

CROYDON FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

August 2015

Dear Friends,

This is by way of being our holiday edition, with reference to trips taken and events to come. The Adult School Hall features largely this month, as it was very busy in July and in August will be used for meetings for worship and by hirers as our meeting room and corridors are being painted. (Details below). Many of us will be on holiday or visiting or entertaining, and, hopefully, enjoying some summer weather. Let me know of any visits you make, particularly to a meeting house. Poems would be particularly welcome!

Gillian Turner

From the section headed CREATIVITY Quaker faith and practice 21.27

A sudden concentration of attention on a rainy August morning. Clusters of bright red berries, some wrinkled, some blemished, others perfect, hanging among green leaves. The experience could not have lasted more than a few seconds, but that was a moment out of time. I was caught up in what I saw: I became a part of it: the berries, the leaves, the raindrops and I, we were all of a piece. A moment of beauty and harmony and meaning. A moment of understanding.

Ralph Heatherington, 1975

Extract from

Freedom Pass London

by Mike Pentelow and Peter Arkell

8 The canal, the Old Railway and The Quaker 6 (miles)

START Rickmansworth Tube Station (Metropolitan Line)

After turning right out of the station, turn right again under the railway bridge, then left into the High Street. On the right a short distance away is **The Pennsylvanian**, a Witherspoon pub which depicts on its sign a portrait of William Penn and displays much information about him inside.

Continue along the High Street to the junction with Church Street. Go ahead and turn immediately left by the library to:

Three Rivers Museum (Home of William Penn)

William Penn (1644 – 1718), the Quaker who founded Pennsylvania, lived here from 1672 to 1677 after getting married to local resident Gulielma Springett.

The next pages give details of his life in England, including the fact that his imprisonment resulted in a change in British law. He and William Meads were charged with conspiring to cause a riot. When the jury refused to deliver a guilty verdict the judge locked them up in Newgate Prison until they changed their minds. A higher court ordered their release and established the precedent that juries were free to give their own verdicts, free from the coercion of judges.

There is a section about Penn in America, his return to England, death and burial in Jordons Quaker Cemetery. It ends with a quotation from Primitive Christianity Revisited: True godliness don't turn men out of the world but enables them to live better in it, and excites their endeavours to mend it.

The guide then sends us to visit St Mary the Virgin Church, Batchworth Lock Canal Centre, a disused railway track, several nature reserves, and ending at Bushey Railway station.

Visit to Kingston Quaker Centre

Sutton Friends are considering whether they are making the best use of their building and, as part of this consideration, arranged a visit to the new Kingston Quaker Centre on 26 July. They kindly invited Friends from other Meetings in the Area.

Graham Torr told us about the sixteen-year history of the project and showed us around the building. The project originated when Kingston Friends felt that their old building, on a site where Quakers had worshipped since the 1770s, was dilapidated and no longer met current needs. The new building, which opened a year ago, was the third design on the third site, and Graham considered it the best.

The first thing that struck me as we gathered in silence was that it was silent. The site is less central than the old one, which was bought for development, but still quite close to the centre and backs onto a park. It is surrounded by mature trees, which we could see through the tall windows, which has the disadvantage that the building cannot generate solar power, so it has been designed to maximise energy efficiency. Air passes under the building before coming in through grilles in the walls, which has the effect of cooling it in summer and warming it in winter. The meeting room is lit by five sky-lights, as well as the windows, symbolising the importance of Light to Quakers and creating a very attractive space. The attention to detail was evident throughout the building, from the good acoustics in the Meeting Room to the child-friendly surface in the outside play area.

The office is hired out to a non-profit organisation, Kingston Healthwatch, who occupy it during office hours, and Quakers do not employ anyone on site. The heating, lighting and security are computerised and users enter with a smart card, so there is a record of everyone entering the building, and users are trusted to leave it in good order. A Quaker manager, who administers several Meeting Houses, is contracted to manage the bookings and invoicing remotely. Healthwatch's presence leads to bookings from health-related organisations and the good acoustics attract music bookings.

Many features of the building, such as the silence and light, are very attractive, and others, such as the accessible toilets and the lockers for hirers, are very practical. Inevitably some snags are still being sorting out and I found the appearance of the building a bit clinical, but there were a lot of interesting ideas. We would probably not be able, or wish, to adopt them all, but I hope we will return in the autumn to a consideration of how well our buildings meet the current needs of Croydon Meeting and the community.

