

CROYDON FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2013

DEAR FRIENDS – June sees the celebration of our lives as part of the wider Croydon community, and many events are listed here as well as reports of various meetings held in May, especially Yearly Meeting.

We need the support of all at our meeting for three events coming up in June. Dates are given in the June Diary at the end of this newsletter, but I want to highlight them here. Firstly, we are hosting Area Meeting, which means we are responsible for AM Teas. We have another social event on the fourth Sunday, a community lunch following a talk after meeting, and a clear-out day when we tackle the security cupboard and the kitchen shelves and cupboards. We want to move the fridge away from the oven and hope to invest in a new oven at the same time.

Gillian Turner

YEARLY MEETING 2013

If you were unable to attend YM you will find the texts of the introducers, the minutes, the epistles etc. on the Quaker website www.quaker.org.uk

My personal favourite is Roy Stephenson's presentation on Discernment: Trust in the Spirit, and the excellent minute that summed up the session. There is also a link to the film which we saw at YM about our week-long Gathering at Bath next year.

Reflections

I love the atmosphere of Yearly Meeting – a great hubbub and what looks like chaos, and then when the session starts, a remarkable and moving silence. I enjoy seeing familiar faces from various Quaker events, and also the ease with which people will talk to those they don't know, sometimes at quite a deep level.

I was not there full-time this year, but I found the Saturday morning session about Discernment particularly moving.

Barbara Cairns

It was my first attendance at Yearly Meeting and everyone I met was warm and welcoming. I was particularly impressed by the diversity of interest groups which had stalls at the Groups Fair. This was insightful in that it demonstrated the openness, tolerance and freedom that is Quakerism. I sat in on the Trustees Report which was held on the Sunday and enjoyed the spirit of respect shown to members who contributed to amending the minutes – all opinions were genuinely valued.

I also went to the 'This Light that Pushes Me' exhibition which told the horrific stories of victims of wars in Africa. Despite the huge suffering, those victims, who became Quaker peacebuilders, turned their lives around through forgiveness and understanding and were able to help others through their experiences.

All in all, a lovely day with good company, good food and we were blessed with a sunny day so that we were able to sit in the gardens in the light.

Corrine Loos

Although the business of Yearly Meeting in Session was less dramatic than in previous years, one of the themes that emerged was 'Telling our Stories'. I will remember stories of courage and grace from two of the side-events.

Gerald Hewitson's Swarthmore Lecture, Journey into Life: Inheriting the story of early Friends, was more of a personal testimony than a lecture. He described his spiritual journey and Quaker conviction and the way he had had to let go his idea of himself, formed in an emotionally and emotionally deprived childhood, in order to be transformed, like the early Quakers, and freed to give of his gifts.

This Light that pushes me: stories of resilience from African Quakers

'Peacebuilders' was an exhibition of photographic portraits of Quakers and other peace-builders from Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Sierra Leone, who are involved in projects supported by Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) together with their amazing stories of courage and forgiveness. One woman had brought together women whose husbands, and sometimes children, who had been murdered in Rwanda with the wives of men imprisoned for the genocide. Some of the wives of the victims were helping to make meals to take to their husbands in prison.

Rhiannon Rees

All age worship session Sun 26

All the children on the Children and Young People's Programme joined the adults for worship on Sunday afternoon. The clerk told us what was to happen – we would hear a reading, then see the illustrations from the book, then hear the poem again. He described centring down, and having deep thoughts that should be shared rather than kept to yourself. He described how, when you wanted to minister, you should stand up, and he would send a microphone to you so you would be heard, but if you stood up and were not called you shouldn't be disappointed.

If you have ever ministered in meeting you know how difficult it can be to stand up and speak, in a room with maybe thirty people, most of whom you know well. There were over a thousand people in the large meeting room at Friends House when a small girl of maybe three stood up, was called, and took the microphone.

'I love you all, and I want to sing you a song' she said, and she sang 'Baa Baa Black Sheep' all the way through, handed back the microphone and sat down again. It was a moment of pure magic.

I heard afterwards that the reason she had chosen that nursery rhyme was that her group of 0 – 4s had been told the story of the lost sheep and she had made a lamb from wool.

Here is the poem:

God's Quiet Things.

Ssh! Listen! Listen for God's quiet things,
Like butterflies with velvet wings,
Or raindrops making quiet rings
on water.

Listen! Can you hear a sound
from worms that wriggle underground?
Or any noise from fish that swim
in ponds that lilies blossom in?

Up high against the blue, blue sky
a quiet cloud is drifting by.
Grasses waving the breeze
or leaves just moving in the trees -

Look ... and listen - high and low
God's quiet things are yours to know.
Fluffy weeds grow seeds to share
and send them sailing through the air

to gardens where the sun shines in,
where inchworms inch and spiders spin.
Do you hear the darkness fall?
The morning dew that comes to call?

Night comes ... Day comes...Up so high
The sun and moon cross through the sky.
Look ... and listen – everywhere,
God's quiet things are always there.

