place was like a pool of blood, Edward Wightman was burned for blasphemy'. He was the last person to be burned at the stake, 12 years before Fox was born a mere 20 miles away.

In August 2015 I happened to find a copy of what is commonly called 'Foxe's Book of Martyrs', not having seen a copy for very many years. I recalled a saying that after a family were able to afford to buy a Bible, this was the next book they bought, and often used as 'recommended reading' for a Sunday afternoon.

John Foxe (1516-87) grew up through turbulent times. He entered Oxford at the age of 16 and became a fellow of Magdalen College 1538-45; during the reign of Mary he went to the Continent, returning here when Elizabeth became Queen. He published many sermons, books and treatises but his best known is the *History of the Acts and Monuments of the Church* - shortened as above! The first part was published in Latin in Strasburg in 1554. It was extended and translated into English in 1563, after the death of Queen Mary (1558). There were 9 editions and 3 abridgements produced by 1641. Queen Elizabeth I and her bishops encouraged churches and parsons to buy a copy. Surely George Fox would have read it, as he records visiting the priests in both Mancetter and Fenny Drayton in the *Journal* (op cit p5).

How then did this book affect the development of Protestantism in England

in subsequent years? 'Foxe did much to form the mythology which saw Englishmen as God's chosen people courageously defending His truth through the centuries.....The Godly remnant who defended Christ's truth at the cost of their own lives were shown in Foxe's book...as mostly springing from the humblest of the people.....[the cause of] the tribulations of the fifteenth century for Foxe, was the rejection of Wyclif and the Lollards. Yet the story ended happily with the triumph of Protestantism.' *The Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution Revisited* Christopher Hill Oxford 1997 p 160). We might see its influence on the young George, in his searching for light and truth. John Wycliff c1329-1384, who became master of Balliol College, Oxford in 1360, held some offices at court and wrote about various kinds of ecclesiastical abuse, which annoyed many bishops. Then he became rector of Lutterworth in 1374 and began to write pamphlets in English which were widely distributed, (previously his complaints had been in Latin). He organised a group of itinerant preachers which gained the nickname 'Lollards', to spread his doctrines, that the church should aid people to live a life of evangelical poverty and imitate Christ. He stressed the need for inward religion rather than the current formalism and rituals. Lutterworth is only about 15 miles from Fenny Drayton, where George Fox was born. About 70 Lollards were tried before the Bishops of Coventry; 7 men and 3 women were executed there between 1432 and 1522, a mere 10 miles from his birth place.

Returning now to Edward Wightman, who does not appear in Foxe's book because he died on April 11th 1612, had no direct connection with Mancetter. But a Robert Glover was born there, a scholar at Eton and of King's College Cambridge, who was burnt at Coventry in September 1555, one of the later 'Coventry Martyrs'.

Earlier that year, February 8th, Rev Laurence Saunders, who had associated with leading reformers in London was also burnt at Coventry. One of the crowd

POOLE MEETING CELEBRATES 40th ANNIVERSARY
OF THE FIRST PUBLIC MEETING FOR WORSHIP
AT 52 WIMBORNE ROAD

We decided we would celebrate by making our regular Soup Lunch for the Disaster Relief Fund a bit special. In normal circumstances we would have invited Friends from other Meetings, but as our kitchen refurbishment was behind schedule, we were unsure how it was going to turn out! Anyway we went ahead on November 29th and it was a really happy occasion. We had no facilities to warm soup, so we had a "souper" buffet and a splendid celebration cake made by Penny Estall.

Roger Gillett shared his occasion and a little of the has been a Quaker Meeting than off) since George Fox century. I had foraged the lovingly organized by put on display signatures of occasion and the greetings also read out Eric Sly's opening and we sang John such a happy one" to the tune of "A Policeman's Lot is Not a Happy One." We raised £68 for the Disaster Relief Fund.



memories of the original history of Poole Meeting: there in Poole on and off (more on visited Poole in the 17th archives and photographs Barbara Millard and was able to all those present on that telegrams received that day. I official account of the 1975 Lampen's "A Quaker's Fate is

Barbara Crawford

Wise Words

It was clear from the BBC report that the two young Burmese men found guilty and sentenced to death were made scapegoats for the Thai police.

