

CROYDON FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

April 2016

Dear Friends,

This month our newsletter overlaps the Easter celebrations, the coming of Spring, and forthcoming Quaker and other events. We continue with Wilf Hayler's edit of his father's diary of one hundred years ago, and with Barbara Earl's series of articles on a religious theme. We also have personal accounts of events and places visited last month, and events to come. **Gillian Turner**

'Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise'

Recently, I attended a workshop about the gospel of John led by an Anglican priest and spiritual teacher called Martin Nathanael. I am still digesting the fruits of the day as it was so full of an immense amount of spiritual guidance. For example, in John 1 (which I tend to associate with Christmas), when reading, "In the beginning was the Word", I am ashamed to say that I had never really understood its true meaning, thinking of "word" such as that which may be spoken. Martin explained that the Greek translation of "Word" in this sense, is *logos* meaning "divine expression", or "source of being" or "always existing". In Proverbs 8, "Word" is synonymous with wisdom.

At this time of year, one's thoughts may turn to the Resurrection, which in discussion with Friends I know can often be a stumbling point. In *The Master Speaks*, Joel Goldsmith writes that often the Bible is read from a purely literal or historical point of view when we may gain much more by understanding it metaphorically as this will be more likely to lead to spiritual discernment. In John 11, Jesus says, "I am the resurrection and the life" which we do not necessarily have to take to mean that He is referring only to a physical event. The Greek translation of resurrection is *anastasia* that is, *ana* meaning "again" and *stasia* meaning "stand in consciousness". Perhaps we can all stand high in spiritual consciousness if we accept God as the reality of our being and do not worry unduly about our human weaknesses.

This discussion led to the concept of sin being raised and again, Martin's knowledge of Greek provided a real opening. *Hamartia* is the Greek for sin, but is more correctly and usefully translated as "missing the mark". This may be nearer to the Buddhist concept of "unskillful behaviour". To hear that the toxic bomb of the shame-inducing concept of sin, which can be so damaging to self-esteem and hope, may be replaced by a more compassionate idea encompassing human flaw, errors of misjudgement and ignorance is quite liberating to hear. We can all hope to repent and recover from *hamartia* without feeling the weight and condemnation of an enduring sense of sin. A clearer and more honest view of our own episodes of "missing the mark" may make us less likely to hold others in judgement.

Jesus told the thief on the cross who had asked to be remembered when He got to His Kingdom that "today thou shalt be with me in Paradise", Luke 23 (Gr. *paradeisos* = enclosure, garden). Some of His last words made it clear that if we awaken none are barred from the love of God and His kingdom is open to each one of us regardless of our mis-steps. **Barbara Earl**

'God of Surprises' by Gerard W Hughes

Over a decade ago, led by David Rees, a group of us studied *God of Surprises*, a book about the spiritual exercises of St Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuit Order. Hughes was a Jesuit priest, teacher and writer. The book, written in 1985, is designed to help us nurture our spiritual lives by continually questioning and developing our understanding of God, and offers a way of doing so through what he calls 'Imaginative Contemplation.' This is a way of contemplating the life of Christ and the parables and miracles by entering imaginatively and prayerfully into the events recorded in the Bible.

As the fourth Sunday of March, traditionally our after-refreshments talk or discussion Sunday, was Easter Sunday, we embarked on an imaginative contemplation of the events of Easter Sunday. We heard the John's Gospel account on chapter 20, in a modern translation. The slow reading, with pauses where the narrative changes, allows us to enter the scene. We share the thoughts and actions of those who arrive to find the tomb empty. We ponder why Mary could see the angels and

Peter could not. We enter the upper room and consider the symbolism of the room with its locked doors. We meditate on the appearance of Jesus, both at the tomb and in that upper room, and hear, with the women and the disciples, the words that bring peace and joy. The Resurrection is a mystery which we can never adequately understand, but this exercise gives us an opportunity to consider what we understand by God's love and the joy of new life. **Gillian Turner**

Miracle

Not the one who takes up his bed and walks
 But the ones who have known him all along
 And carry him in -
 Their shoulders numb, the ache and stoop deeplocked
 In their backs, the stretcher handles
 Slippery with sweat. And no let-up
 Until he's strapped on tight, made tiltable
 And raised to the tiled roof, then lowered for healing.
 Be mindful of them as they stand and wait
 For the burn of the paid-out ropes to cool,
 Their slight lightheadedness and incredulity
 To pass, those ones who had known him all along.

