

CROYDON FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

July 2016

Dear Friends,

What a difference one month makes. The beginning of June signalled the end of Britain Yearly Meeting when our focus was on living out our faith in the world. As the month progressed we became more aware of the unpleasantness of the political discourse surrounding the Referendum and now, as our July edition is circulated, the divisions within our society are revealed and we face a long period of uncertainty. As the problems now facing Ireland, north and south, are very lightly touched upon in the British press, I have taken to buying an Irish daily. On 29 June, in a long article entitled "Calm down: the Brexit referendum is not a 21st century Sarajevo", by David Williams, he gave examples of the reasons different British friends gave for voting in or out. I was startled to read his description of a businessman who voted to Leave as having '...deep, almost Quaker convictions about society.'

This month we have some responses to the events of last month, both nationally and in our own small community, and news of events to come. As always David Parlett and I hope you enjoy reading it, and we thank everyone who has contributed.

Gillian Turner

News of Friends

Alan Yardley. Alan's funeral took place on Monday 13 June at 12.45 at East Surrey crematorium. There was a large congregation present, with a sizeable contingent of Friends. The service was led by Pat's local vicar, and there were many references to Alan's Quaker past as a birthright Friend, his attendance at Sibford Quaker School, and his faithful endeavours to live by the testimonies. We sang the Quaker hymn *Dear Lord and Father of Mankind*, were given examples of his enjoyment of life, and ended by singing the Crystal Palace Football Club anthem, which sent us away with smiles and feelings of thanksgiving for a life well lived. Lyn Beazley of Purley meeting has offered to write a Minute of Record of his life.

Celia Snaith. Celia is now in Heathfield 1, Croydon University Hospital, having been sent home after breaking her ankle falling down the stairs at home, and her hip when she fell in hospital.

Jo Cox MP Remembered

The day I heard about the shooting of Jo Cox MP I had been feeling despondent about the tone of the referendum debate after hearing a radio talk show on the way home from dropping the boys at school. Her subsequent death hit me hard at an emotional level, not only because I am the same age, with two children, and a history of work in the charity sector (in fact, I found out we had friends in common after her murder) but because it felt like a devastating attack on the values I hold most dear.

On 22 June I attended an event in Trafalgar Square to celebrate Jo's life on what would have been her 42nd birthday - I felt strongly that I needed to pay my respects and stand in solidarity with others who agree with her that: "we have more in common than that which divides us".

Unfortunately the VoteLeave campaign chose to fly a plane with a banner over the square repeatedly during the memorial, drowning out moments of the speeches and causing further pain.

Her husband Brendan spoke movingly of his wife, telling us that: "She just wanted people to be happy and for the world to be a better place". He shared his view that her killing was political - an act of terror designed to generate hatred - and that there was a need to ensure that something positive comes out of her murder. Her sister Kim was screened in from a vigil in her home town of Batley and Spen and she called on us to consider the principles of peace, respect and understanding in our own communities and everyday lives. She urged us to come together and unite against hate and division and to fight instead for inclusion, love and unity.

Her family and friends have launched a charity appeal in her name, which will support work including the White Helmets, volunteer search and rescue workers in Syria; Hope not Hate, who challenge the politics of hate and extremism within local communities across Britain; and the Royal Voluntary Service, to support volunteers to combat loneliness in her constituency. So far over £1.4m has been raised - further donations can be made at www.gofundme.com/jocox.

I would like to end with the following poem, written by Dorothy Oger following the killings in Brussels in March, which was read out by Gillian Anderson at the event.

Laura Roling

FOR LOVE

I shall stand for love,
Even with a broken soul,
Even with a heavy heart.

I shall stand for love,
For the world is wounded.
Not just my little piece of land,
Where I am mostly safe,
Where I am mostly well,
But our world, everywhere
Every day.

I shall stand for love,

Because we need more light,
Not more deaths,
Not more power,
Not more bombs.

I shall stand for love,
So that our children are safe
So that our friends are sheltered
So that our borders are open.