Many prayed for the lads over the past year; so what of our prayers ? A personal friend writes helpfully :

From Dr Martin Megarry

Jesus' ministry ended in desperate failure - but the story didn't end on the Cross. I think the relationship between Law and Justice is certainly not one to one: often it doesn't seem to matter that someone is found 'guilty'; anyone will do so long as we can close the case. And we are not free of this sort of thing either - remember The Birmingham Six?

I think we often ask God to act in a particular way - I know I do; and we sense that we have been 'heard' - which is why we continue to pray... but we neither ask Him what to pray for and how to pray it, nor listen for His reply. It may be to right to ask Him at this stage that the evil one's plans for these two in particular and Thailand in general may become seriously unstuck and he will deeply rue his 'victory' - that God's plans of love and truth will be fulfilled in His way and timing - and that these two will somehow see Him and know that He is walking with them in this horror of a situation.



How much do we really know about Quaker Eldership?

During this short 'prepared ministry' I'd like to offer some thoughts on the nature of Eldership and the role of Elders.

Ours is an experiential, non-credal faith. We are led by the Spirit, following the promptings of love and truth in our hearts, bidden to live adventurously.

Why do we need Elders at all?

It is much easier to answer the need for Overseers. We are a community without paid staff, and need to exercise proper pastoral care for our members.

But spiritual care, guidance, or, heaven forbid, authority? If 'Christ is come to teach his people himself', what other 'authority' do we need?

I'd like to highlight three reasons. The first is straightforward. We need to provide structure and organisation for events such as marriages, funerals and other public meetings. Someone needs to be responsible. The second is not quite so easy. We say that we are a spiritual community. Our members vary greatly in experience. Answers are sought. At the very least, we need to ensure the provision and maintenance of an environment in which they may be found. We need encouragement in the following of the leadings of God. We also need support in avoiding mis-leadings. And we need to ensure sufficient structure and discipline in our Meetings for Worship to allow all to be heard and valued. My third reason is linked to this. Just as individuals can be mistaken, so can groups, even whole Meetings. In our open, equal community it would be very easy to be carried away by persuasive words and charismatic personalities. The story of James Naylor is convincing on this point. This is why Elders are appointed by the Area and not just the Local Meeting. You can't be just a Local Meeting Elder. You are part of a wider group that watches, listens and applies a moderating influence if necessary.

If we have got it right, Elders are appointed by Area Meeting after a thoroughly grounded Nominations process has discerned that they

have - or may develop - the appropriate gifts.

But they are still servants of the Meeting, just like the Clerk, or the Convenor of Catering Committee. Elders don't have to do everything (more of that later) any more that the Convenor of Catering Committee has made all the cakes himself (herself?). They enable, facilitate, make connections.

A common misconception is that Elders have status or, heaven forbid, authority. Tales are told of past years when Friends actively sought the status of Elder, even moving Meetings in the hope of securing it, when it was for life. Our three-year terms seem to me a sensible precaution against self importance!

But, in the same way as all Quaker nominations, the role itself has authority, in the sense that the Meeting has empowered the holder to carry out a set of defined responsibilities in its name.

And these are all laid out in Quaker Faith and Practice. I'd sum them up as listening, discernment, upholding, enabling and caring. You could add Nurturing, encouragement, facilitating learning, sharing stories, looking at things in new ways. They can't all be done by every Elder, but they can be covered by a group of Elders, working together, and doing what they can. That's important. Like the rest of us, Elders have to be faithful to their roles, and faithful to the authority of their roles - whilst remembering that the authority belongs to the role and not to them!