Seamus Heaney

March 1916

On March 3rd, my father (his portrait below is dated March 6th) appeared before the local tribunal in Lancashire, and, being convinced that he was sincere, he was granted exemption from combatant service (only). His was one of the earliest cases, and it later transpired that the tribunal were unaware that they were able to grant him unconditional exemption, and did not carry out what was laid down in the Military Service Act.

As a result, a few days later on the 8th, he was asked to present himself for the Army at Earlstown Recruiting Office, which he ignored, making sure that the *Earlstown Gazette* were acquainted with the events.

On March 23rd he appeared before the Appeal Tribunal in Liverpool, when the Lord Mayor was in the Chair, and his appeal for unconditional exemption was turned down. An annual temperance conference was taking place in Liverpool at the same time to which the Lord Mayor was again present, and his notes claim that the Lord Mayor invited him over, presumably having seen him at the Tribunal.

A visit to London was made at the end of the month, and it was at this time that his brother Walter appeared before the local tribunal at Croydon Town Hall. Walter owned a glass and china shop on The Pavement, High Street, South Norwood, and was given absolute exemption, bearing in mind that the military representative could appeal against the decision at any time.

He never did, and, on reflection it is clear that Walter would never have been suitable for army service. And so the way was clear(?) for the events of April 1916, which was to prove an eventful, but worrying time.



*What purpose burns within our hearts,
 That we together here should stand.
 Pledging each other mutual vows,
 And ready hand to join in hand.
 We see in vision fair a time
 When evil shall have passed away
 And thus we dedicate our lives
 To hasten on that blessed day.
 To seek the truth whate'er it be,
 To follow it where'er it leads;
 To turn to facts our dreams of good,
 And coin our lives in loving deeds.*

WEFH

Minot Judson Savage (1841-1918)

Monkeys on Mars complete the Sport Relief Mile



The Big Day arrived and we were all ready for our biggest challenge yet (well some of us), after all our hard work and training (Laura and Jacob mainly). On Sunday 26th March, Albie, Jacob, Laura, Sarah (accompanied by her bear Big Ted who came along to provide moral support) and myself all travelled to the Olympic Park in Stratford, East London.

After a temporary detour at a cafe en route we pinned our registration numbers on and lined up with all the other competitors - the run began outside the Olympic Stadium on a cold but sunny day. Laura and Jacob soon ran out of sight in the crowds and Albie, Sarah and myself went at a more sedate pace. There were bands and singers and people encouraging you to keep going, and we passed a group of people doing a

'Thai Chi' mile - they probably took longer than everyone else but it seemed the best way to travel. It wasn't long before we reached the home straight and lots of cheering from people at the finishing line - and we finally caught sight of Laura and Jacob who had finished ages before us. It seemed all their training paid off.

It was a great day out and we felt a huge sense of achievement for doing such a positive thing for Sport Relief - we managed to raise £335! And we'd like to say a very big thank you to everyone that sponsored us.

Next year I might even run it too!

Andy French

Hertford Friends Meeting House

Before Easter Brian Skeet, while staying with his daughter, went to meeting for worship at Hertford Friends Meeting House. He discovered that it is a grade 2* listed building and is believed to be the oldest Quaker meeting house in the country. A Quaker preacher first came to Hertford in 1655, and services were held in private houses until 1669 when the decision was taken to build, at a cost of £243 12s 0d, a meeting house for Quaker worship.. George Fox visited the building at least 3 times. The building may have sustained damage in 1683 as there is evidence that it was repaired then. In 1717 sash windows were installed, but were replaced in 1731 by casement windows, with the lower openings bricked up. In 1981 comprehensive repairs costing £72,000 took place, with a steel corset installed to take the weight of the roof and tie back the walls.

