

# CROYDON FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

## JANUARY 2015

DEAR FRIENDS,

David Parlett, assistant editor, and Gillian Turner, editor, wish all our readers a happy and healthy 2015. We hope that you find our newsletter interesting and informative, and begin, as we like to do, with a quotation from Quaker Faith and Practice 24.60:

*What matters is living our lives in the power of love. Hence we lose the sense of hopelessness and futility in the face of the world's crushing problems... We must literally not take too much thought for the morrow but through ourselves wholeheartedly into the present. That is the beauty of the way of love; it cannot be planned and its way cannot be foretold. -* **Wolf Mendl 1974**

### Greetings to F/friends who visited or sent messages to Croydon Meeting at Christmas.

**Peter Tayler** thanks all Croydon Friends for their Christmas gift to him.

**Philip Barron** at Bernhard Barron Homes sends warm greetings.

**Tima and John Beckett** have again donated money for stamps for posting the newsletter. It is always good to see John washing up after coffee on fifth Sundays! Tima has promised to write an article about her trip to the Holy Land.

**Oliver Drewery**, whom many of us remember as a child attending Croydon Meeting, sent a news sheet detailing the lives of his wife Su and their two children, Katie and Thomas.

**Bronwen Gibbs** sent news of her life in Wales with her husband Lewis and their children and grandchildren. She has been visiting Thornton Heath recently to support her brother, but tells us that he is now settled.

**David and Isabelle Rees** send love and best wishes to all at Croydon Meeting.

**Helen , Mark and Olwyn Shorey** send greetings and news from Guernsey. Olwyn, who attended Junior Yearly Meeting in Bath, is applying for university on the Mainland. Helen writes:



*"Dear Friends, We thought that those of you who remember Myra Shorey would like to see this picture of her wedding day. She married Thomas Jennings in Guernsey on 20th December. They are currently in Australia on honeymoon staying with Tom's grandmother Jenny who emigrated there. Love to all"*

### Greetings from Jean and Oliver Campbell-Leith

*Some Friends remain who will remember Jean and Oliver Campbell-Leith as stalwart members of Croydon LM (where they met and were married) until their retirement in the early 1990s. Jean has sent us Christmas greetings and the following update.*

Dear Friends,

We've mostly had a good year, in January finding Lizzy our Lurcher in a nearby Rescue home; she is good natured but has needed time and training to now (mostly!) cope quietly and non-destructively when left for a little, thankfully.

For that reason, mainly, we missed Quaker Yearly Meeting Gathering this year, but Oliver was delighted to go on an Appleseed Retreat at Woodbrooke with Brenda Heales, and we managed, unexpectedly, to go as a threesome via Eurotunnel to France for our annual September family gathering. It was a little challenging at times as Lizzy sometimes serenaded us when being left outside the shower facilities or in the camper, but we managed it. Lizzy also joined us around my brother's kitchen table and back home at a Trustees meeting, where she was both sociable and well mannered with the human company. We also managed a Harp Festival in Caernarfon, several outdoor painting days with one of Oliver's two Art Groups and some Gardens open for Charity, as well as Music Club events, and a Campervan show in Birmingham for which we stayed over.

This will be a poignant Christmas for Oliver and Jean, though, as it is the first one we will have

spent apart in 37 years. Oliver is now living just outside Ruthin in a warm, caring and comfortable Care Home, having lost the use of his left side in early November owing to a brain haemorrhage associated with a tumour. He is still conversing and making his needs known, glad to say, and showing an interest in TV and a little reading, and today there was just a hint of movement in his left hand, which lifted our spirits.

Jean is spending several hours a day visiting him with Lizzy, who loves greeting all who welcome it. Happily, Jean has just managed to persuade her 'boss' to let her go and retired yesterday, as she is wanting to have more time and energy to help ensure that Oliver's quality of life is as good as it can be, while continuing with her voluntary roles if/where possible.