Asked what aspect of the role worries them most, Elders are likely to talk about 'Eldering' - a horrible word. Yet so little of Eldership is about 'Eldering'. Sometimes, but only rarely if Friends are exercising appropriate spiritual discipline, an Elder will have to address unsuitable spoken ministry in Meeting for Worship or inappropriate or excessive contributions to Meeting for Worship for Business. I've only known the need twice, and I have to admit that I did not handle it well.

Newly nominated Elders are also concerned about aspects of the role beyond their Local Meeting. Our Meetings inevitably experience difficulties from time to time. We are human, after all!

Where these centre around spiritual discipline, right ordering or the misunderstanding of authority it is best to ask for the support of Elders from a neighbouring Meeting or the Area Meeting as a whole. This is perhaps another reason for the appointment of Elders at Area Meeting level. These things do not happen often, neither does it need the involvement of every single Elder!

In returning to my original question, "Why do we need Elders at all?" I'd like to apply very strong emphasis to this next point. Ours is an experiential, non-credal faith. We are led by the Spirit, following the promptings of love and truth in our hearts, bidden to live adventurously. We appoint servants of the Meeting, not leaders.

The responsibilities of Eldership are the responsibilities of us all, jointly.

The responsibilities of Eldership, that is, the right holding of our Meetings, the nurture of spiritual learning, the provision of companionship on our spiritual journey, are the responsibilities of us all, jointly, to the extent that each of us is capable. I very much commend to Friends an exploration of Chapter 12 of Quaker Faith and Practice. It might prove as surprising as it is instructive!

I apologise for leaving this point until last.

Some Local Meetings, especially smaller ones, struggle with finding members able to serve in roles, so they adopt a different strategy, perhaps appointing convenors and some form of 'circle' system. But the responsibilities are still addressed, and this is just fine, particularly when it is supported by the Area Meeting.

The Clerks are picking up from some Friends that there may be a need for a longer discussion about Eldership, Oversight and the 'right ordering' of our Meetings at some future date, perhaps with some input from Quaker Life. If this is your view, please let your Clerk know.

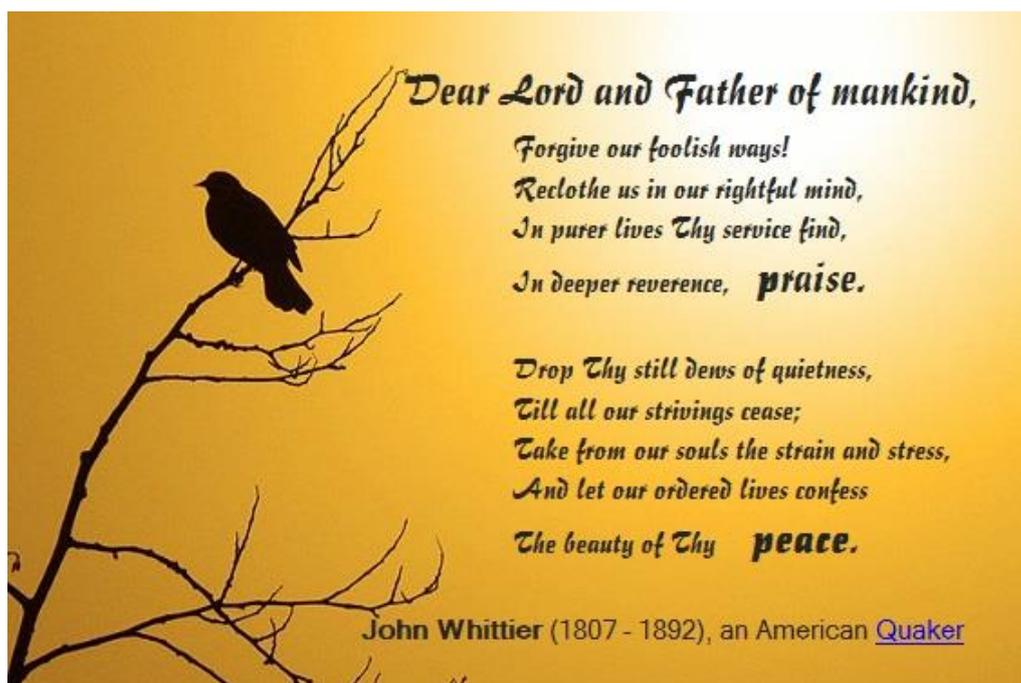
I'd like to conclude by posing three questions, if I may.

