

CROYDON FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2015

DEAR FRIENDS,

Apologies for the late arrival of the Newsletter this month. David Parlett, who always puts the finishing touches to it, has been away at the crucial time.

With February comes the season of Lent. In the chapter Unity and Diversity, and indexed under 'Times and Seasons' I found the following:

To Fox and the early Friends, the whole of life seemed sacramental, and they refused to mark off any one particular practice or observation as more sacred than others. They took the same stand with regard to Sunday, or First day; it was not itself more holy than Saturday or Monday; every weekday should be a Lord's Day. Their whole attitude was gloriously positive, not negative. They were 'alive unto God' and sensed Him everywhere.

We do not say that to observe the sacraments is wrong, but that such observance is not essential to wholehearted Christian discipleship and the full Christian experience. We do not judge our fellow Christians to whom the outward sacraments mean so much. Rather do we wish, by prayerful fellowship with them, to be led unitedly with them to a deeper understanding of what underlies those sacraments, and so to share a richer experience of the mind of Christ. Gerald K Hibbert 1941.

Gillian Turner

Wrap Up Trident



On 2015 Jan 24, Saturday, Rhiannon Rees, wearing her CND hat rather than her Quaker bonnet, dragged me up to Westminster to join in the *Wrap Up Trident* demonstration. A long pink scarf which had been used at demonstrations in Aldermaston was brought out again and we paid it out from the Ministry of Defence building in Horse Guards Avenue along Whitehall, Parliament Street, Bridge Street and Victoria Embankment back to where we started - a distance of nearly a kilometre - and with more to spare.

We then marched to Old Palace Yard where various speakers preached to the converted. There I met Janet Cowen (who was Mercy to my Satan in the Medieval play). She said "I have walked the whole length of the scarf and am impressed by the number of Quaker banners I have seen". So where were Croydon Quakers? The group from Stoke-on-Trent had a banner saying "pots not bombs". What could we put on ours - "trams not bombs"?

More sources:

- [The Friend](#)
- [BBC news](#) - watch the background: you will see Ealing Quakers and, right at the end, Barbara Cairns of Epsom Meeting
- [Daily Wail](#) - including Helen and John Drewery

Roger W Haworth

A War Experience: Marjorie Evans

Friends who have spoken to Marjorie Evans will have heard her mention, in passing, if the subject arises, that she was in the Davis Theatre in Croydon when a bomb fell through the roof of the building in 1944. Her back was injured in the blast, and on Christmas Eve 2014, a fall in her kitchen shook her back up again, and she has been housebound for almost six weeks while waiting for the old injury to settle down. When members of the Book Club met in January, as usual in her home, we took the opportunity to ask her about her experience, and she has agreed to allow me to write them up.

(Historical note: The incident, which could have been a disaster, happened on the evening of 14th January 1944, when a German plane dropped a bomb on the theatre. It made a small hole in the roof, and landed in the stalls, but didn't explode. It killed six members of the audience and injured 25. There were over 2,000 in the audience that night, watching the supporting feature film starring Joan Davies in "Two Senoritas". The main film was "Winter Wonderland". If the bomb had exploded there would have been total devastation and many hundreds dead. Damage was only minor, and repairs were soon carried out.)

Marjorie was home on leave from the Women's Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) and was sitting in the stalls at 7.50pm when the bomb landed next to her in the aisle. She says she doesn't remember much about what happened next except that when she got outside she was given a bowl of water to hold by a nurse and helped with the injured. She remembers that when she was looking for the gloves that had been on her lap she saw an arm in a sleeve where part of the ceiling had come down. At some time after 11pm she was told to go home but couldn't remember how to get there. She lived in Addiscombe and eventually managed to remember and got a bus.

As she was obviously very badly shaken and was still on leave, she went to relatives in Devon, overstayed her leave and was arrested for being absent without leave. Post-traumatic Stress Syndrome was not recognised then. Eventually the injuries to her back were diagnosed. She was sent to a hospital in Moretonhampstead and to Kenwith Castle, a convalescent home in north Devon. From there she was sent back on active service in Washington in Sussex until she was invalided out in November 1944.