We hope this year has treated you well, and that the New Year is a good one for you. With love, from Jean and Oliver + Lizzy email: [jeanleith@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jeanleith@hotmail.co.uk)

*Editorial note: "The Lurcher is a fun-loving, affectionate, lovable dog that thrives on the leadership of his master. These dogs were bred to hunt rabbit and hare in Ireland and Great Britain by Irish gypsies and tinkers in the 1600s. They have inherited fast, agile movements from the sighthound crosses in them. Lurchers have the strong hunting instincts of the sighthounds. This combination also proved to be a good, obedient dog that learns commands fast. Good for outdoor type families, they are usually gentle with people, which makes an amenable companion". (More at <http://www.dogbreedinfo.com/lurcher.htm>)*



### **Alexander Plunkett**

David Parlett and family would like to thank all who have held Lizzy Parlett's daughter Alex in the Light over the past three years since the onset of childhood leukaemia (A.L.L.). We're pleased to report that Alex (left) is still on course for an end-of-treatment date in May of this year. He will be 15 in February. Despite a large amount of absence from school we can be thankful that he is holding his own. In fact, he is consistently top of the class in maths, his favourite subject.

## **Adult School Hall: Update**

### **Nightwatch events**

Girls from the Coloma School helped Nightwatch to pack up 120 Christmas presents in the ASH in the week before Christmas. These are for distribution to homeless and other vulnerable clients of Nightwatch. The bulk of the costs came from a grant from Greggs Trust. Other charities such as Challenge also contributed items such as toiletries and warm clothing. The packages contain hats, gloves, scarves, a gift voucher, toiletries, soft drinks, chocolates, mince pies and other festive items. **Jad Adams, Chair**

### **Wonderful Chaos**

The Sunday evening before Christmas is usually a special day for Nightwatch because it's the day when we provide Christmas presents for the homeless and needy that we meet on every other day of the year. The presents are essentials - toiletries, food, hats, gloves and vouchers. It's also a time when long-standing volunteers arrive back for university or holidays from jobs further afield. People filled with Christmas spirit also swell the volunteer numbers.

We had a very kind offer from the Duran Grill and Burger Company to supply burgers and chips to all, and another Church group who were preparing Christmas dinners. In addition to the sandwiches, cakes etc that we normally supply, then there was ample provision (we decided not to provide soup!).

Normally on a Sunday night, in order to deal with an average of 80 people we have to be fairly regimented, but on the 21st, Fell Road felt more like a street party. There was a continual queue for the burgers, another for the presents and yet more people milling around receiving Christmas dinners and clothing, ordered in previous weeks. A small group singing carols from the Reference Library steps completed the scene. Wonderful Chaos, but with everyone calm and so appreciative. There were over 20 volunteers and a large number were served. We had provided 120 Christmas

presents and ran out. That's a record for Nightwatch.

On a slightly dismal note, a record for Nightwatch is a sad reflection on the fact that there were so many homeless and needy that required our services.

**Roger Davies, Trustee**

### **Other Events: Craft Fair**

The Craft Fair on the 7 December took place successfully on the whole. It rained intermittently and was very cold, but a surprising number of people turned up, and it was very well supported by members of the Meeting. I was worried that we would have congestion in the car park, but this did not happen, thanks to Kate Orchard stepping in to replace the person who was supposed to be in charge who had had an accident the day before.

It was wonderful to see the building so alive, so full of activity, and without doubt such an event could be held again, but with more time to organise it and not on a Sunday. I should explain that the only reason we chose Sunday was that, so close to Christmas, the stallholders were booked for all the Saturdays in November and December, and the organiser was very keen to go ahead.

Normally, people hiring the Hall provide their own furniture – tables, chairs etc – but the organiser proved unable to organise this herself. Although we had enough chairs we were low on tables, and had to borrow 12 each from the Spiritualist Church and St Augustine's. This meant that they had to be collected and returned, a task which fell largely on the shoulders of Dave Perry and Megan Carmichael our cleaner, driven to and fro with the trailer on the back of his car by Peter Tayler on his day off. Never again, we all agreed. Next time, and we hope there is a next time, another organiser can sort all that out herself.

### **Use of the ASH in 2014**

Apart from Nightwatch and taking part in the Croydon Heritage Festival and Open London, we hosted two wedding celebrations, four church events, a film production in aid of MIND, a political event and the craft fair. Already I have been approached by two local organisers about using the building next July. It is clear that our lovely building can play its part in Croydon life, just as our Meeting House does, but to do so more fully it needs to be advertised, with its own website and a sign telling passers-by what it is. 108 years old and no sign anywhere to tell its name and history! We need to think of it as an asset which gives us an opportunity to tell our community who we are and what we believe.