Brian very much enjoyed his visit to this historic building. He was impressed at the welcome he received when he arrived. Friends sat on benches placed in a rectangle around a table which held the usual Bible, Quaker Faith and Practice and flowers, but no water. He discovered at the end of Meeting that he was sitting next to visitors to a Quaker meeting for the first time, and was able to tell them that he was a visitor as well. He gave the Meeting greetings from Croydon, and was asked to take back Hertford meetings greetings to us. He was given a copy of their newsletter, which Gillian is looking forward to reading.



Loveliest of trees, the cherry now



*Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.*

*Now, of my threescore years and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.*

*And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.*

A. E. Housman (1859–1936),
A Shropshire Lad 1896.

Active Peace Surface Peace

On Sunday 13th March I attended a Women's Interfaith Conference, given by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Women Association, UK South Region. The invitation was issued by a member, Asfa Javid. For the last two years such an invitation has been sent to the women of Purley Meeting, but this year it was extended to Area Meeting.

There were speakers from the Baha'i, Sikh, Quaker (Eleri Pengelly of Purley Meeting), Buddhist, Christian and Islamic faiths. The Hindu speaker, unfortunately, could not attend. Quakers were present from Purley and Epsom Meetings, and I from Croydon. The theme was "How to establish a living relationship with God". The speakers gave answers in relation to their own faith, and a Q&A session followed.

The commonality between all those faiths, was the importance of LOVE, service towards others, regardless of race, creed or background, and charitable acts towards those less fortunate. Such interfaith events help to foster better community relations and a better understanding of one another, and to educate and dispel any myths or stereotypes that one might hold. It certainly provides clarity, where any misunderstanding may have been present. For example, regarding the rights of women in Islam, the Ahmadiyya speaker, and others from this community, pointed out that some of the commonly held negative perceptions by non-Muslims in fact stemmed from culture, not Islam. This is an important distinction, not to be forgotten when making an evaluation of any group.

The Conference ended in true community spirit, with a shared dinner. It was here that I was invited along with my family, to attend the 13th National Peace Symposium organised by His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad. He is the worldwide leader and 5th Caliph of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, and an internationally respected speaker on the need for peace and a promoter for universal human rights. He has addressed world Parliaments, including the House of Commons, the European Parliament and Capitol Hill.

The Symposium took place on Saturday 19th March at the impressive Baitul Futuh Mosque, the largest mosque in Western Europe. This exclusive invitation only event included guest speakers such as Zac Goldsmith; Siobhain McDonagh, Labour MP for Mitcham and Morden; Justine Greening, Secretary of State for International Development, a member of the National Security Council and Conservative MP for Putney; and Baron Ahmad of Wimbledon, a Pakistani Ahmadiyya Muslim businessman and Conservative member of the House of Lords, who is Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport and Under Secretary of State for Home office, responsible for implementing the Counter-Extremism Strategy. This Strategy covers countering extremist ideology, building a partnership with all those exposed to extremism, disrupting extremists, and building cohesive communities. It was of no surprise that, on arrival, every guest was subject to airport-style security. It is to be noted that the minority Ahmadiyya Muslim Community are highly persecuted within mainstream Muslim communities and countries.

The keynote speaker, His Holiness Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, reinforced that true Islam is peace loving and does not advocate acts of terrorism. This is apt, as three days after this Conference news broke of terrorist attacks in Brussels. His Holiness highlighted the West's involvement in supplying arms to terrorist groups and in prioritising oil, which has led to the toppling of governments in Iraq, Libya etc.

I felt compelled to write this article, and it is interesting that it coincides with Holy Week. What would Christ's reaction be to extremism, Islamophobia and to a world which is in much need of peaceful dialogue and healing? Perhaps, it is as simple as asking one's self how well do I know my neighbour, and how prepared am I to extend a hand of friendship? "Love For All, Hatred For None" - an Ahmadiyyan slogan.

Cynthia Stawiariski

News of Friends

Reg Briscoe continues in good health in his residential home in Purley, and goes out regularly on trips on Tuesdays and Thursdays. **Mary Clarke** is not at all well and is back home after a brief stay in hospital. **Marjorie Evans** is making very slow but steady improvement and is back home with a carer looking in every day. When I phoned she had just put on her washing.