For the following three years Marjorie travelled to Marylebone for treatment. She went by bus (there were no ambulances provided for the walking wounded) to Warren Street and walked the rest of the way. 1944 was the time of the doodlebugs and V2s, Marjorie's home had been damaged in 1941 when a direct hit on a house further up the road had blown all the windows in, she was pretty blasée about the danger. 'We had to get on with it' she said. 'Everyone who worked in London during the blitz got there somehow'. Before she joined up she worked at the Ministry of Labour in London and says she travelled there during the blitz in the back of a lorry as often as not. What stuck in her mind about the journey to Marylebone was having to stand in the bus for an hour on the way home after two hours of treatment on her back.

I asked her about the cost of treatment. There was no National Health Service then, of course, and as she had been wounded while on leave she was not the army's responsibility, so her costs were met by her father.

In 1948 Marjorie fulfilled her long-held ambition to study music at the Royal Academy of Music, taught piano and for many years ran the Croydon Music Festival. She still attends the Fairfield Halls regularly for concerts.

Marjorie is now 93, and says that recovering from an old wound takes rather longer than when in one's 20s. It was splendid to see her with us again on 1 February.

Gillian Turner

News from far-flung places.

Sophie Collins, now in Chile

Thank you again for your donation for the children I was volunteering with in Peru. It took some time for the school to get in contact about how they spent the money we volunteers collected. All the children received a present each, the younger children got dolls and things and the older children got books or decorations for their rooms. They also threw a small party for the children when the presents were given with cake and hot chocolate. With the remaining money they repaired some walls which were going rotten with damp and repaired the whole school. They also bought new tables and chairs for the oldest class as they were using ones too small.

Thank you so much again.



(Note: Sophie is backpacking on her own through South America. In her last email she was in Argentina and was on her way to Chile. She will be returning to the UK in the middle of April and we look forward to seeing her again.)

Jade Flahive-Gilbert

is now back in Indonesia, having spent the Christmas holidays in **Bali**. I hope to have details of her adventures in the jungle, complete with photos, in our next issue.

Brian Skeet in Australia

Brian is spending the whole month of February in Perth, Australia, staying with his friend Daphne Eagling who used to live in Shirley. She lives a bus and train journey away from the city of Perth, a most beautiful place with wonderful walks by the Swan River and Kings Park. Her daughter lives by the Indian Ocean, a short bus ride away, with the most glorious walks by the coast.

The Way Forward

Croydon meeting for worship for business 25 January 2015

We have held a special meeting for worship for business to consider our response to the consultation on 'The Way Forward'. We have heard an explanation of the role of Meeting for Sufferings and the current consultation. In small groups and in a plenary session we have considered the questions asked by the working group and responded as follows:

What is distinctive about Quaker work and witness, to us and to others?

It is our faith that is important, leading to our witness and our work. Our witness should come first and leads to our work.

What is your vision of the ministry that your local meeting and Quakers in Britain are called to, now and in the future?

We should 'be patterns and examples', corporately and individually. In ministry this morning we heard *Quaker Faith and Practice* 23.02. We feel the lack of a pilot in our world now. We should re-take the helm and be seen to be standing up for our testimonies. We need to do more outreach.

What are we led to do together?

We consider that activities that support the local community should be an important part of our witness, as well as work to support national and international projects. We feel that the work we are already doing, supporting Nightwatch and the Friends Family Group, is making a significant contribution to the life of different groups in our community. However we are conscious of the great need in Croydon as statutory services are cut back, particularly the lack of support for children and young people with emotional and mental health problems, which can lead to life-long health and social problems. We wonder if we could do more by working with other Meetings in our Area.

How could Quaker structures and networks help Quakers in Britain to flourish?

We particularly value the work of Woodbrooke and the variety of courses they offer to newcomers and others, including through distance learning and 'Woodbrooke on the Road'. There is a need to support older Friends with the use of social media.