If you are interested in organising an event – an art exhibition, jumble sale, craft fair, craft workshops etc – please let me know.

**Gillian Turner**

### **'The Way Ahead' for Quakers in Britain**

We have all been invited by Meeting for Sufferings (the representative body of Quakers in Britain) to contribute to shaping the vision for Quakers in Britain over the next five to ten years. We will be considering this at our next local business meeting on 11 January. All members and attenders are welcome. I hope that as many as possible will come.

The invitation from the working group appointed by Meeting for Sufferings says: "Meeting for Sufferings has asked us to produce a document to follow on from *A framework for action*. The document will describe the broad discerned vision of Quakers in Britain collated from this wide-ranging consultation. We hope it will encourage more Friends to work on shared concerns and to speak in unity to the world. It is intended to serve Quakers in Britain and all of us have a part to play in developing it. Our group's task is to consult as widely as possible, and collate the results. We need you to respond by 31 January 2015 with your leadings for now and the next few years. We believe this is an opportunity to reaffirm the spirit of Quakerism in making real the "Kingdom of God on Earth". Francis Howgill wrote (*Quaker faith & practice* 19.08) "...holy resolutions were kindled in our hearts as a fire which the Life kindled in us...". Imagine fire kindled to a blaze. Left to itself it could flare and destroy or fade and go out, but set within a hearth or furnace it becomes safe, constructive and productive. We hope that through this consultation we can define the shape and nature of the hearth so that Friends can be more effective at all levels over the next five to ten years.

**We ask local meetings, area meetings and other Quaker groups and individuals to discern what we are led to do together.** We do not intend to list specific projects and programmes but to enable all the various groups that make up 'Quakers in Britain' to see how their

leadings and activities can contribute to fulfilling our shared aspirations. We offer these questions as prompts to you in your discernment:

- What is distinctive about Quaker work and witness, to us and to others?
- What is your vision of the ministry that your local meeting and Quakers in Britain are called to, now and in the future?
- What are we led to do together?
- How could Quaker structures and networks help Quakers in Britain to flourish?

Currently we are suggesting a working title of ***The Way Ahead 2015-2020, cherish and change.*** We welcome your feedback.... You can find out more at [www.quaker.org.uk/way-ahead](http://www.quaker.org.uk/way-ahead)." Although we first considered this at our local and area business meetings in November there was not enough time to reach unity on our response. If you cannot come to the meeting you are welcome to send me your contribution before 10 January.

### **Meeting for worship for business in the refurbished Large Meeting Room**

As readers of The Friend will know, there has been a great deal of controversy about the refurbishment of the Large Meeting Room at Friends House, so when I was given the opportunity of having a guided tour before Meeting for Sufferings on December 6 I put on my Croydon Premises Committee hat and waited to be impressed. Friends, it is indeed a most impressive meeting room and has to be seen to be appreciated. The heating system which was both sustainable and coped with a very high roof - how wonderful that would be in the ASH! The light, easily-stackable tubular steel chairs with their green cushions, so beautiful and so beyond our means!

But to business, where I wrenched my mind from considering the acoustics to the period of worship that begins our meeting and then to the agenda. We were reminded that a group of young people were considering separately the Long Term Framework, and the letter which Rhiannon has quoted above, was read out.

We considered a number of minutes from Area Meetings, including concerns about the government's decision not to support search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean, the prevalence of Islamophobia, and tax justice.

We had an interesting film about The Retreat, York and were presented with its triennial report which emphasised its holistic approach to mental health treatment.

Finally we were given an overview of the work of Quaker Life Central Committee, focusing on concerns for end of life care and assisted dying. Some meetings, Leeds is one, have working groups dealing with these issues, and ask QLCC to reach a Quaker view of death and dying. If you haven't already made your way to Friends House in Euston, please do so, and now is the perfect time to write **Yearly Meeting 1 – 4 May 2015** in your diaries. ***Gillian Turner***

### **Earth & Economy edition 5 out now!**

Earth & Economy is full of the latest work of the Economics, Sustainability & Peace team, information about what Friends across the country have been doing and information about how you can get involved. Friends can sign up to receive monthly updates at [www.quaker.org.uk/Earth-and-economy](http://www.quaker.org.uk/Earth-and-economy).