I shall stand for love,
Even with a broken soul,
Even with a heavy heart.

'Iftar' Meal with the Lighthouse Educational Society

On 16 June eight members and attenders from Croydon enjoyed an 'iftar' meal with the Turkish community. The Lighthouse Educational Society has four branches in South London and is an educational charity, inspired by the teachings of Turkish Muslim scholar Fethullah Gulen. His philosophy was based on non-denominational education, dialogue and peaceful co-existence. They provide after-school education and mentoring for Muslim children and explained that they believe in reaching out to the communities in which they live. You may remember that some of them brought 'Noah's Pudding' to share with us a few months ago. This time they had extended an open invitation to Croydon Quakers to share their fast-breaking meal.

It was interesting that, when they first approached us, they explained that they had heard of Quakers through reading in Turkish sources about Mary Fisher, who travelled to Turkey in the seventeenth century to speak to the Sultan. In Quaker Faith and Practice 19.27 she tells how she was kindly received. Her story is also shown in a panel from the Quaker Tapestry at QFP 28.13. One of our hosts told me that he had been particularly impressed by reading that, when the Sultan offered her an escort for the next stage of her journey, she said that she did not need one because the Lord was accompanying her.

During the month of Ramadan most Muslims fast from dawn to dusk, which must be a very long day when Ramadan falls in June, so it was dusk when we gathered. They explained that fasting is a spiritual discipline which enables them to open themselves to God. Hanife, who sat next to me, said that the secret of getting through the day was to keep busy. She is one of a group involved in charitable work, such as sending gifts to schools in Kenya.

The Croydon group took over the former 'Eagle' pub at Reeves Corner. Hanife said that they had just finished refurbishing it when the riots broke out around them. They had prayed hard and only one curtain had caught fire. Now the building is light and tastefully decorated and I was very impressed with the enthusiasm of the young volunteer teacher who showed me their bright, colourful classrooms. They were very generous hosts and provided a choice of tasty vegetarian dishes as well as meat.

As it happened, it was a sad day, following the murder of the MP Jo Cox. Gavin Barwell, MP for Croydon Central, was there, wearing a black tie and clearly upset. He had himself been threatened by a constituent with a knife in his office in Shirley two weeks before. He said that it was good to end the day with a hopeful event, sharing a meal with a community group reaching out to other faith communities.

Sadly, this week Turkey has also experienced another terrible tragedy. I have sent a message to our friends to express our sympathy following the attack on Istanbul airport. **Rhiannon Rees**

"... First cast out the beam out of thine own eye". Matthew 7

Occasionally, when asked about Quakerism, I have a tendency to end up proudly listing notable Friends: Penn, Fry, Cadbury, Rowntree, Lister... Judi Dench, Sheila Hancock etc. Two close, non-Quaker friends always enjoy chortling away and pointing out that I never seem to mention the

name of Richard Nixon in my litany of weighty Friends. They are right, I think that I subconsciously select names that I know will present Friends in the best light. Of course, there is no need for me to do this as Quakers are human beings with the same frailties and weaknesses as everybody else. Added to which, I am sure that the Society of Friends does not need my amateur P.R. services to detail the virtues and celebrity of members past and present. (I also mention that Barack Obama's daughters attend a Quaker school!)

During our informal discussion group this week, we looked at Chapter 20 of *QFP*, "Living Faithfully Today", and touched briefly on the topic of perceptions as to an individual's supposed "fitness" for membership. Some Friends felt strongly that "judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matthew 7) should come into play when considering others. We tend to excuse our own less-than-perfect behaviour as a result of specific, unavoidable, unfortunate reasons but blame others' mis-steps on downright ill-tempered and deliberate unpleasantness! If we were all given just what we deserve, as Hamlet said: "Who should 'scape whipping?"

