

CROYDON FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

March 2020

Dear Friends: This is the month of Lent which, because of our testimony to Times and Seasons, we do not always acknowledge even though we keep many of the practices and are aware of it as a spiritual practice among Christians of all denominations. Our newsletter looks, this month, on how we live sustainably together in reports from our own and our area business meetings. Like other meetings around the country, doorkeepers and elders have stopped shaking hands and we are learning how to bump fists. How much we miss hugs! ***Gillian Turner and David Parlett***

*Do you respect that of God in everyone though it may be expressed in unfamiliar ways or be difficult to discern? Each of us has a particular experience of God and each must find the way to be true to it. When words are strange or disturbing to you, try to sense where they come from and what has nourished the lives of others. Listen patiently and seek the truth which other people's experience may contain for you. Avoid hurtful criticism and provocative language. Do not allow the strength of your convictions to betray you into making statements or allegations that are unfair or untrue. Think it possible that you may be mistaken. **Advices and Queries 17***

News of Friends

Jade and Eka are taking part in the Indonesian display of music and dance at Kew Royal Botanic Gardens which finishes at the end of March.

Olwyn Shorey is in her final year at King's College, London studying German and Portuguese. When we met she discussed the problem that British students will face when they need to travel to or work in the EU with only UK passports. Unfortunately the Irish connection goes too far back to enable her to obtain an Irish/EU passport. [*I had the same problem when I tried it!- DP*]



Olwyn and Helen Shorey. Photo by Gillian Turner

Living sustainably on Guernsey

As a Quaker and a lawyer who has worked on a variety of environmental matters I often think about ways of reducing my own carbon footprint. Living on the 24 square mile island of Guernsey makes this easier in some ways and more difficult in others.

It's easy to walk most places and reserve the car for heavy shopping, our subsidised bus service is only £1 a ride, 90% of our energy is now supplied from renewables via the cable from France and we pay per bag of black bag waste we put out for disposal. We also have a surprising cluster of good but expensive vegetarian/vegan/ zero waste and ethical clothing shops in town.

The real dilemma though is leaving our rock to visit friends and family. There is no boat in the winter to my mother-in-law's island of Alderney (population 2000) as the currents are too rough so a 12 seater plane is the only option to travel between the islands including for those from Alderney to visit the hospital in Guernsey.

We do have a fast and slow ferry to Poole from Guernsey but the fast ferry is regularly delayed, rescheduled or cancelled in the winter and the slow ferry is an overnight trip with a significant risk of rescheduling sometimes by as much as a day or two to catch a weather window. This year has been particularly difficult for the ferry company given the extended period of windy weather so that the bulk of islanders, including my family, use the plane especially in the winter. For me, it does not seem a real option to not visit family at least a few times a year.

I have been struck recently by a notice in our zero waste shop in town that we don't need a small number of people doing zero waste perfectly but a lot of people doing it imperfectly. I think the same applies to our carbon footprint. Even if some things are difficult for me like travel off island, I should not give up but keep trying to be imperfectly green. I am combining my trips to see relatives, donate to a tree charity and am considering off-setting. I sometimes look wistfully at interesting lectures I am asked to attend in England but I really can't justify a plane journey for a short event.

Friends living in London will have other challenges in trying to live a more sustainable life style but I do hope we can all keep plugging away imperfectly. Sending love and light to all Croydon Friends.

Helen Shorey

Compassionate Communities- Kindness in Action

I recently attended the second of four Kindlers workshops on *Compassionate Communities: Kindness in Action*, part of the Everyday Quaker workshops. They're held on a Saturday each month at Sutton meeting house, 10am for 10.30 start, finishing at 4pm.

The day was open to all Friends, (not limited to our area meeting). I was the only one from Croydon, some from Epsom, Sutton, Wanstead and Bethnal Green. It was a very relaxed and welcoming morning beginning with tea or coffee. Then an introduction to the day. We were split into groups of two, three or more at various times, discussing and answering questions with the theme of Communities: 'What do we consider a community?' 'What, if any, community are you part of?' (apart from Quaker meeting). One was to split into groups of two, each thinking of four words only on the word Community. Results were varied, only one of the four were similar in meaning or the same. 'Friendly' and 'Help' were the most mentioned.

I enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere, and the direct questioning, admittedly hard at times.