Graham kindly said that he would be willing to give his talk again if there were enough Friends interested in visiting at a time more convenient for Croydon Friends (perhaps a fifth Sunday?). If you would be interested, please contact Gillian or me.

Rhiannon Rees

Antiquarian Books

Our young Friend has a concern about the old books in the Friends Room, and apparently also in the basement, and urges us to index and mend them where necessary. He sends us details of their proper care.

The care and restoration of old books is an art in its own right, to the reading of publication to the neutralisation of paper. The most important thing to know is the publication date which is usually on the right hand side of the book or at the bottom of the title page. The date is usually written in number form, but if the book is from the 18th century it will almost always be written in Roman numerals. The wonderful thing about old books is that they tell the evolution of books themselves, for example a book from the 18th century will show that the paper is hand made and the letter blocks are very clearly carved compared to a book from the 19th century down to contemporary books which are machine made.

If one encounters the problem of stained old paper in a book that has loose falling pages which you may want to bind, or an old document of importance, you might want to try to neutralise the paper. Neutralising paper is a method of removing acid which eats the paper because of the whitening process which involves bleach and certain acids. To begin you will need a tray with warm water with magnesium bicarbonate in it which will remove any stains, leave it for about half an hour and then remove it and let it dry.

.../...

Care of the books. The list is as follows: 1.) Book deodoriser to get rid of book orders, 2.) Book repair tape, 3.) Cellugel to treat powdery leather, 4.) Conservator's wax to reduce dryness, 5.) Cotton book tape, 6.) Book ink erasers, 7.) Marble paper/ink, 8.) Book head band's for spinal support.

Edward Stawiarski

Morning Thoughts

*Awake, my soul, and with the sun
Thy daily stage of duty run;
Shake off dull sloth, and joyful rise
To pay thy morning sacrifice.*

It was a most unusual awakening with the words of a hymn in my mind – I can't remember it happening before. What was the second verse? ... something about 'influence of the Light divine' ... sounds very Quakerly must check that out. So, shaking off my dull sloth, I arose, not joyfully, I must admit, to find out more.

Forsaking my breakfast, I began to consult my large collection of hymn books located on my sideboard. But could I find the verse?.... not a sign of it. Could it be in another hymn, or, praise be, could I have written it myself? - no way.

What's this?

*Thy precious time misspent redeem;
Each present day thy last esteem...*

That will take all day; may I leave that until tomorrow? I have already shaken off dull sloth; or will tomorrow be too late?

At last, I have found it, after going through eighteen hymnbooks. Why didn't I look in *Songs of Praise* (1925) first? No. 25, verse 4; I even remember the number from Assembly at school; and here it is again in *Congregational Praise* (1951).

*By influence of the Light divine
Let thy own light in good works shine;
Reflect all Heaven's propitious ways
In ardent love and cheerful ways.*

The verse does not appear in any of my earlier hymnbooks, and raises the question – did Archbishop Ken actually write it, or was it added in *Songs of Praise*? It doesn't seem to carry the same mood as the other verses.

Thomas Ken (1637 – 1711) was a man of first principles; he was visited by Charles II but refused to allow Nell Gwynn enter his house. He was brought up by his elder sister, who was married to Isaac Walton (*The Compleat Angler*) after the early death of his parents.

The tune is more recent than the words of the hymn, although it fits them so well. It was written by Francois Hippolyte Barthelemon (1741 – 1808) and first appeared in *The Hymns and Psalms used in the Asylum or House of Refuge for Female Orphans*. Thomas Ken's evening hymn "Glory to thee My God, this night" was compiled from a collection of verses he wrote while at Winchester but that's another story

Wilf Hayler

Erica Johnson Bequest: Update on Premises

Work will begin on painting the meeting room on Monday 3 August and will last approximately 10 days. The decorators will then move to the first floor corridor, aiming to finish by the weekend, and finally they will paint the vestibule and the area between the two sets of doors.

We will need to hold at least one, possibly two meetings for worship in the Adult School Hall. Peter Tayler has warned hirers if and when they will need to move to the ASH, and the work should be completed by the end of the third week, the 22 August.