Mavis Parker sent an Easter card to Joyce Trotman with a prayer on the front rather than the usual spring flowers: ***This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.*** Psalm 118:24. She also said: I enjoyed your article in the March Newsletter and Wilf's continuing article's on his father's diary and included a cheque for postage which was gratefully received by our LM Treasurer.

We were delighted to welcome back **Dave Perry** who stayed for our Fourth Sunday meditation and lunch, and told us about his life in Colchester and his continuing search for a new home.

He is renting a very nice house from a friend and says he would buy it tomorrow except that it has no front garden and the back garden faces north. After so many years living in a block of flats Dave longs for a garden.

David and Barbara Parlett celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary on 26 March.

Terry Wilkes returns from his trip to India on 15 April and we look forward to welcoming him back

Forthcoming events

Tuesday 5 April: Qfp sharing group: 7:30pm, Chapter 10: Belonging to a Quaker Meeting.

Saturday 16 April: Kindlers - Making Visible the Invisible? 10:00 to 17:00 at Friends House, A Kindlers workshop led by Linda Murgatroyd. Refreshments from 10 am for a 10.30 start. Bring your own lunch or eat in the Quaker Centre Café. Tea at 4.30.

Saturday 16 April: Dementia - London Quakers Dialogue 10:30 to 15:00 at Friends House. Over 1,000,000 people in the UK have dementia. We are planning an opportunity to learn more and hear about ways we can work with sufferers and support their carers. Details being arranged and will be announced shortly.

Thursday 28 April: London Citizens Mayoral Assembly 18:00 to 20:30, (Meeting for worship 6.15), at The Copper Box, Olympic Park. No charge, but please register with quakercitizensuk@gmail.com. Just days before the Mayoral Election, 6000 Citizens will present the main mayoral candidates with a considered agenda for action on London's housing crisis, the refugee situation, the Citizens' Living Wage and local jobs and training opportunities. This agenda has been created through a year long listening campaign in each member institution across London. West London Area Meeting (who are a member institution) have committed to take 300 Friends & associates - we hope that Friends will be represented from across London. Can you join us?

Saturday 30 April: Quaker Values in **education 10:00 to 16:30, Friends House, £15. National conference** for all interested and engaged in publicly funded education. It will explore how Quaker values can stimulate and inspire a productive and broad debate about the impact of current government policy on our school system. This conference is for Quakers, Teachers, Governors, Parents and others concerned for the health and purpose of the education system in Britain. Speakers: Tim Brighouse, Ruth Cadbury MP, Graham Ralph and Alison Spottiswode. The programme also includes plenty of time for discussion and workshops to inform a way forward.

Saturday 30 April: Animated Voices 10:00 to 16:00, Hampstead mh. Come and join Leavers for this exciting Stop Motion Animation workshop for Young People, where you can explore your ideas about equality, peace, the environment and other important topics. You will be working in a group as the production team, creating a story board, checking the right lighting, and animating the characters yourself, using digital photography. Creating your own Stop Motion Animation is a slow, but very enjoyable process, capturing one frame at a time.

Breakfast every Sunday morning from 9 to 10 am.

