

CROYDON FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

February 2016

Dear Friends,

This month we are starting a series that looks back one hundred years to 1916, the year when the Conscription Act was passed. Our Friend Wilf Hayler has agreed to give us edited entries from his father's 1916 diary each month, beginning with background information for January. As usual our entries reflect our lives here at Croydon Meeting, gives us news of Friends, and tells us of events to come.

Gillian Turner

1916

Our principle is, and our practices have always been, to seek peace, and ensue it, and to follow after righteousness and the knowledge of God, seeking the good and welfare, and doing that which tends to the peace of all. All bloody principles and practices we do utterly deny, with all outward wars, and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence whatsoever, and this is our testimony to the whole world. - Quaker Peace Testimony

A Prayer

O God!
I thank Thee for the world
And all the music in it;
For the skylark and the linnet;
For the murmuring of the streams;
For the beauty of the leaves;
For the trees where sunshine gleams;
For old walls where ivy cleaves;
For the pine tree on the hill;
For the mountain tops of snow;
For the valleys and the rills;
And the deeps where quiet grows;
For the glory of the skies,
And its fair expanse of blue;
For the place where stars arise
And the falling of the dew...
For all things or near or far,
God, I thank Thee, Thine they are

Mark Hayler

January 1st 1916 – Liverpool Farm School for Boys

I do not know if my Father, Mark was familiar with the Quaker Peace Testimony at this time, although it is likely, as his Father, Guy, an internationalist, as well as other members of the family, were working for peace during the early war years. Indeed, on January 1st Guy, well known in political circles due to his work as a temperance reformer, had written to Herbert Asquith, the Liberal PM (the family were Liberal supporters) about conscription. The Military Service Bill was introduced because, it was claimed that a million men had failed to assist, and more were needed.

It was passed by 208 votes, and as a result of the Military Service Act, conscription was introduced on January 24th. The family were brought up as Congregationalists, and attended Sunday School regularly, winning certificates for their attendance and work. They were close friends of Lord and Lady Carlisle; indeed prior to their move to London in 1909, Lord Carlisle had lent Guy one of his houses at Bulmer, near Malton in Yorkshire. As a result of their friendship, Mark started to work for them as Estate Secretary at Naworth Castle in Cumbria, and Castle Howard in Yorkshire.

After some years, my Father felt the need for a more positive spiritual life and became a student at Trevecca College, a Methodist Theological College in Wales where he studied from 1911-13. However, he found that, having gained the experience of preaching at many local churches, he felt the need for a freer expression of his faith, and began exploring some of the other religious movements that were appearing at this time. And so, against this background, and a family brought up for service to the community, on April 6th 1915 he became secretary of the Liverpool Farm School at Newton-le-Willows.

Peace was still an important issue, however, and his records show that he attended a No Conscription Fellowship meeting on January 21st. 2016 was going to be an eventful year, and as early as February 1st, things began to happen...

Wilf Hayler

Love is a Direction

To read in Simone Weil's *Waiting on God* that love is a direction and not a state of the soul offers us the opportunity to take a practical tip about this most divine of human expressions. To know that it is essential, particularly in personal periods of emotionally dry or troubled times, to re-set repeatedly what the Buddhist teacher, Jack Kornfield calls the "heart's compass" is a most comforting thought. Weil writes that The Lord's Prayer allows us to re-establish conscious contact with God in order to receive, amongst other things, our daily bread, which is supernatural. It could be that the task of restoring our heart's compass anew may well be included as part of the petitions of this prayer. We know that we cannot expect to live on yesterday's manna.

Empathy and love for others does not have to mean agreement or even approval. Instead, we may seek, as our own *Advices and Queries* (no. 17) suggests, to develop a feel for what has nurtured or nourished the other. Weil suggests we ask ourselves, "What has happened to you?" Awareness of the inner life of the other may lead to a feeling of what it is like to be the other person. Judgement and criticism can be put aside as we recognise a fellow human being who may be struggling in precisely the same way as ourselves.

Simple kindness and the generosity of attention have the power to transform both self and others. Kornfield advises that we "see with the eyes of compassion and act with the wisest of intentions". We need to give this precious gift to ourselves as much as to others. He continues that, "our hearts are like seismographs picking up the tremors of intent". ("After the Ecstasy, the Laundry".)