Why do you come to Quaker Meeting?

What do you expect to find there?

What minimal structure is needed in order for you to find what you expect - or, as is often the case, far, far more than you ever dreamed?

Tom Sanders



OUR HUMAN DIMENSIONS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Retreat Bamford Quaker Community - June 2015



The retreat was led by Laurie Michaelis of Living Witness and was attended by Friends from across England, and one from Wales. 'Inner Transition' was the main theme and focus of the retreat.

On the first day we were led in various activities that helped us to think about our own personal need to transform; to transition from where we are now in response to the changing climate and environment and in seeking to live sustainably. We thought about the reasons for our natural human desire to stay within our comfort zone and the fear we have of change that often leads us to be self-delusional, in denial, using avoidance tactics aplenty.

Woven into each day was time to do zero carbon activities like weeding in the Community Garden and walking in the wonderful Peak District countryside that was all around us.

On the second day we moved on from focussing on personal journeys, to how we might encourage and help others to transition and transform the way they live, so that our communities might be sustainable and mitigate the impact of Climate Change. We focused on the importance of connection and inter-relationship. We were able to share experiences and ideas, and offer support to each other in a diverse range of ways.

Each day we shared meals together in the communal kitchen around two wooden tables - sometimes arranged all together, sometimes set up as two separate tables. Food was diverse in range - ensuring that the dietary needs of vegetarians and vegans were fully met. The resident Friends prepared our main meals each day and were gracious hosts.

On the last day we were challenged with the need to transform systems by engaging with the 'powers'. We were signposted to helpful books, websites and other resources that could support us in engaging in mutually respectful dialogue with political and other establishment 'powers'. I recorded in my notes the following quote: 'We don't have to complete the task, but neither should we refrain from it.'

Being Sunday, we spent time in Meeting for Worship with the Hope Valley Quaker Friends, the Community's main dwelling also being the Meeting House for the Friends who live in the surrounding villages.

The morning of departure we made ready to go our separate ways contemplating and reflecting on the thought: 'Where am I on my journey?'

from Kathy May

Dear Editor

STEREOTYPING

As a recently arrived and temporary resident of Hampshire, currently attending the New Milton meeting, I have read - indeed am still reading, the latest issue of News and Views with interest.

One article, however, caused me some concern. The article (joke?), on page 11 ('Materialism, Equality and a gay guy') seems to reinforce or be based on a common stereotype of gay men. i.e. that they are promiscuous (as the son of the fourth woman has at least three boyfriends at the same time). The article also seems to be based on a stereotype of Jewish people as being more preoccupied than many with material success, (why not just say four women were at lunch rather than mentioning they were Jewish?)

It may be that the joke is on me - in that our 'take home' message is that that 'each person is unique, precious, a child of God' whether or not that person seems to fit a stereotype based on their sexuality, faith, race or other differentiating characteristic. It just seems to me a pity that those stereotypes were used.

*That aside, I have enjoyed what I have read in this issue so far. Thank you.
In friendship, Helen Carter*

SUFISM

from notes made at the Ashram by John Gibbs



The substance of Sufism is the Truth and the meaning of Sufism is the selfless experiencing and actualisation of the Truth. The practice of Sufism is the intention to go towards the Truth, by means of love and devotion. This is called **the tariqat**, the spiritual path or way towards God. The sufi is one who is a lover of Truth, who by means of love and devotion moves towards the Truth, towards the perfection which all are truly seeking.

Sufism is a school for the actualisation of divine ethics. It involves an enlightened inner being, not intellectual proof; revelation and witnessing, not logic. We refer to ethics that transcend mere social convention to bring a way of being that is the actualisation of the attributes of God.