Please join us for porridge, toast and coffee. Coffee available until 10.15

March collections

6 South London AQM £22

13 Croydon Local Meeting £36

20 Young Friends General Meeting £49

27 Campaign Against the Arms Trade £55

Standing order figures not yet available

April Collections

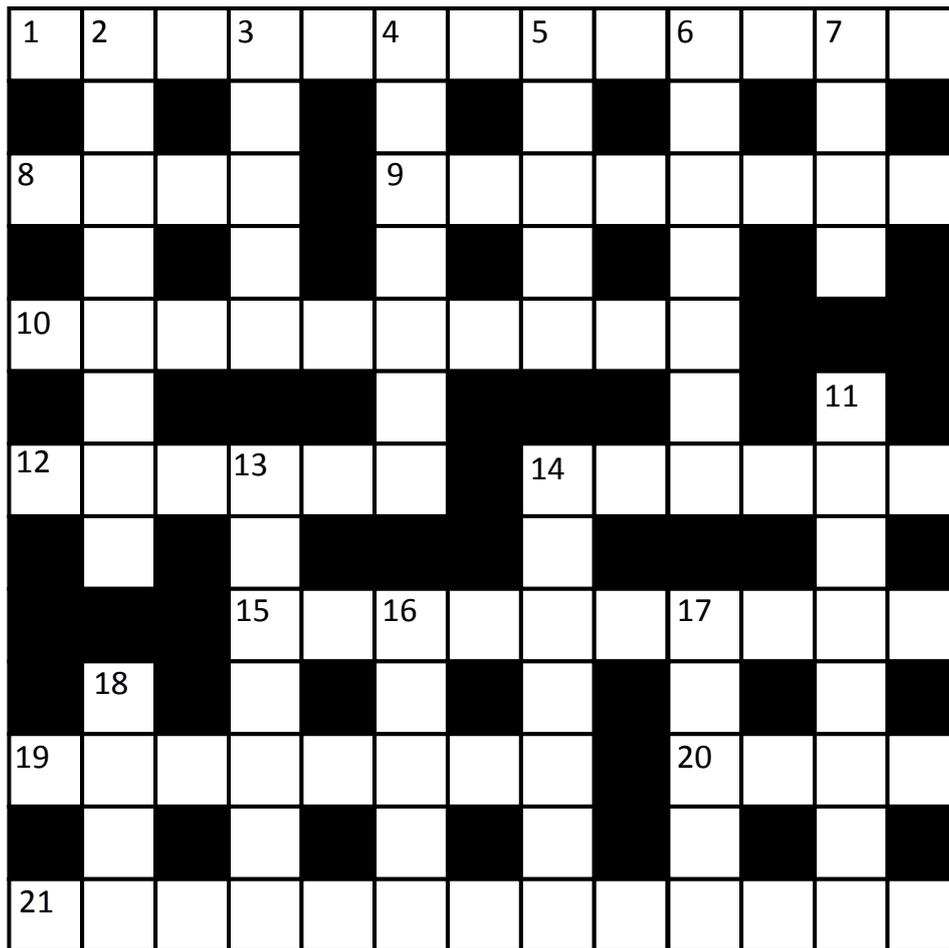
3 St Christopher's Hospice, **10** Quaker work worldwide, **17** South London Area Meeting

24 Quaker Concern for Animals

The deadline for the May edition is Sunday 23 April 2016

Please give, send or email contributions (no longer than 500 words, please) to Gillian Turner Tel 020 8688 9659 email gillianturner033@gmail.com

Friendly Crossword #7 by Grumpy Old Quaker



Across

- 1 and 21: Fathers of evolution (7,6 and 6,7)
 8. Penetrating music? (4)
 9. Ribbons attempt to get weaving (8)
 10. Fourth king of the Kingdom of Judah (10)
 12. A bit off (6)
 14. Schubert's speciality (6)
 15. Brainy adjunct (10)
 19. Ancient, as of a pristine forest (8)
 20. Runner - from the blue? (4)
 21. See 1 across.

Down

2. Spanish country house (8)
 3. Round-up (5)

4. Beg (7)

5. Profundity (5)

6. Floral ornament (7)

7. Relating to legal term (2, 2)

11. Political entity (8)

13. Migrant (7)

14. Herbaceous plant (7)

16. Madly enthused over (5)

17. Identifier (5)

18. Russian region (4)

A	D	V	E	R	B	S		F	O	N	D	A
S		E		E		I		O		O		L
S	I	R		F	E	L	I	X	S	T	O	W
I		S		U		I		E		R		A
G	E	O	R	G	E	C	A	D	B	U	R	Y
N				E		A				M		S
	S	C	R	E	E		D	R	O	P	S	
A		E				P		A				E
B	U	N	H	I	L	L	F	I	E	L	D	S
A		T		O		U		N		A		T
S	D	R	A	W	K	C	A	B		T	E	A
E		A		A		K		O		E		T
D	Y	L	A	N		Y	E	W	T	R	E	E

Solution to #6