Rhiannon Rees (Clerk), Godfrey Turner (Assistant Clerk)

Sutton's response to the discussion on the new Quaker Framework

On Sunday 9 November 2014 we extended our Local Business Meeting in order to discuss the questions we had been given. The Elders led the discussion and 15 Sutton Friends joined us. We had a very open discussion which brought out a number of very useful ideas for Sutton to consider as a meeting which are minuted separately. The discussion seemed to centre around questions 1 and 3 and the following is our response for the national discussion.

What is distinctive about Quaker work and witness, to us and others?

We feel that the two testimonies of peace and truth are at the heart of our lives and are how Quakers are perceived. We would like these to be priorities in any thoughts about a new Quaker Framework. We as a local meeting will continue to grasp any opportunity we have to share these beliefs in the community and would like to see more about Quaker work throughout the world being shared with Quakers and non-Quakers. We would like to hear the Quaker view on current affairs heard more loudly.

What are we led to do together?

We know that there are centrally produced resources that could be used by area and local meetings for outreach projects but we do not always know what is available. It would be helpful if we could access support from Friends House more easily.

Area Meetings tend to work in isolation and it would be advantageous if there was more sharing of ideas and expertise between areas and local meetings. Links and networking opportunities need to be encouraged and supported.

It is often difficult for families with young children to be as involved in the meeting as they would like and we need to make opportunities for them to link with other families, perhaps share children's meetings resources and dates.

Climate change is an issue which we cannot ignore and we would like to see more vigorous efforts being made to improve energy consumption at and by local meetings. We need support to find the right ways of doing this and foresight to make changes even if the cost effectiveness may be some time in the making, for example double glazing windows and insulating roofs of meeting houses. We feel that we should also be making much greater efforts with recycling, and it was suggested that Elders of meetings should be asking Friends about their own efforts to reduce their carbon footprints.

In common with many other meetings, we are having to grapple with changes in legislation and often feel that we are out of our depth. Quaker Life has produced extremely helpful support for meetings dealing with pension provision for area meeting employees and we would appreciate similar support on issues such as safeguarding.

Thoughts on the Charlie Hebdo attack.

There have been many articles in the press in the wake of the attack in Paris and its aftermath, including one in The Friend by Harry Albright, a former editor of that journal. He argues that 'nothing and nobody should be beyond scrutiny and criticism.' He adds: 'But simply that people might be upset by criticism or scrutiny is not a reason not to publish when there is a valid point to be made'. I am sure that The Friend will publish a number of letters discussing this point of view. Joyce Trotman has also been thinking deeply about this, and has sent in her thoughts.

Expediency

As far as I can remember, my mother was always saying "All things are lawful but all things are not expedient." I did not know what she meant, but I liked to hear her say "expedient". To me the word had a pleasant sound, even though I did not know its meaning. It was not until after she died that I found the origin in Paul's letter to the Corinthians:

All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. 1Cor 6.12

The Oxford Shorter Dictionary gives the meaning of 'expedient' as 'proper or suitable to the circumstances of the case'.

I then realised what the statement meant: The law may allow you to perform a certain act with impunity; you have to decide whether it is advisable for you to take advantage of it, taking into account 'the circumstance of the case'.

Lord Atkin gives the legal definition of a neighbour:

"You must take reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions which you can reasonably foresee would be likely to injure your neighbour. Who then, by law, is my neighbour? The answer seems to be, persons who are so closely and directly affected by my act, that I ought reasonably to have them in my contemplation as being so affected when I am directing my mind to the acts or omissions which are called in question." This is known as The Neighbour Principle.

There is a Guyanese proverb that says "When goat dung wan' f' roll, the slightest breeze 'a blow am down." This is used as a comment on the behaviour of someone who is bent on causing trouble, and uses any excuse, however insignificant, to cause a riot.

This is my observation about the militant Islamists in our midst. I therefore ask: Is it expedient that we should provide the breeze for the goat dung to roll, or should we take account of Lord Atkin's judgment which is as relevant today as it was in 1932?

Joyce Trotman

Use of the Adult School Hall in 2015

Although the Hall is unheated and is very cold at present, I have a booking for filming in February. I will report next month about this.

If you are interested in organising an event during the summer months when the building's lack of heating is not important – an art exhibition, jumble sale, craft fair, craft workshops etc – please let me know. I am starting to get some firm bookings for the summer months, including the request below.