It is so much easier to judge another than to look within and see our own less than virtuous traits. The splinter in our brother's eye is so much easier to see than the beam in our own. Changing others seems essential, to change ourselves less pressing. Certainly, there is much to decry at home and abroad at the moment as malicious political mud-slinging and extreme, traumatic violence fills our screens. Thomas Merton, the American Trappist monk and mystic, advised us to look within before leaping to externalise judgement:

"Instead of hating the people you think are war-makers, hate the appetites and disorder in your own soul which are the causes of war. If you love peace, then hate injustice, hate tyranny, hate greed- but hate these things in yourself, not in another."

In Chapter 20 of *QFP* in 20.07, Susan Lawrence writes about trying to come to terms with her own brokenness and making peace with herself thus allowing her to do the same with her environment. This working from the internal to the external allows us to understand ourselves and others more clearly and act with compassion in an imperfect world.

Barbara Earl

Ed note: An internet search based on the question "Was Richard Nixon really a Quaker? produces some interesting results. One of them quotes as follows from George Bernard Shaw's "Maxims for Revolutionists": "What a man believes may be ascertained, not from his creed, but from the assumptions on which he habitually acts". - DP

What's leadership when you can't tell people what to do?

As our country seems to be experiencing a total political meltdown, it could be an apt moment to consider quite what leadership is and should be. However, it would be surprising if Quakers were not a little hesitant - though certainly thoughtful - when the subject of leadership comes up. Isn't it one person (or an élite) telling everybody else (sometimes dubbed perhaps rather patronisingly 'followers') what to do? After all, that would mean telling 'what to do' to a group of people who do without intermediaries like ministers, vicars or, better still, bishops. (Of course, I'm talking about this side of the Atlantic). In resisting authoritarianism, dogmatism and hierarchy, Quakers, after all, have for centuries done it for themselves on a theological and practical basis.

Of course, there are lots of questions in the general area of all types of organisations and leadership. How do a whole battery of social scientists discuss this contentious topic? There are many formal leadership theories that focus on the qualities that make a distinction between leaders and followers. Leaders as individuals can be examined through 'great man' (*sic*) and trait theories and, more recently, theories that consider other variables such as situational factors, the nature of relationships and skill levels. Do certain attributes make some people better suited to leadership roles, or do characteristics of the situation make it more likely that certain people will take charge? Or is something entirely different going on?

This week's course at Woodbrooke bravely tackled this controversial area under the title of 'Leadership among Friends'.

So how do Quakers fit into this - or perhaps they don't? As with most Quaker discussion, the focus among the course members was on practicalities and making things happen rather than theorising. We were asked to consider what was it in Quaker culture that made it distinctive and to link that with our own actual experiences in our meetings. Is there a real distinction between leading and following? Perhaps there is something in the very nature of Quaker decision-making - which is always working towards an acceptable consensus - that allows leading and following to be

part of the same process rather than separated into two very different processes (engaged in by different groups of people). It is this separation that sometimes, regrettably enough, makes these processes authoritarian and sometimes oppositional. But in a Quaker context, it can be seen that the power of 'deciding' and 'doing' is shared by the *whole* group rather reserved to one supposedly special individual (or élite).

A quote from Mahatma Gandhi was found to be especially relevant: 'I suppose leadership at one time was about muscles; but today it means getting along with people'. But the course tutors argued that there is also a need *to do* more than have good relationships among Quakers. After all, there is a need to get things done, perhaps change them, at the level of the meeting itself, the local community in which it is placed, and in society as a whole. In a specifically Quaker context (and from a Quaker source), George Lakey gives a definition of leadership as 'taking the initiative in relationships'.

As somebody with an interest in both organisational theory and learning more about Quakers and their multi-layered and subtle culture, I found the course extremely helpful. The trip itself to beautiful and relaxing Woodbrooke was very enjoyable and meeting so many good humoured and wise Friends was a delight.

Helen Johnson

Conscientious Objectors from Croydon

Museum of Croydon talk – 24 June

An audience of nearly twenty attended a talk and exhibition given by the Borough Archivist, Lindsay Ould and Interpretation and Learning Officer, Johanna Hayward, accompanied by slides.