Poems can communicate through symbolic expressions the depth of sufi spirituality, the inner states of mystical love, and the Unity of Being. They reveal aspects of Sufism and of travelling the sufi path that are not always accessible in prose writings, especially from Rumi "Through love grief is as joy".

Sufism has been described as *an aspect or dimension of Islam*. I.e. dedication to worship and to Allah most High, disregard for the finery and ornament of the world, abstinence from the pleasure, wealth, and prestige sought by most men, and retiring from others to worship alone. In pursuit of the goal of worshipping Allah, Sufis belong to **Tariqas**, or orders, established in the first few centuries after the Prophet's death. These orders have a master who will teach sacred knowledge to others in the group.

Although Tariqas have a long history, in recent times some Muslims have questioned the necessity of Tariqas arguing that they were alien to the Prophet himself. Sufis make a convincing defence from the Qur'an and Sunna (what the Prophet said, did, agreed to or condemned).

Sufis acknowledge that Tariqas were not established at the time of the Prophet. They consider that the Prophet, his companions and their immediate successors, the first three generations embodied Islamic mysticism but the phenomenon was too general to have a specific name. Later generations of some Muslims became distracted by worldliness so those, dedicated to worshipping Allah, were given the name Sufi.

This was eloquently described in the 10th Century by Abu I-Hasan Fushanji who said:

Today Sufism is a name without a reality. Once it was a reality without a name.

And some Afterthoughts from Rosemary Brown

The order to which I belong - the Sufi Ruhaniyat - is of universal Sufism, brought from India to the West by Sufi Inayat Khan in 1910. We do not call it a Tariqa and have a head (Pir) but not a Master as such. Each Sufi can choose his or her own guide, who takes no payment for the service of guidance.

We would say that Sufism is basically mysticism and is at the heart of every true religion. Words, forms and rituals are overlaid onto this heart of spiritual truth, but its essence is individual experience.

Here are three quotations:

'If anyone asks you what Sufism is, you may say that it is the religion of the heart'. Inayat Khan.

'A Sufi maintains from first to last the freedom of the soul.' Inayat Khan

'Sufism is about experiences, not premises.' Al Ghazali

Because divine mysticism has always existed - and will always exist - our universal Sufi order does not confine itself to Islam but respects Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, Sikhism, earth traditions such as what is called Native American and many others. The poetry of Rumi expresses this. In addition to the symbolism of the heart, Sufis place great importance on the breath. Ideally, each breath should be taken with awareness of God/Allah/

It may be of interest to Friends that in Islam a special name is given to Jesus (Esa), 'The Breath of God'.

Sufis are committed to love, peace and unity.

The report from Tony and Voirrey Faragher (21st of August) shows that the health and decriminalising drug use approach in Portugal cuts imprisonment and improves health. With the same decriminalisation policy applied in England and Wales 1,000 fewer people would go to prison.

In June 2014 Navanathem Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, said at a conference reviewing global drugs policy, "Criminalisation of drug use has considerable impact on drug users' right to health. Users of illegal drugs may be reluctant to seek out health information, advice or treatment because they fear that information about their drug use could be shared with authorities, leading to possible arrest, imprisonment or treatment against their will."

In addition about one in three prisoners (approximately 30,000) in England and Wales have a criminal offence related to their drug use.

The head of the drug prevention and health branch of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Gilberto Gerra, asked Quakers two years ago to raise awareness about the fact that imprisoning such offenders is not a viable solution, and that many alternative measures, such as community programs, exist to provide the necessary treatment.

In April 2016 the UN General Assembly is holding a special session entitled 'World Drug Problem'. Countries will be involved in shaping the outcome.

Quakers in Britain have an opportunity to encourage the UK government to support the UNODC document 'From Coercion to Cohesion', which argues for governments to provide health-based treatment for illegal drug users instead of punitive criminal justice measures.