Premises Committee was very happy to respond positively to the following appeal from the Metropolitan Police, seeing it a way to serve the community.

My name is Terri Smith and I am a police community support officer for the Metropolitan Police Safer Transport Team. I am contacting you to ask for your help. We are looking for a free venue to hold our junior citizenship scheme.

In recent years we have been part of a fantastic schools program known as Junior Citizenship Scheme.

The Junior Citizens Scheme has been in existence since 1991 and is offered free of charge. Each year approximately 5000 school children take part in the safety activities provided by the Junior Citizens Trust and its partners.

During their visit each child experiences different safety scenarios and each child is given the opportunity to participate in making a 999 telephone call, stranger danger, life saving first aid, fire safety, dog safety, water safety, bus and tram safety

All learning sessions are designed to be interactive and teach children of all learning abilities. Children are taught a variety of life skills which focus upon how to keep themselves safe whilst potentially helping others who may be in difficulty or distress. The controlled learning experiences

provide children with the confidence and information to make decisions which they may face during a real life emergency.

In previous years the JSC has been run by the metropolitan police schools teams; however as a result of recent cut backs this scheme was disbanded. Due to my colleagues and I having a great involvement in previous schemes we felt that JCS was too valuable and productive to allow it to disappear. Therefore we made the personal decision to save and revive the scheme despite having Zero budget. We have built relationships with tram link, London fire brigade, London ambulance service, Croydon council and other metropolitan police teams in order for the scheme to continue. All the agencies have been devoted and have volunteered their time for free as do my colleagues and I.

The Junior Citizenship Scheme we are hoping to run from Monday 6th July - Friday 10th July and again on Tuesday 14th July -17th July the hours are 9am - 4pm.

The Spiritual Life of the Meeting

***with John and Diana Lampen at Sutton Meeting House
Woodbrooke on the Road - Saturday 21 March 2015 - 10.0am to 4.30pm***

John and Diana have both been much involved in conflict resolution and peace education. They worked together for peace in Northern Ireland, the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. John still works for peace projects in western Uganda. They have written several books for Friends as well as for children.

The day will look at ways to strengthen the spiritual roots of the meeting.

Coffee and Tea will be provided but people should bring a packed lunch. A suggested donation of £5 towards the day would be welcome.

Forms are available in the Meeting but cheques made payable to Sutton Quaker Meeting, to arrive if possible by March 1st can be sent direct to Antony Barlow: Flat 4, 15 Brambledown Road, Wallington SM6 0TH.

February diary

*Events at Croydon meeting house unless otherwise stated
For details of items marked * see <http://www.londonquakers.org.uk/events>*

Sunday 8 - Croydon meeting for worship for business, from 12.15. All welcome

Friday 13 - "Things that help me grow", 7.30 at Sutton FMH

Tuesday 17- Meeting for dessert: pancakes from 5.30 onward.

Saturday 21- Area Meeting at Sutton 2.30

Sunday 22 - Bring and share lunch with talk from 12.15 - 1pm

Monday 9 February* - Justice and Reconciliation - Ending the Cycle of Violence.

Thursday 12 February* - Climate Change: It's Time to Act. 19:30 to 21:30, Goldsmiths College

Saturday 14 February* - Global Divestment Day, 12:30 to 13:30, City Hal, London.

Sunday 15 February - Meeting for worship for business. From 12:15.

Friday 20 February* - Bring and Sing. 6:30 Friends House, William Penn suite.

Saturday 21 February - Area meeting, Sutton meeting house from 2:15pm.

Sunday 8 March - Meeting for worship for business From 12:15.

Breakfast every Sunday morning from 9 to 10 am.

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

January Collections

(Figures in brackets by standing order)

4 Quaker Work at Home and Abroad £20.00 (£87.00) - **11** South London Area Meeting £33 (£69) - **18** Woodbrooke £84 - **25** Croydon Local Meeting £74 (129).

Socials Committee would like to thank those who contributed to the collection for Local Meeting this month, as this will go a long way to pay for all the refreshments we organise throughout the year.

The deadline for the March edition is Sunday 1 March 2015

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