After explaining the state of the situation after the passing of the Military Services Act in 1916, the afternoon was concentrated on the material which had been obtained on COs living in the Croydon area.

Of these, there were two Quakers from Purley Meeting: Roderick Kendall Clark and Mark Guy Pearce. My father, Mark Hayler, did not become a member until some time after the War had ended. Indeed the two Marks were to later meet at Dartmoor, and, I believe, remained close friends. Among other Croydon COs featured in the programme were Charles John Cobb, Gilbert Foan, George Glasscock, Glen, Mark and Walter Hayler, and Mark Guy Pearce.

One thing I learnt that I did not realise was the sad fact that so many of those who were mentioned had died in their 40s, no doubt partly due to their experiences and treatment.

The talk was supplemented by a small exhibition mainly obtained from The Glasscock and Hayler families, but it included one exhibit that was a mystery to me – a large book including a detailed list of Croydon COs with details, compiled by my uncle, Walter Hayler, which had recently been sent to the Museum – but not by me. Who had sent it?

As we left the talk, we were able to look at the small exhibition in the public area which included Gilbert Foan's standard work on hairdressing – a large tome. He was another who died young; Edith, his widow, was a close friend of our family when I was young, and, as I remember, was living in a small flat in South Norwood.

WEFH

Adult School Hall Open Day

On the first day of Croydon's Heritage Festival, Saturday 18 June, we opened the Adult School to interested visitors from 11am to 4pm. Everyone who could turned up to support the event and to enjoy the opportunity to chat to each other as well as the steady stream of visitors who came during the day. It was particularly good to see Kitty McVey, who has been so helpful in the matter of obtaining a Landlord's Licence for our flat.

Our archivist David Parlett displayed historic maps of Croydon and original architectural plans and drawings for the ASH and the present meeting house (opened in 1955). Rhiannon Rees exhibited material showing our commitment to peace. Gordon Spence put up Quaker posters and laid out leaflets to give visitors information about who we are. Wilf Hayler stood ready to speak about the Conscientious Objectors posters lent to us by the Museum, I handed out leaflets detailing the history of the ASH and the Arts and Crafts Movement and enjoyed chatting to interested visitors. Cathy Spence and her helpers organised the kitchen, cut the cakes, buttered the scones and poured out the tea and coffee. Although I have listed the refreshments part of the procedure last, in fact the red striped tablecloths and the bunting lent a cheerful community feel to the occasion. Our visitors joined us around the tables with their coffee and cake, understanding, I

believe, that we are an outgoing Christian faith group, rooted over the centuries in this corner of Croydon.

Gillian Turner

Gardening Club

Now that we have our new notice board, Premises Committee have started to look at the garden, to see how we can add more colour to the beds that are out of sight behind the buildings. There is a long bed bordering the fence which has not been dug over for many years. It is very stony and weedy, but the soil is good and the grass in front of it is in excellent condition.

The children have made a start on the piece of ground next to the bicycle rails and planted lavender, salvia and other flowers for the bees.

Gil Greiner, who volunteers with a community garden group, says that he could organise a group who could dig the ground, but he needs tools to do so. We are appealing for Friends who have unwanted gardening tools languishing in their sheds, to give them to Gil so he can make a start. We could then start planning with the children to make a peace garden, a hidden oasis at the back of our meeting house.

GT



The election of the new Croydon mayor reflections of a new Borough Dean

At the Annual Council Meeting, held at the Town Hall on Monday 26 May 2016, Cllr Wayne Trakas-Lawlor was elected mayor of Croydon. It was stated that he is the first openly gay man to be elected to such a position and, as one of his proposers also said, is a working-class boy from the Waddon estate. The whole ceremony was Skyped to his partner's family in Ohio and the Mayor's own family was sitting in the gallery. Perhaps we can be wildly optimistic and say that some sort of social progress can be detected in his election. He seems to be a pleasant chap, and the whole meeting was carried out in a warm and good-humoured atmosphere.