There may, of course, be times when the flow of love for self and others may seem blocked or difficult to access. It is then that the words of Joel Goldsmith in *The Infinite Way* offer succour: "Do not be concerned about your relationship with people. Consciously maintain your relationship with God and this will take care of everything else."

Barbara Earl

Forty years on

On Sunday 15th February, 1976 I entered the Quaker meeting House on 60 Park Lane, Croydon, for my first Meeting for Worship, thanks to an advertisement in one of the Sunday papers and a visit from Joy Evans a member of the Meeting. I had come with quite a lot of religious baggage having had the experience of a number of Christian denominations - Anglican, Roman Catholic, Congregational, Christian Brethren, Methodist - ecumenical before the word had been invented.

For the first time I was sitting in a circle, I didn't have to look up to a man in a pulpit making announcements according to the programme, and half way through delivering a sermon. It was this new experience of worshipping God in the silence that I first experienced and grew to cherish, and still cherish.

After eight years, encouraged by the kindly acceptance of the members, with special grooming, in the best sense of the word, from Doris and Ernest Roiser, and Joy and Bill Evans I applied for membership, and set about learning how to be a Quaker. Forty years on I look back on how I was blessed and privileged to grow in Spirit as I was enabled and encouraged to play my part at both local and national level. Guided by my "Don't leave home without it" *Advices and Queries* I learned and I am still learning how to be a Christian the Quaker Way.

I can say with massive thanksgiving, "Hitherto has the Lord led me" as I enjoy that overall feeling of well-being thinking of the numerous ways in which my Quaker family have loved, supported and upheld me.

Plenty Love,

Joyce Trotman

Michael's passing 29 January 2016

Dear Friends

Thank you for the cards, flowers and all your good wishes; I have felt very supported over the last few difficult days after Michael's death.

I was particularly touched by receiving the flowers that had been on the table during Meeting for Worship on Sunday. They are lighting up my kitchen.

In loving Friendship

Mary Jakeman

News of Friends

In our January newsletter we sent loving greetings to three Friends in hospital. It is good to report that **Anthea Underwood** is home from her stay in hospital and was with us at Meeting for Worship on Sunday 1 February. **Alan Yardley remains** at the East Surrey Hospital and is visited regularly.. **Marjorie Evans** suffered a stroke on Sunday 1 February and is in the Princess Royal Hospital, Farnborough.

Sadly, **Kathy Alton** died on Wednesday 6 January. Her wish was to have her memorial meeting at Croydon Meeting, and a report is below.

Email from Dave Perry

When I got to Colchester FMH I spoke to someone who, on hearing that I have recently moved from Croydon, said that she and her family used to go to Croydon Meeting. Unfortunately I didn't ask when, other than finding out it was 'a long time ago', but the family name is Usher. So it was Rod and Julia Usher and two boys. They lived on Streatham Hill and initially attended Streatham Meeting before moving to Croydon. At some time they also went to Westminster Meeting. I wondered if you and Godfrey or Wilf or Brian or some of the other Friends might remember them? *(We do. Eds)*

I'm still settling in and have started doing a little exploring. I went last Thursday to Brightlingsea (home of David Rees's brother and partner). I went on the bus, just 20 plus minutes from Wivenhoe, passing through Alresford and Thorrington. Brightlingsea is at the mouth of the estuary. There isn't a sandy beach, not that I could find anyway, but there is an extensive marina with lots of apartments with balconies with what must be lovely river/sea views. Not much in the way of a shopping centre but some lovely Victorian terraced houses in the centre with more modern bungalows and semi's as you get to the outskirts. The day was lovely with plenty of sunshine and blue skies though the wind had a bit of a bite to it. I stayed there for just under a couple of hours and enjoyed my walk along the front.

I've still to do any serious house-hunting but no doubt something will happen when the time is right. I went recently to see the film *The Danish Girl* with Eddie Redmayne and thoroughly enjoyed it. I also found out that they show at the Odeon Colchester live transmissions from the Royal Opera House etc and I had started to see some live transmission at Croydon Vue and enjoyed those that I saw, so will be keeping an eye on the Odeon's programme.

I miss Croydon Meeting of course but can you believe it's two months already that I've lived in Wivenhoe!

Jade Flahive Gilbert From her Facebook page in January

December and January is the Long Vacation at Indonesian universities, rather than the summer months in European ones, so Jade is island hopping and enjoying the leisure and cultural life accompanied by her friend Eka.