Some personal reflection: 'extreme need'. Imagine you are walking along a street, you see a homeless person sitting on the pavement. What feelings do you experience when seeing them? What thoughts come to you? What do you do... is your response always the same? How does your inner state of mind affect the way you respond?

As you can see, that gave us much to consider with lots of conversations over a welcome lunch break. (I was surprised at how ready I was for lunch). We even had lovely shared food, finishing with delightful French pastries!

The whole day finished with a guided meditation - a bit too late in the day for me.

I felt a bit 'brain dead', but so pleased I went. I came away with very positive feelings about Quaker life.

Many thanks to the Kindler team, also to Frances Touch for brilliant organising.

This quote below came to me and meant so much.

'I would like my life to be a statement of love and compassion – and, where it isn't, that's where my work lies' (Ram Dass).

Margie Ashley

Fasting From Epsom Friends' Newsletter

At a meeting of the local Inter Faith Forum on 13th February, we heard from a Jew, a Hindu, a Moslem and a Baha'i about their use of fasting as a spiritual discipline. I had thought beforehand what I could say about Quakers - 'fasting' is not in the index of Q F & P - and decided paragraphs 40 and 41 of Advices & Queries were the nearest I could get. I was invited to speak on behalf of Christians, but fortunately there were Anglicans there who were more competent to speak from the church point of view.

I was struck by the similarity of approach of the various faith groups to this subject. The details vary - Moslems have the whole month of Ramadan whereas Baha'i have 19 days, Christians Lent (and fish on Fridays), Jews five days at different times of the year, the main one being Yom Kippur, and Hindus during certain festivals. Fasting is always linked to prayer, and is during the day time (e.g. from sunrise to sunset), with eating and drinking allowed after the end of that time. The fast is sometimes complete abstinence from food and drink, or it may be water is permitted.

Afterwards I thought of two Biblical references I could have mentioned - Isaiah 58,6 and Matthew 6,16-18 - although the latter might have been a bit inappropriate in the circumstances.

Several people said how helpful they found the practice of fasting to be. The Moslem speaker said she is always sad when the month of Ramadan comes to an end, as it has been such a beautiful experience.

The Forum meets next on Friday 13 March at 7.30 pm at St. Michael's the Sanctuary, 4A Church Street, Ewell, when three successful women from various faiths will tell how their faith has shaped or contributed to their professional success. All are welcome. **Barbara Cairns**

Is not this the type of fasting I have chosen; to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter - when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help. And he will say: here am I. **Isaiah 58:6 - 9**

St Patrick's Day 17 March: A traditional prayer

Three things are of the Evil One:

- An evil eye;
- An evil tongue;
- An evil mind.

Three things are of God, and these three are what Mary told to her son, for she heard them in heaven:

- The merciful word;
- The singing word;
- And the good word.

May the power of these three holy things be on all men and women of Erin for evermore.

A Visit from Quaker Spiritual Healers

Our Fourth Sunday talk in February, on the topic of Spiritual Healing, was delivered most ably by Cherry Simpkin of Blackheath Meeting and Anne Le Marinel of Wokingham Meeting. Steve Shiner, also from Wokingham, provided interesting additional input regarding Friends' questions and comments at the end of the presentation. The talk was followed by a sustainably-sourced vegan lunch provided by Croydon Friends which included a choice of soups, fresh bread, vegan cheese and delicious apple cake and brownies.

We heard that the Friends Fellowship of Healing (FFH) was established in 1935 and provided Distant healing and promoted a prayerful healing ethos generally. The Fellowship was underpinned by the idea that in 'Spirit we are One and It knows no distance'. Quaker Spiritual

Healers (QSH) are a sub-group of the FFH, inaugurated in 2001, and is one of the largest special interest groups within the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) with over 500 members.

Both Cherry and Anne explained that healing energy is all around us and that everybody has the ability to heal by consciously connecting with the power of the Spirit. The point was made, however, that to practise healing it is advisable to embark upon certificated training in order to develop technique and work within safe and appropriate boundaries. Quaker Spiritual Healers, whether giving distant or contact healing, operate within a rigorous code of conduct and are provided with a mentor during their two-year probationary period. In addition, weekend courses are offered to ensure ongoing coaching and support.