### **Confused?**

From <http://quaker.org.uk/groups-and-structures>:

You may have read that as we have no paid clergy our meetings are run by our members, all on a voluntary basis. The same is largely true of the whole organisation. There are lots of groups and committees, supported by paid staff, that make up the structure of Britain Yearly Meeting. This covers an enormous range of specialisation and responsibility.

Our national Quaker structures are quite complex. A short pdf guide to our structures gives a basic guide and explains where to find more information. The minutes of some of our committees and groups are also available (registration required).

If you can't find the information you want please email [webteam@quaker.org.uk](mailto:webteam@quaker.org.uk) and we will try to find the appropriate information for you.

### **Wanted: Quaker Centre Volunteer**

What kind of role involves listening and responding to Quakers and other visitors from around the country and abroad, some seeking work or a home or a place to share their burdens? What role might also include eldering a meeting, arranging flowers, clearing tables, taking deliveries, shelving, sorting, replenishing leaflet displays, counting, packing, stock control, making up book orders, pricing, or mailing out large numbers of Quaker periodicals and newsletters to Friends? Where, sometimes, might you be expected simply to sit and wait?

Being a Quaker centre volunteer at Friends House involves all this. Travel expenses will be paid. For details and application forms, visit <http://www.quaker.org.uk/jobs-and-volunteer-opportunities>.

### **BYM Children's Programme and Young People's Programme** **1–4 May, 2015**

Publicity is now available for the Children's Programme (ages 0 to 11) and Young People's Programme (ages 11 to 15) taking place alongside BYM 1–4 May 2015. Each programme gives the opportunity for children and young people to engage with BYM in an age appropriate way. Children's Programmes 1 & 2 will take place at Friends House on the Saturday, Sunday and Monday of BYM. Young People's Programme is a residential event taking place at High Leigh, Hoddesdon from the Friday to Monday of BYM.

Booking for all programmes is essential and bookings close Friday 20 March. For further information: 020 7663 1160, [cypadmin@quaker.org.uk](mailto:cypadmin@quaker.org.uk) [www.quaker.org.uk/cyp-events](http://www.quaker.org.uk/cyp-events)

### **Courses for Quaker Roles at Woodbrooke in 2015**

A new programme of short courses designed to help people carrying out particular roles in meetings for 2015 has been published from Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre. These courses fill up quickly so you should book early to avoid disappointment. Courses include training for clerks, elders, overseers, nominations committees, trustees, treasurers, meeting house managers and much more.

Woodbrooke, 1046 Bristol Road, Birmingham B29 6LJ  
0121 472 5171, [enquiries@woodbrooke.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@woodbrooke.org.uk)

### **Calendar**

**Our New Year Social is on Sunday 18 January**, beginning at about 12.30 with lunch, followed by a selection of board and card games, jigsaw puzzles and conversation, and ending with coffee and cake. Bring your favourite savoury or dessert dish to share – and why not also your favourite game?

**Our next business meeting** is on the 11th, and on the 25th we will be considering the long-term Framework for Action (see "The way ahead", page 3.)

**Living Adventurously.** More talks are planned for the next three months. On January 9 Gordon Spence will be introducing The Mysticism of Meister Eckhart and Quaker Experiences. Sutton meeting house, 7:30 – 9:30pm. All welcome.

### **December Collections**

*(Figures in brackets by standing order)*

- 7 December Quaker Work at Home and Abroad £38.00 (£87.00)
- 14 December Croydon Local Meeting £43
- 21 December Area Meeting £78
- 28 December Friends Family Group £47
- Copper collection £10

### **Collections in January**

- 4 Quaker Work at Home and Abroad, 11 South London Area Meeting,
- 18 Woodbrooke, 25 Croydon Local Meeting

### **New Every Morning**

Every day is a fresh beginning,  
Listen my soul to the glad refrain.  
And, spite of old sorrows  
And older sinning,  
Troubles forecasted  
And possible pain,  
Take heart with the day and begin again.

*Susan Coolidge 1835 - 1905*

**The deadline for the February edition is Sunday 25 January**  
**Please give, send or email contributions (no longer than 500 words, please) to Gillian Turner**  
**Tel 020 8688 9659 email [gillianturner033@gmail.com](mailto:gillianturner033@gmail.com)**