Nicholas McGeorge Quaker, is FWCC representative, UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

HEAVENLY BEE by Chris (Lymington), in a Dorset garden (May 2015)

Tiny *A twinkle in the eye.*

Poised *Blurred wings holding stillness
black
and amber
(and a golden drop of sunshine).*

Basking *Deep blue above
scented green below
flowers abounding.*

Alert *Proboscis extended
(lance in rest)*

Strange *A beckoning finger appears
long, extended, hair-like, bent,
slowly sweeps top to toe
then is no more.*

Magical *Flick He's gone. Vanished. Not there.
Flick He's back.
In then out
(into a fifth dimension?).*

Heavenly Being:
Peace *Eyes held
mind stilled
heaven abounding
(dimensionless, yet holding all).*



MAKING SAUSAGES SPECIAL

Marge
Sausages
Onion peeled & sliced
Thyme, sage or rosemary pulled to bits
1 tbsp Mustard & 1 tbsp Orange juice
And for the mash:
Mixed root veg (parsnip, swede, potato, carrot)
peeled or washed & cut into chunks
1 tsp Smoked Paprika, (Tikka Curry powder or similar)



Cook sausages in oven to just done golden brown
Saute onion in marge scattering in pieces of herbs
Boil veg in saucepan to cook well and drain
Mash veg with marge, smoked paprika and white pepper
Place into oven dish and spread the sausages and onions on top
Mix mustard with orange juice and pour over sausages
Return to oven to heat up; then serve sausages with onions on bed of veg

Women Drivers



Waiting in a lay-by ready to catch speeding drivers, a Police Officer sees a car puttering along the A22 at well under 30 mile per hour.

He said to himself "This driver is as dangerous as a speeder!" So he turns on his two's and blues and pulls the vehicle over.

Approaching the car he noticed that there are five elderly ladies, two in the front and three in the back, wide eyed and white as ghosts. The driver, obviously confused, says to him "Officer, I don't understand, I was doing exactly the speed limit. What seems to be

the problem?" "Ma'am," the officer replies, "you weren't speeding, but you should know that driving slower than the speed limit can also be a danger to other drivers." "Slower than the speed limit? No sir, I was doing the speed limit exactly - twenty-two miles an hour" the old lady said proudly.

The Police officer, trying to contain a chuckle explains to her that A22 is the road number, not the speed limit. Rather embarrassed, the lady grins and thanks the officer for pointing out her error.

"Before I let you go, Ma'am, I have to ask, "Is everyone in this car OK? These women seem awfully shaken, and they haven't made a sound this whole time".

"Oh, they'll be all right in a minute officer. We've just come off the A120 . . .



Exploring the Light

By Peter Wilson, Poole Meeting

***“Jesus spoke to the Pharisees again, ‘I am the Light of the World,’ he said. (John 8:12)
(1 Thessalonians 5:5) : “You are all children of the Light.”***

What manner of spirit are we of? Have we any connection with the spirit which descended on the upper room, sounding like a ‘mighty rushing wind’? Do we look to be swept out of our comfortable existence by an invading power which comes, as Jesus said, no one knows whence? Or do we look rather for a gentler movement within? Do we say, it was this Spirit of God which breathed into our human clay to make us living souls? It is there, in our humanity, but mixed with passions which confuse its purpose, limited by the tunnel vision of the self. Occasionally a blinding flash may come from without and someone is jolted forwards; but the Spirit’s normal method is a quiet insistence, a still small voice barely audible amid the turbulence of earthquake, wind and fire.

Quaker Faith and Practice 26.74

This inner exploration began with the statement that Spiritual healing is Love in action. I’m sure we all believe that. But is it also the Light in action? In our understanding, does this Love equal the Light that we speak of?

Using my daily quiet times, this exploration of the Light involved not just my reasoning but also using God’s gift of visualization in being able to ‘let go and let God.’ I first needed to consider two questions before exploring the Light further:-

What do we mean by the Light?

Letting go of what?