By Nancy Sweetland

Greetings from ex-members of Croydon Meeting attending YM;

Kathy Alton, Matt Alton, Alastair and Jean Campbell Leith, Jackie Fowler (daughter of Kay Wright), Alma and John Harding, Phil Laurence, Clair Tighe.

Part of the Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Chris Cook was read in Meeting for Worship, and Brenda Heales, Chris's partner who founded Appleseed with Chris, also sent loving greetings.

St Christopher's Fun Walk 19 May 2013

Marjorie Evans and I, along with several hundred others, set off in bright sunshine to walk the three miles round Keston Ponds for which Marjorie was sponsored (I sponsored myself).

At first Marjorie reminisced about all the other times she had taken part and the longer walks she had completed, with, among others, Kathleen Bell and Mavis Parker, and we agreed that it was much more pleasant to walk with a friend or in a group than on one's own.

It didn't take long before we left the narrow tracks and trails behind and came into a beautiful bluebell wood, where the birds sang regardless of the noise of the walkers and the fresh green of the leaves lifted the heart after our long bleak winter and spring. I noticed that Marjorie was regarding the bluebells with a frown. Our native species are being wiped out by foreign bluebells, aliens in our woods, she told me. She relaxed when she failed to find any intruders; all these bluebells bowed gently over, the blossoms on one side only of the stem. The foreigners stand upright with blossoms circling the stems. She digs out any she finds in her garden and includes them in her garden waste. I promised to examine my bluebells carefully for signs of alien bulbs when I got home.

We strolled on, admiring the views over the valley and standing back from time to time to allow the more active walkers to overtake us, and I kept an eye out as we went along to see if I could spot any wild garlic in the hedges. I commented on how easy it is to spot as the leaves are so pungent, and Marjorie remarked casually that she had little sense of smell, or taste, since she was in the Davis Theatre (now the Fairfield Halls) when it was blown up by a bomb during the war. She suffered considerable trauma as a result, but no-one in her unit (she was in the ATS) paid any attention and she got on with it as she was expected to do.

It wasn't the first time she had had a close encounter with a bomb, she told me. There was a direct hit on some houses further down her road. She and her parents were, fortunately, in a bomb shelter, but the explosion made her bedroom window implode and her bed was covered in glass shards which would have been fatal had she been in it. When she was serving in Brighton her

office window had a bullet through it. Apparently the Germans regularly sent planes over to strafe the promenade that runs to Hove. Did you know that? I didn't.

I begged Marjorie to write up her experiences in an article for the newsletter. She said she would think about it, and as we talked, somehow we missed the turn for the three mile walk that would take us to the ponds. It might have been when I got stuck on a stile and had to have help to climb over. Marjorie, needless to say, went nimbly over like a two-year-old.

Just when I was commenting, as we walked through a field of buttercups, that three miles seemed longer than I had expected, we came to the next checkpoint and discovered we were actually half-way along the five-mile route and had missed the ponds out completely. We saw on the map that if we followed the five-mile route for a further mile we could get back to the starting point by walking up steep Fox Hill. We did wonder about hitching a lift but pressed on, and half-way up, to my delight, I found great clumps of wild garlic in full flower.

When we explained why we had approached the finishing line from the wrong angle we were told that we deserved the 5-mile medallion! The Green was packed with walkers setting out and finishing, and we agreed that we had had a lovely day. However, Marjorie was annoyed that we had missed seeing the ponds, and suggested that we organise a meeting walk one Sunday after meeting for worship. Are there any takers? We thought, the last Sunday in July or the first Sunday in August.

When I got home I discovered that all my bluebells are foreign interlopers.

Gillian Turner

Your very own password

As a member or regular attender you can now access the Members Area page of our Croydon meeting's website by logging in with your own user name and personal password. This has the advantage that restricted documents, such as the Who's Who and the minutes of business meetings, no longer have to be individually password-protected, so once you're logged in you can access any of them without further ado. You can even remain logged in indefinitely if you're sure nobody else is going to use your computer.

The first time you do this you will need to set up an account. Start by clicking on www.croydonquakers.org.uk, then on Members Area. This will bring up a log-in page. Before you can log in you will need a password. Get this by clicking on passwo@parlett.eu to send me an email requesting one and giving me your preferred username (which can be your real name in whole or part, or a nickname.) I will then get it generated automatically and send it to you. Upon receiving it you can return to the login-in page and fill in your name and the password I will have sent you. The first thing you should do then is change it to something of your choice by clicking on "Change password". Whatever you choose will remain unknown to me anyone but you, as it is encrypted and stored automatically in an inaccessible computer program. If you lose your password, all you need do is send me another request and I will generate a replacement. Then follow the same procedure as before.

Data protection

Talking of the Who's Who, please note that this document complies with the requirements of the Data Protection Act, which means that members are listed automatically by virtue of being members, and attenders only if they have asked or agreed to be included. Anyone who is so listed may ask at any time to see all the information that is held about them. If you have any queries about this please contact me in my capacity as Keeper of Records, or Wilf Hayler as Area Meeting Membership Clerk.