Both Friends gave moving details of their individual journeys into the sphere of healing, including childhood experiences and personal need in times of challenge. They went on to highlight that healing is not necessarily confined to the physical realm but may reach emotional and spiritual areas. We ourselves are never the healers, merely conduits for the Spirit. Lamps that cast the Light, as Jesus said: 'I can of my own self do nothing.... The Father within, He doeth the works'. (John 5.30 and 14.10)

Healing, of course, is not only the province of specific one-to-one sessions with a trained practitioner. We can all be channels for the Light even in informal settings. When we greet another warmly, offer kind eye-contact or listen actively without framing a slick reply we are using the gift of spiritual healing. Jim Pym, a Quaker healer of very long standing, writes:

'Healing also includes many arts and sciences. There is the art of listening, the art of smiling, the art of empathy, of knowing just what people need, and not rushing in to offer help that is not suitable. Then there is the healing that comes through prayer in its various forms, through the laying on of hands, through music and dance, painting and colour, through communion with and understanding of the world of nature, and through friendship' (QFP 21.72).

For those interested in finding out more, the FFH magazine *Towards Wholeness* can be found in the periodicals rack outside the Common Room. For those wishing to train or just explore the world of spiritual healing, the next course is at Claridge House near Lingfield on Monday 21 to Friday 25 September, 2020. (Details from Kay Horsfield on Horsfield.k@gmail.com). If necessary, speak to your overseer as funding help may be available. **Barbara Earl**

Small steps towards sustainability

This was one of the items on the agenda at Croydon Business Meeting on 9 February, in preparation for Area Meeting and taking its place among a number of treasurers' reports. In discussing what small step we could make in our diets, and responding to Veganuary, we agreed to provide a vegan lunch after our Fourth Sunday talk, with the additional challenge of using local – that is, UK - ingredients.

Our menu consisted of two soups, leek and potato, and root vegetable, with various breads and oat biscuits – so far so normal. We also included a choice of four vegan 'cheeses', easily obtained from any supermarket but a challenge to dairy-lovers, with mushroom pat. We added aubergine pate, which is hardly local but we felt might cheer up the vegetarians among us. We weren't able to offer a green salad as all lettuces and leaves seem to come from Spain.

All proved very successful, with seconds and thirds of soup, all the bread and most of the 'cheeses' and spreads cheerfully vanishing.

The highlight of the meal, however, proved to be Liz Collins's Apple Cake, made with local eating apples. It swiftly disappeared amid promises of the recipe. Jade and Eka's Vegan Chocolate Brownies were a close second.

Local apples and pears finished the simple repast, with thanks to the cooks and assembled Friends.

Apple Cake Recipe

For the Apple Cake:

2½ cups (312g) All Purpose Flour
1½ cups (300g) Brown Sugar
1½ tsp Baking Soda
½ tsp Salt
1 tsp Ground Cinnamon
1/4 tsp Nutmeg

1 cup (240ml) Vegan Buttermilk (fresh lemon juice mixed with soy milk)
1/3 cup (80ml) Extra Virgin Olive Oil*
1 tsp Vanilla Extract
1 Tbsp Apple Cider Vinegar
2 Tbsp Applesauce
1½ cups (188g) Chopped Apple (Peeled)

For the Cinnamon Sugar Topping:

½ cup (100g) White Sugar
1 tsp Ground Cinnamon

1 Tbsp Vegan Butter (Softened)
Optional for serving - vegan whipped Cream

Instructions

1 Preheat the oven to 160°C (325°F). Spray a 9×13 dish with non-stick spray and set aside.

Notes: low heat is important. Any vegan alternative to grease the baking tray works if you don't have spray. Pan Measurement is in inches.

2 Sift the flour into a mixing bowl and add the brown sugar, baking soda, salt, cinnamon and nutmeg and mix together.

3 Prepare your vegan buttermilk by adding 1 Tbsp fresh lemon juice to a measuring jug and then adding soy milk up to the 1 cup (240ml) line. Leave it for a minute to allow it to curdle.

Note: Alternatives to soy milk can be used but beware of thickening agents which may change the recipe.

4 Add the vegan buttermilk, oil, vanilla, apple cider vinegar and applesauce to the mixing bowl and mix in properly. The batter will be thick.