The Light - How we define the Light depends on our background and faith experience. I’m comfortable in visualizing the Light as the ‘presence of God’. But I’ve also heard the Light described as a ‘field of loving energy’, ‘a spiritual force field of divine energy’, ‘the source of creative power’, and ‘the connectiveness of the human spirit (divine DNA) linked to divine energy. Describing the indescribable is always an impossible task using inadequate language. As Quakers we would probably say, use a definition you feel comfortable with. There is no one right answer, as we only glimpse one or two sides of the multi-faceted ‘Godhead’ diamond. Perhaps we can all agree that the Light represents for us a spiritual loving force that functions both within and beyond ourselves.

As for **Letting go of what?** through regular spiritual practice and discipline, I mean letting go of self, ego, anything within our earthly body that interferes with or hinders the relationship between ‘that of God within’ (God immanent) and the otherness of God beyond ourselves (which is God transcendent). We need to learn to hold in check our ego, by tuning in to the presence of God, so that we can truly say, ‘Not my will, but thy will be done.’

Moving on to an exploration of the Light, there were 3 stages of this spiritual journey and then a 4th. stage to connect the Light with healing.

Stage 1. ‘Wait in the Light’ - I see this as an act of faith and worship, employing minimal distraction, i.e. silence and stillness (using prayer either wordless or words formed in the mind), alone or with like-minded individuals, and within a time-frame that allows us to focus on that still ‘voice of calm’ within the depths of our very being. One problem we may experience is that our timetable may not coincide with God’s plan for us. We may wait for some considerable time with no apparent voice or happening. Does this matter? In response I try to stay focussed on my divine DNA (that of God within) and continue to wait in faith.

But we sometimes ‘wait with difficulty’ perhaps trying unsuccessfully to control the ‘monkey mind, perhaps using meditative techniques to let go of ego and its monkey mind? What if we continue to struggle in this? What else can we do? How about waiting **with** the Light.

Contd

Exploring the Light Contd

Stage 2. - 'Wait with the Light.' - For me, this next progression implies both God and ourselves waiting together. There's a significant difference here suggesting the strengthening of our relationship with God, in that we use this time to enjoy and deepen our connection with God. Think of it as spending time with God in your 'secret garden' but without any anticipation or expectation other than 'the joy of being and growing' enriched and surrounded by His Divine Love. Words are not necessary - being connected brings its own reward. Waiting with the Light means that God also waits with us, and only when the time is right (i.e. His plan for us) will we hear that inner voice (the prompting of the Spirit.) Trust that this will happen when it is meant to happen.

Stage 3. - 'Becoming part of the Light.' - Again for me, this further level of progression in exploring the Light requires a considerable leap of visualization in which we connect our spiritual energy and being (our true self) not only to God transcendent but also to all others (for example as with a distant healing group) who are also reaching out with their spiritual energy. My belief is that in this way, this combined spiritual force becomes a part of the Light that upholds and sustains all those who are in need. In some mysterious way, we are enabled to become a part of the Light, and a part of the act of Divine love to heal.

Stage 4. - 'Using the corporate Light as channels for healing.' As many of us within a healing group know, 'Tuning in to the presence of God' is followed by 'Intention' before we 'Let go and let God.' How much time is needed for healing to occur? To be effective channels for healing, we must forgo ego, dismiss the boundaries of time and space, and work from our Spirit-self which is our true reality. We use 'that of God within' to reach out to 'that of God in another' so that a spiritual connection can be made, and so that healing may happen for that individual's highest good.

My belief is that healing can be and probably is instant, the moment we have the intention and then let go. If time seems to be needed, then maybe it is for the benefit of ourselves (or the patient in the case of direct healing). It's not God that needs the time, it's us, perhaps as a way of remaining embedded within the Divine Presence.

Healing is not so much about seeking a specific cure, it's more to do with surrounding people with the Light i.e. the unconditional love of God, so that in turn they may come to experience the healing energy that comes from the Light that surrounds them. The Light can enter and work through all disorders of the mind, body and spirit, and bring comfort, improved health and spiritual enrichment. Being aware that we become an active part of the Light we call on helps our own healing processes to begin to operate more effectively.