Of course, sitting in the Council Chamber does give attenders the chance to reflect on what's going on and in what way. The Chamber itself is in very good decorative order; there were lots of helpful council officials taking newcomers to their seat; and apart from the out-going mayor, the widow of a past mayor and few others, everybody there seemed to be white and old. There was a nice chap from the Baptists who very helpfully explained to this newcomer what was going on – and he did observe that such a gathering (in terms of age and ethnicity) was not representative of Croydon as a whole. This comment became even more meaningful when I thought about my recent visit to Croydon Library. The whole place seems shabby and neglected. The few people that staff the place all seem to be on the ground and first floor. (Call me old-fashioned but the computers seem to have pushed the bookshelves out of pride of place and down against the

walls). The people using the library to study at the tables and computers are young – much younger than those in the Council Chamber – and most, if not all, were black.

After the meeting, we headed off to the reception. My Baptist and Buddhist neighbours were very kind and introduced me to some of the people there. When the drinks came round I was automatically handed a glass of orange juice..... because all Quakers are teetotal. Sometimes it does not seem possible to get beyond stereotypes!

Helen Johnson

Premises News

7 July to 27 August National Community Service - The Challenge will be using the Adult School Hall as a base for their charity work in Croydon during the summer months.

NCS aims to bring together young people from all different backgrounds in a common purpose. Offering new experiences it gives them the chance to take on new challenges, learn new skills and meet new people. This helps discover their own talents and realise their potential whilst having fun. It offers a chance for young people to make their mark! After meeting a charity or community organisation the team come up with ideas for a project to make a difference before having the chance to present their project to a panel of professionals and gain feedback.

NCS is a government-funded initiative that supports community engagement, social action and social mixing among young people.

Zumba, a dance fitness programme, has started to run in the ASH on Wednesday evenings from 7 - 8.30pm.

Weightwatchers now meet in the meeting room on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Events

Sunday 3 July: Area Committee Meeting

at Croydon meeting house after mfw and a simple lunch. Not restricted to AMC members - all are encouraged to attend and contribute.

Wednesday, 6 July: Poetry for Human Rights in Colombia

18:00 to 21:00 at 60 Farringdon Road, London, EC1R 3GA; Cost: £10-£15 As part of its 35th anniversary, PBI UK is holding a series of events that celebrate the work of human rights defenders around the world. This evening of poetry and music features Ruth Padel and supports the inspirational work of human rights defenders in Colombia.

PBI was founded in 1981 by a group of nonviolence activists, which included Quakers, and the work of the charity is in line with the fundamental Quaker principles.

Sunday 10 July: Meeting for worship for business

at Croydon meeting house after mfw and refreshments. Please be ready to start at 12:15pm.

Sunday 17 July: A Summer Sharing of Words and Music

2:15 at Croydon meeting house, followed (at about 3:45) with a strawberries and cream tea.

Breakfast every Sunday morning from 9 to 10 am.

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

Collected in June

(Standing orders in parentheses)

5 Quaker Action on Alcohol and Drugs **90**

12 Quaker work at home and abroad 45 (YM 410)

19 Claridge House 82 (AM 233)

26 Brummana High School 130 (LM 467)

Collections in July: 3 Quaker work at home and abroad - 10 South London Area Meeting – 17 Woodbrooke - 24 Croydon Local Meeting - 31 (*open*)