Playing at the Malay Musicinstitute

In Sumatra: Yesterday I finished a ten day Noble Silence meditation course called Vipassana. It was a challenging, but really amazing and special experience learning a meditation technique and way of life which is full of happiness and compassion. While there names kept coming into my head of friends I think would really benefit from this course or who would be very interested in it, but really I think everyone in the world should do it. Check it out! They have mediation centres all

over the world. It is not from a particular religion, all people are welcome to go and learn the technique (which is from Buddha Siddhartha Gautama).

Eka and I have safely arrived in Padang after a 28-hour bus journey, which included our bus filling with smoke, leaving us all stranded in the middle of Jambi in the middle of the night waiting 5 hours for another one to save us... Now at our couchsurfing hosts place chilling until heading on some new adventure tomorrow.

We went to an amazing beach where we swam out into the middle of the ocean and there was a pasir timbul (like a beach in the middle of the ocean) so we could stand up in the middle of the sea. Crazy and amazing! We had our snorkelling gear on so swimming there we could see the most amazing white coral in the sea and little fish.

Terry Wilkes

Terry is embarking on a meditation course in India, leaving on 10 February and returning on 14 April. He flew to New Delhi via Dubai, where he stays for three days, then by train to Haridwar and on again to Rishikesh, a town on the Ganges dedicated to providing for pilgrims and ashrams offering yoga and meditation.

His silent intensive meditation retreat is led by a Hindu guru called Saire Mooji. Terry attended a similar retreat in London one weekend late last year and was so impressed that he applied to attend this five-week free retreat in March. He has allowed himself three unplanned weeks after the retreat before returning home.

Rishikesh is situated on the banks of the Ganges, surrounded by forested hills and is the gateway to treks in the Himalayas.

Kate Orchard

Kate is cheerfully battling snow and gales on the farm outside Edinburg where she works as a project manager.

Kathy Alton: Memorial meeting 22 January 2016

The service at Croydon Crematorium, which preceded the Quaker meeting for worship, celebrated her life in hymns, readings, words and music, and was attended by her immediate family and the wide number of friends she made outside the Quaker community. Apart from Chris and Matt, her sons, she was the only Quaker in her family, and the service was of great comfort, particularly to her father, sister and nieces, and by those Quakers who also attended it.

That congregation gathered at our meeting house and moved, with local and other Friends, into the meeting room for our thanksgiving for the grace of God in her life. We had set out 100 chairs, and all but two were filled, as well as the benches at the front and back. Chris and Matt acted as elders, and David Parlett, as Kathy has requested, gave the introduction. The ministry that followed was very moving, coming as it did from both sons, her sister and nieces, her great niece aged eight or so, Friends from Barnstable and Folkestone Meetings, from her Equipping for Ministry group, her dog-walking group, and from members of our meeting, where Kathy married, had her boys, and played an important part in the life here.

Refreshments, as ever, played an important role in the occasion. Family and friends brought cakes and much drinking of tea and coffee ensued. It was so good to see Mamadu Tyson, come with Matt and Chris's Young Quaker Friends and joined by Emily Collins, sitting together in the meeting room afterwards. Kathy was the only elder in Folkestone Meeting, and Friends there are planning to write a Testimony to her life, with the support of Barnstable Friends, Appleseed and us. As people began to drift away, we all agreed that Kathy would have approved of the day: everything planned and in order, just as she lived her life, with everyone she loved present and supporting one another.

The reading from *Advices and Queries*, which came towards the end of our Meeting, sums up the qualities in Kathy's life:

"Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one" (George Fox, 1656)

'A Better Croydon for Everyone'

I went to the launch of 'A Better Croydon for Everyone', the report of the Opportunity and Fairness Commission, an independent commission set up by Croydon Council. In the introduction, the Bishop, who chaired it, says 'Fairness for us and Croydon residents and workers means no one should be excluded; everyone should have the opportunity to develop their potential to the full. The scale of the task is immense...' The north of the borough is much more deprived than the south and contains some of the poorest neighbourhoods in the country. House prices are unaffordable for many workers; Government welfare changes and housing costs in central London are forcing many of the poorest families to move to outer London and public services are under pressure. The Commission believes change can best be brought about by 'people-led change' from the ground up: 'As Mahatma Gandhi once put it, we must be the change we want to see.'