We have now received details and costings of the accessible toilet. Please let Gillian know if you wish to have a copy

Estimates for secondary double glazing throughout the building are now in and will be discussed at our next business meeting in September.

Elders

Who are they and what are they for?

Elders currently appointed to serve this meeting are Liz Collins, Yvonne Kassim, Kay Papadopoulos, David Parlett, Gillian Turner, Terry Wilkes, and Alan Yardley.

Our duties, as outlined in *Quaker Faith and Practice* 12:12, are, briefly -

- to prayerfully uphold the meeting and its members
- to promote the right holding of meetings for worship and foster helpful vocal ministry
- to ensure that meetings for church affairs are properly understood and rightly held
- to be responsible for special meetings for worship such as marriages and funerals
- to care for the spiritual life of individual Friends and attenders (in addition to the pastoral care exercised by overseers)
- to help all in the meeting to broaden and deepen their knowledge and understanding of Quaker ways.

If you have any problems or matters of concern in any of these areas please contact any one of us. The clerk of elders is David Parlett (020 8764 0950, email quakers@parlett.eu).

Adult School Hall

Nightwatch: The Annual General Meeting was held on Monday 20 July.

Jad Adams told us that the average number of clients per night is now 80, a slight rise, noticeably among Eastern Europeans. There is also an increase in people sleeping rough, both in London generally and in Croydon.

Nightwatch is the largest food provider in Croydon and works closely with the Croydon Food Network.

Welfare reforms have a very negative impact: benefit caps, the housing benefit lowered, Universal Credit forms which have to be filled in online, targeting single parents.

The movement of big money into central London areas pushes people further out until rental accommodation in London boroughs is no longer within people's means.

Nightwatch meets immediate basic needs – firstly that of hunger and then helping clients to move to a less chaotic life, by providing sleeping bags, a new rucksack, clothes for interviews, resettlement furniture and kitchen equipment, and IT support. These latter items, apart from furniture, are given out on Sundays, along with a food parcel containing dry and tinned food.

September 16 2016 will be the 40th anniversary of the foundation of Nightwatch, and celebrations are starting to be organised. Finally, there was some discussion about where the distribution area will be relocated to when Queens gardens are closed.

Last year's October's appeal for tins of soup and other foodstuff was down from 11,000 to 7,000, which has meant that stocks are very low. Roger Davies, our liaison trustee, is now buying tins of with donations from individuals and food banks.

Copies of the Annual report 2014 can be viewed online at www.croydonnightwatch.org.uk, and there are copies on the rack in the meeting house.

Website

I'm redesigning our website at croydonquakers.org.uk to make it look cleaner and less cluttered. Please let me know if you have any comments or suggestions to make about it, or if you experience any technical difficulties, such as pictures overlapping text.

But please note that problems can arise if your browser is out of date. Do remember - whether you're using Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer, Safari, Opera, SeaMonkey or whatever – to click on "Help > Check for updates" from time to time, and download the latest version if you haven't already got it. A newer version should work more smoothly and offer greater security than an old one.

David Parlett

*When I was 14 my father was so ignorant of the world I couldn't bear to have him around me.
When I was 21 I was amazed to discover how much he'd learned in seven years. – Mark Twain*

Events calendar

Thursday 6 August: Remembering Hiroshima

On the seventieth anniversary of the dropping of the first atomic bomb there will be an interfaith service at Friends House to mark the event and a number of other events in central London on and around that date and 9 August, the anniversary of Nagasaki.

Tuesday 11 August: Art Exhibition

Inside Out/ Outside In - at St Martin in the Fields, 10:15 to Sunday, 6 September, 2015 - 17:15. How can our spiritual journeys be shared? A series of Internal and External Human Landscapes. "How can we, as Quaker artists, create an opportunity to depict, show and open dialogue around our spiritual journey?" by three Quaker Female artists 'living adventurously'.

Saturday 15 August: Pop-up Teashop

and exhibition of Quaker Service at Wandsworth meeting house, 14:30 - 16:30. Join us for a rare opportunity to look round London's oldest Quaker Meeting House and enjoy tea and home-made cake in our Garden - a hidden jewel in the heart of Wandsworth. We also have an exhibition about the Friends Ambulance Unit in the First World War and other examples of Quaker service.