David Parlett

Birthday Greetings to

Olivia Edgson who was

6 on 31 May.

**Geza Vermes, Hebrew Bible scholar and historian of early Judaism and
the origins of Christianity.**

Geza Vermes. Does that name mean anything to you? He was born in 1924 of Hungarian/Jewish parentage. In 1930 he and his parents converted to Catholicism. He became a priest and that saved him from Auschwitz and the gas chambers where both his parents died.

In 1956 he came to England, renounced his Catholicism and married a divorced woman. He needed to find a job and our Friend George Boobyer gave him a lectureship in Divinity at Newcastle University. After some years he was offered a post as a lecturer in Christian/Jewish studies at Oxford University and became known for his work on the Dead Sea Scrolls. He became the leading expert and wrote a book which is still the best known on the subject. During this time he also wrote his autobiography, which is well worth reading. Unfortunately the book on the Dead Sea Scrolls is very difficult unless you have the background knowledge.

His last major work 'Jesus the Jew' is, to me, one of the most convincing books I have read. A lot of scholarship went into the book, and I recommend it wholeheartedly. It puts the life and ministry of Jesus from a Jewish perspective, as a prophet as we know from the Old Testament.

His books and those of Karen Armstrong have been one of my major 'finds'. Quite recently I was on a train and opened at random my newspaper only to find a long obituary of him (he had died aged 88) and I had just finished 'Jesus the Jew'.

I am fortunate that Purley Meeting's library has these books and I have had time to read them.

Ted Battle.

Quaker Community, Bamford

21-23 June: Midsummer Madness. A summer festival skills-share, celebration and gathering with a special low price of £60 for Quaker Community Associate Members, Quaker Voluntary Action volunteers and Living Witness members. All welcome! Please contact mail@quakercommunity.org.uk to book.

5-9 August: Living Witness Summer School. What does Quaker faith & practice have to offer in becoming a low-carbon sustainable community? We'll work with Quaker processes and practices, reflecting on the ways we could use them in our lives, our meetings and other circles. The fee is £160-200 depending what you can afford. Please contact dee@livingwitness.org.uk to book.

SMALL GRANTS FUND FIFTH ROUND

Opportunities for local people and communities to come together, get organised and get things done

The Small Grants Fund focuses on getting small and innovative projects off the ground which are designed to improve the quality of life for local people and their communities. We are very keen to see small scale projects where modest funding will help people make a real difference in their communities and help unlock other resources.

Full details of the fund, the on line application form and the training sessions which we have organised can be found by clicking on this link [Small Grants Fund Round 5 information](#).

Community Events in Croydon in June

Sunday 2 : Local street lunches

Saturday 8: Croydon Food Festival

Sunday 9: The Big Lunch organised by FtiC held in Parkhill Park from 1.30-3.30/4pm.

Bring some food to share with others and have a fun afternoon with people of all faiths.

Last year we had about 50 people and children altogether from all the major faiths and despite being the wettest summer in history we had a dry afternoon and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves.

Sat – Sun 8 – 9 Open Garden Squares Weekend. Nowhere in Croydon but three in Carshalton:

Sutton Ecology Centre in Carshalton and Carshalton House Landscape Garden, both accessible from Carshalton Station, and Dean City Farm near Phipps Bridge Tram Stop.

enquiries@londongardenstrust.org

Saturday 15 The Green Fair 10 – 4pm. We have a stall together with CND.

Sat 3 – Sat 23: Croydon Heritage Festival. Go to their website for details of events.

June diary

events at Croydon meeting house unless otherwise stated

Sun 2 Meeting for Upholding (*formerly Prayer for Healing*) 10.10

Thurs 6 Singing for Fun 3.15 – 4.15

Sun 9 Local Business Meeting for church affairs

Mon 13 Card recycling 12.00

Fri 14: Monthly Talk at Sutton FMH 7.30 Roswitha Jarman Breakthrough to Unity:
Quakers and Mystics

Sat 15 Area Meeting followed by AM Tea

Sat 22 at Friends House 10.30 – 1.00 Nature, Nurture and Free Will. A Quaker Dialogue between a psychologist and a physicist.

Sun 23 after mfw Juliet Prager, Assistant Recording Clerk will talk about Yearly Meeting.
Followed by a simple lunch.

Sat 29 Clear-out day. Sorting out the kitchen and security cupboard. 11 - 4

Breakfast every Sunday morning from 9 to 10 am.

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

Collections in May

(Figures in brackets are by standing order)

- 5 Quaker Work at Home & Abroad £37 (£97)
- 12 Quaker United Nations Office, Geneva £136
- 19 Area Meeting £83 (£79)
- 26 Local Meeting £16 (£102)

The Donation Table raised £61.63 for the Campaign against the Arms Trade
Marjorie Evans raised £500 from sponsorship in aid of St Christopher's Hospice.

The deadline for the July edition is Sunday 23 June 2013

**Please give, send or email contributions to Gillian Turner Tel 020 8688 9659
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