At the launch the Bishop explained that the Commission had sought views from organisations and groups across the Borough. They hoped that the conversation would continue. They had focused not on things beyond their control, such as the 'unfair' funding settlement for Croydon or housing costs in London, but on what Croydon people could do to make the town a better place for everyone. The interim report had identified six key themes and this report developed 58 recommendations around these, including:

Vibrant, responsible and connected communities: There are over 1,700 community groups in Croydon. There are recommendations for the Council to give more powers to local neighbourhoods, so local businesses and residents can work together to improve them, and to encourage volunteering;

A town centre that lifts the whole borough: Recommendations for ensuring local people benefit from the rapid redevelopment include a jobs brokerage service and a new Croydon Employment Charter to encourage good practice, including the London Living Wage;

Leaving no child behind: Croydon has a high number of children with special educational needs and the Young Commission of younger residents, who worked alongside the adult Commission, expressed concerns about mental wellbeing among children and young adolescents. The Commission recommends more nurture groups for pre-school children and more openness to best practice on therapeutic interventions and support for children with special educational needs.

A connected borough where no one is left isolated: Recommendations for moving social isolation to the top of the local agenda. At the launch a student from Croydon College emphasised that young people as well as older people suffer from loneliness.

Finding homes for all: Recommendations include a Good Agent and Landlord Charter; encouraging home-owners to offer shelter for homeless people and a new community fund to tackle homelessness.

Supporting residents towards better times. Recommendations include offering work experience to every young person at college and new services to support employment and offer benefit advice and money-wise training.

A copy of the report is in the Meeting library.

Rhiannon Rees

Reading Quaker Faith and Practice chapter 21

Two groups are undertaking a reading of the whole of QFP, our book of discipline, and we have been provided with a calendar. Unfortunately we have begun in February rather than in October so we have decided go to the January choice for our next meeting on Chapter 2 Approaches to God – worship and prayer.

Coming up...

Tuesday 9 February: Supper with Pancakes: Join us for baked potatoes and pancakes on Tuesday at 6pm in the Common Room.

Friday 12 February: "In the Beginning" - Genesis, John, and palæoanthropology. Talk and discussion led by David Parlett at the Living Adventurously group meeting, Sutton meeting house, 7:30 -9:30pm.

Sunday 14 February: Meeting for worship for business.12:15 at Croydon meeting house. The results of our spiritual Review will be presented.

Saturday, 20 February: KINDLERS: Embodied Worship 10:00 to 17:00 at Friends House: Does God prompt Love and Truth through words only or also through our bodies? We dance for joy; we hug in sorrow. Come in loose clothing to move about freely. A Kindlers workshop, led by Jenny Moy and her friends. Bring your own picnic lunch or eat in the Friends House Quaker Centre.

Saturday 20 February: Housing and Inequality - What canst THOU do? 10:00 to 16:00 at Friends House: A day conference organised by London Quakers for all BYM. Minute 25 of BYM 2015:- "....There is a continuing housing crisis in this country and inequality in housing is a highly visible and damaging symptom of injustice in our society... The problem is not an insoluble one and our voices can be heard."

Sunday 21 February: Area Meeting, 12:30 after mfw and a picnic lunch at Sutton meeting house, clerked by Croydon Friends. Amongst other things we will be hearing two more spiritual review reports.

Sunday 28 February: Fourth Sunday talk – spiritual preparation for Yearly Meeting. YM 2016 will be held over the late May Bank Holiday weekend at Friends House, London, 27–30 May. In 2016 we will continue to look at how we live out our faith in the world, starting with "hearing our stories". We will look at how we recognise and respond to the promptings of the Spirit to act in the world, and at how we know and use our gifts. Introduction led by elders, followed by a simple lunch.

Sunday 28 February: "For Conscience Sake" 12:45 to 13:45 at Wanstead meeting house Wanstead (Bush Road Wanstead London E113AU). A new play by Plain Quakers exploring the choices faced by conscientious objectors in World War One against the backdrop of growing militarisation today.

Friday 4 March: Women's World Day Of Prayer at the Minster at 1.30 p.m. The theme is "Receive Children, Receive Me". The programme was prepared by the Christian women of Cuba.