Tuesday 18 August: Art Exhibition

The Quaker Arts Network has been offered the newly re-furbished large meeting room to hold an exhibition in August 2015. "The Light" is being let out commercially as a conference centre and exhibition space, and this will be the first to be held there. "Climb up to the Moor" has been touring the north of England since 2012 and we are pleased to be bringing it to this exciting new venue. Based on personal experience of a specific area of our British landscape, the paintings and text panels address a number of issues.

Saturday 22 August: Elsie Sawell

A memorial meeting will be held for our Friend Elsie Sawell at Streatham & Brixton Meeting House at 2.30, followed by a simple tea.

Saturday 22 August: Art and Spirituality workshop

"Rooted where we are: Moorland and City": 11:00 - 15:30, Friends House, Euston. This workshop offers simple mindful making activities and a chance for some spiritual sharing. Led by Linda Murgatroyd and Melvyn Freake, both Quakers and experienced facilitators. All materials are supplied.

Wednesday 2 September: Public meeting on assisted dying

Gavin Barwell MP writes: "Hundreds of you have contacted me about Rob Marris's Assisted Dying Bill, which the House of Commons is due to debate on Friday 11th September... I am not opposed to someone who has full mental capacity and is facing a slow and painful death taking a decision to end their own life at a time and in a manner of their choosing... However, I am very wary of any change in the law that could lead to people feeling pressurised by family members or others into ending their lives... I intend to listen to the opinions of my constituents over the summer and study the proposals before deciding how to vote. I am holding a **public meeting** to debate these issues in more detail. [It will be] held at Croydon Town Hall on **Wednesday 2nd September from 7pm**. If you can't attend, please feel free to send me an email with your views. With best wishes, Gavin Barwell MP", gavin.barwell.mp@parliament.uk

Tuesday 8 September: No faith in war

09:00 to 15:00 Join Put Down the Sword and other faith groups for a day of prayer and nonviolent action against the arms trade and war profiteering. From 9am on Tuesday 8 September there will be a presence at the Excel Centre, as the organisers put together the final preparations for the DSEi arms fair. At 10am there will be a Meeting for Worship. All welcome.

Saturday 12 September: Elders and Overseers training day

10:00 to 16:30, Friends House Euston. One day training day for Elders and Overseers. £40 course fee payable to Woodbrooke. Book directly with Woodbrooke (it's not on their course database): enquiries@woodbrooke.org (tel. 01214 725 171) or use the contact form on the London Quakers website (under Events).

Sunday 13 September: Meeting for worship for business

From 12:15.

Saturday 19 September: Area meeting

Croydon mh from 2:30pm.

Sunday 11 October: Meeting for worship for business

From 12:15.

*Breakfast every Sunday morning from 9 to 10 am.
Please join us for muesli, toast and coffee. Coffee available until 10.15*

Collections

Figures in parentheses are for donations by standing order

July 5 Quaker work at home and abroad 50 (YM 87)**12** South London Area Meeting 23 (AM 69)**9** Woodbrooke 50**6** Croydon Local Meeting 29 (LM 159)

Scheduled for August: **2** Quaker work at home and abroad **9** Croydon Refugee Centre **16** South London Area Meeting **23** Claridge House 30 OPEN

The deadline for the September edition is Sunday 23 August 2015

Please give, send or email contributions (no longer than 500 words, please) to Gillian Turner

Tel 020 8688 9659 email gillianturner033@gmail.com



On our Fourth Sunday event in June, Christopher Head gave us a series of dramatic readings from the poetry of Rumi. This (below) was one of them.

Listen, O drop,
 give yourself up without regret,
 and in exchange, gain the Ocean.
 Listen, O drop,
 bestow upon yourself this honour,
 and in the arms of the Sea be secure.
 Who, indeed, should be so fortunate?
 An Ocean, wooing a drop!
 In God's name,
 in God's name,
 sell and buy at once!
 Give a drop
 and take this Sea full of pearls

Jalal-ud-din Rumi
 Mathnawi IV, 2619-2622
 tr Kabir Helminski and Camille Helminski
 The Rumi Collection, pub Shambhala