The deadline for the August edition is Sunday 24 July 2016

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



Croydon Friends invite you to a

**summer sharing
of words & music**
on a seasonal theme

at Croydon Friends Meeting House (60 Park Lane, Croydon CR0 1JE) on

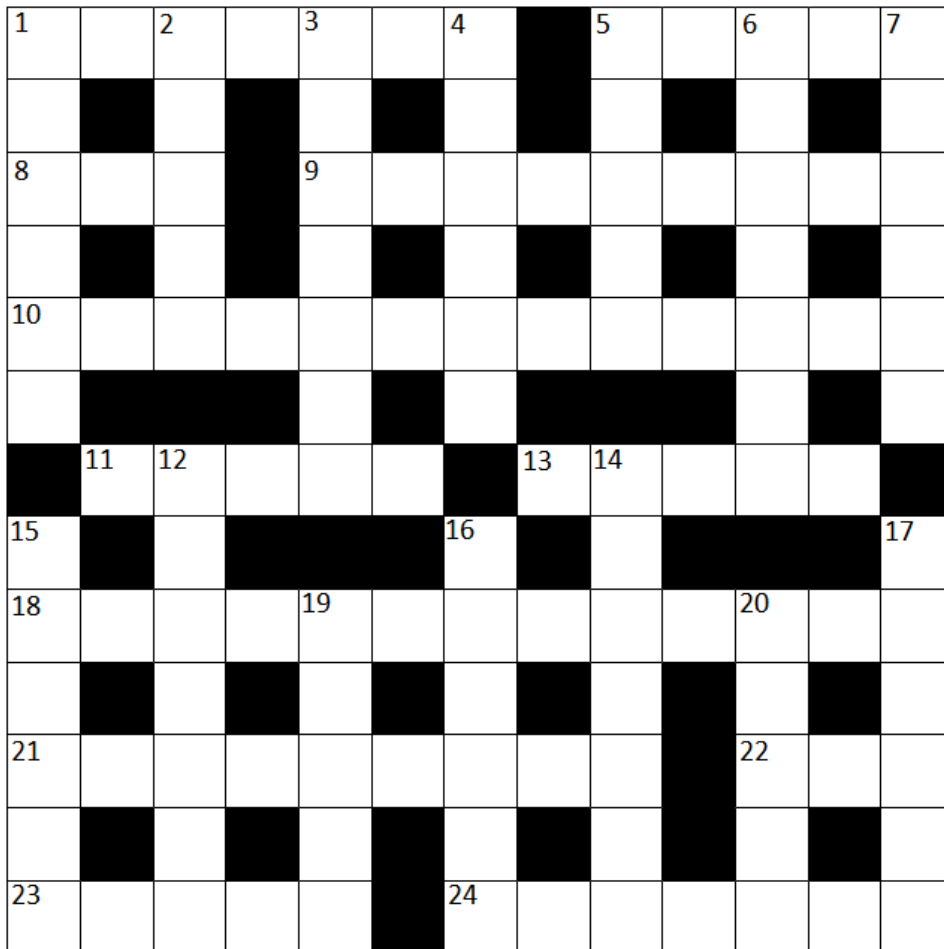
Sunday 17 July 2016

from 2.15 pm to about 3.45, followed by tea & strawberries

You're invited to bring a topical reading or piece of music (on CD, or even live), ideally not longer than 5 minutes. All are welcome. For further details contact Wilf Hayler on 020 8653 7042 or David Parlett on 020 8764 0950

Friendly Crossword #10

by Grumpy Old Quaker



Across

1. Agrees with current leads (7)
5. Top male (5)
- 8, 22. Beat this for pipers offspring! (3-3)
9. Grown-up head-warmer follows adolescence (9)
10. Quaker retreat (8, 5)
- 11, 13. Six of one and half a dozen of the other (5, 5)
18. Fox went to earth here (7, 6)
21. They come before spaghetti (9)
22. See 8. (3)
23. Attractive as a washer-up? (5)
24. Component of gunpowder (7)

Down

1. Ancient larks? (6)
2. Half a semicolon (5)
3. No idealist, this one (7)
4. Blur (6)
5. Initially hydrogen (5)
6. Multiplying outcome (7)
7. Confused as an egg? (6)
12. Starts fire (7)
14. First letter (7)
15. On deck (6)
16. Grips (6)
17. It has a distinctive atomic arrangement (6)
19. Simply behead, I tacitly suggest (5)
20. Gate-fixer (5)



Solution to #9