To sum up, we just need to remember that God is always the Healer, and that healing is His Divine Love in Action. As partners with God and as channels for healing, we may thus aspire to become a part of that loving Light, which brings balance and wholeness into our being and helps restore balance and wholeness in others.

In our healing work, to surround a person with this spiritual force field of loving energy, and to be aware that we are a part of that process, is to do far more than call upon the Light. It is to become a part of the Light that upholds and sustains. What a gift! What a privilege!

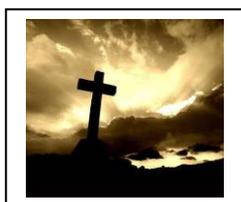
(adapted from a talk given to the Healing group at Poole Quakers)



VISITORS ARE WELCOME !

Quakers offer friendship and silent worship open to God's Spirit at these meetings.
Whatever your faith please feel really welcome to join us.

POOLE	52 Wimborne Rd, BH15 2BY	Sundays 10.30am	01202-681443
BOURNEMOUTH	16 Wharncliffe Road Boscombe BH21 1AS	Sundays 10.30am	01202-882914
WIMBORNE	Hanham Centre Hanham Road BH21 1AS	Sundays 10.30am	01202-840994
SWANAGE	Queens Mead Room Queens Road BH19 2ES	The last Sunday of each month 10.30am	01929-425740
NEW MILTON	30 Whiterfield Road BH25 6DF	Sundays 10.30am	01425-619831
LYMINGTON	Community Centre Cannon Street SO41 9BQ	Sundays 10.30am	01590-678706
FORDINGBRIDGE	United Reformed Church Salisbury Street SP6 1AB	2nd & 4th Weds of the month 1pm & 1st Sun 10.30am	01425-652527



It's Easter !

"If Jesus' death marks the point at which God's identification with people is most profoundly expressed, the resurrection asserts God's sovereignty over all things. Jesus is made, truly, Lord of all."

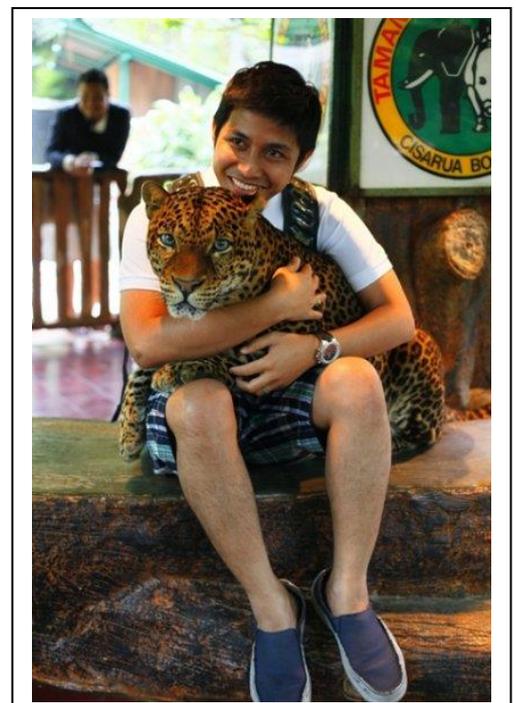


Bishop Andy John (BRF)

what a wonderful world



'It ill becomes us to invoke in our daily prayers the blessings of God, the Compassionate, if we in turn will not practice elementary compassion towards our fellow creatures'. Mahatma Gandhi





*Look how the wild flowers grow; they do not work or make clothes for themselves. But I tell you that not even King Solomon with all his wealth had clothes as beautiful as one of these flowers. It is God who clothes the wild grass - grass that is here today and gone tomorrow. Won't he be all the more sure to clothe you? How little faith you have! So do not start worrying. Your Father in heaven knows that you need all these things.
[Matthew 6]*