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

January collections

Figures in parentheses are for donations by standing order

3	Quaker work at home and abroad	46.50 (YM 87)
10	Area Meeting	75.10 (AM 61)
17	Woodbrooke	48.50
24	Croydon Local Meeting	60.00 (LM 119)
31	Tommy's*	81.00

* This charity, chosen by the children, funds research into pregnancy problems at three centres in the UK, with a fourth to open this year, and provides a pregnancy information service to parents. It was started in 1992 by two obstetricians at St. Thomas' Hospital in London, frustrated by the lack of research which meant they could rarely tell parents why their babies did not survive.

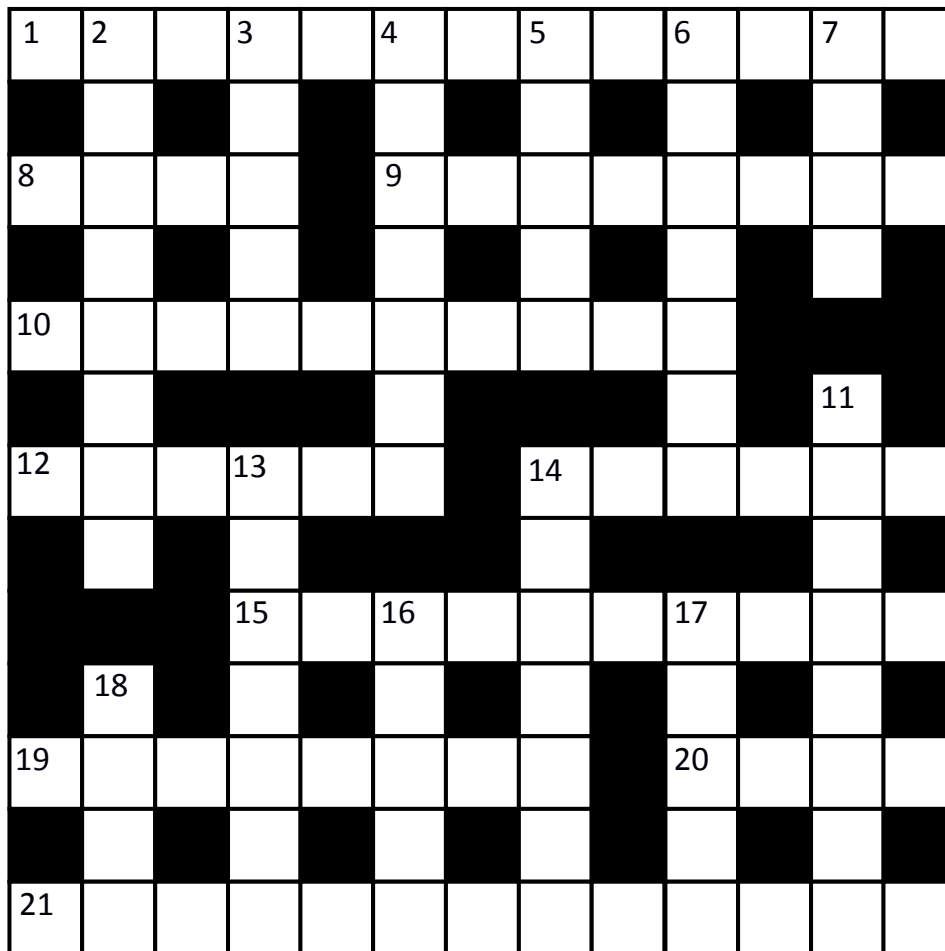
February Collections

7 Friends Family Group, **14** Quaker work at home and abroad,
21 South London Area Meeting, **28** Timmane School, Nairobi

The deadline for the March edition is Sunday 26 February 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 #5 by Grumpy Old Quaker



Across

1. Albert in 1857 (6, 7)
8. Albert opposite 19 (4)
9. Albert in Swiss patent office (8)
10. Former Manhattan landmark (4,6)
12. Albert between Battersea and Chelsea (5)
14. What Tennyson wrote of the king (6)
15. Bosnia, Herzegovina, Croatia, etc (10)
19. Albert opposite 8 (8)
20. Golden galleon (4)
21. Palmerston in 1857 (5, 8)

Down

2. Reverse direction (8)
3. Good stuff for stocking up (5)
4. Sight for sore eyes? Quite the opposite! (7)
5. Oz (5)
6. Fulfil (7)
7. Control (4)
11. Agreement for mutual support (8)
13. Where patients rest (3-4)
14. Pancreatic product (7)
16. Jacob and Wilhelm (5)
17. English cricket in 1882, supposedly (5)
18. Much the same as 20 (4)



Solution to Crossword #4