5 Add in the chopped apple pieces and fold in. Do not beat at this stage.

6 Transfer to your prepared baking dish and smooth down.

7 Prepare the cinnamon sugar topping by adding the sugar and cinnamon to a bowl and mixing together. Then add in softened vegan butter and mix it in until properly combined and the mixture is crumbly. Sprinkle over the top of the cake.

8 Bake for 45 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the centre of the cake comes out clean. (the apples will remain moist).

If eating warm, allow to cool a bit before cutting.

Enjoy.

You couldn't make it up!

The Nontheist Friends Network are to hold their annual conference at Friends House at the end of the month (28-29 March). Questions have arisen as to whether or not it may need to be cancelled because of the coronavirus, and, if so, would Friends House reimburse booking fees to the NFN? This has given rise to the further question of insurance: 'Could we argue that cancellation of a nontheist gathering is due to an Act of God?'

DP

Area Meeting: Sutton, 16 February

Area Meeting started with a simple but tasty shared meal of soup, bread, cheese, fruit and cake provided by Sutton Friends, which gave us a welcome chance to catch up with Friends.

The children made vegan banana cakes, which we ate warm from the oven at the end of the meeting.

The main topic was consideration of what more we might do to meet our Canterbury commitment to become a low carbon community (see Helen Drewery's article on Sustainability in this newsletter).

In other business the membership of four people who had not attended Meeting for many years was terminated (two by resignation). A number of appointments were made: Barbara Cairns, Marian Noble and Alan Smillie were appointed as Area Meeting Committee (AMC) representatives for Epsom, Sutton and Purley respectively until 31 December 2021 and Jo Doherty as an AMC representative for Purley until 31 December 2020. Munir Morad of Sutton and Margaret Skelton of Croydon were appointed to Area Meeting Legacies Committee. Rachel Edgson was re-appointed as Children and Young Peoples Advocate in Croydon and Tom Pennington was appointed to our Premises Committee until 31 December 2020.

We heard that Trustees were considering introducing a new and simpler accounting system for Meetings in the Area.

Our membership clerk told us that the tabular Statement for 2019 showed that membership of South London Area Meeting had decreased from 169 to 167 during the year, after allowing for new members, movement of members, deaths and membership terminations. The Meeting

agreed to ask Friends House whether they really needed to record members as 'male', 'female' or 'other', rather than just the overall number of members.

The next Area Meeting will be held on 17 May at Streatham and Brixton (not Purley as originally planned).

Rhiannon Rees

Appeal for support from Helen Drewery

Would you be willing to help with planning and running a one-day event on climate change? Area Meeting has agreed to run an event in the autumn, and has asked Helen Drewery, supported by Carol Contant, to get it started. The event would draw in and involve lots of local organisations, with Quakers getting it going, building networks, and probably providing the venue, either at Croydon or at Sutton Meeting House. Friends in Blackheath have shared their experience of doing just this, and are willing to advise us.

The event would aim to strengthen connections among organisations locally (not just ones which focus specifically on environmental issues), draw in more people to work for climate justice, and encourage more and more varied action.

A few people are needed for the core planning group, and then later we will need people willing to offer all sorts of skills, both in the run-up and on the day itself. If you are willing to put some energy and passion into this, please contact Helen - helenmpdrewery@gmail.com, or 07846 423614.

Report of the Croydon Churches Forum

held at The New Life Christian Centre 5 Cairo New Road on Wednesday 5 February, 2020

Take time to learn about other people `s experience of the Light

This gathering of church leaders of various Christian denominations took place mainly to report on their faith in action as they ministered to the spiritual life among the people of Croydon. After everyone had enjoyed a satisfying breakfast, Bishop Jonathan Clarke, the chairman, extended a warm welcome, then invited contributions, each aimed at sharing the good news of the gospel was of love of God through Jesus Christ, and how this love is expressed in practical ways. Millie Reid presented to programme of the Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Health. This provided drop-in time for a number of activities, namely: The Rainbow Club on Mondays, 7-9 pm at the South Croydon Centre, Ledbury Rd; The Women`s Group, on Tuesdays at St. Mildred's from 12-2pm; The Open Door Friday evenings from 7-9 pm at Norbury Methodist Church, Pollards Hill North, SW16 6NL; The Bridge, Sundays from 12.30- 2.30 pm, at St Mildred's; Creative Writing Workshops on Tuesdays from 2-4 pm; Art Workshop on Fridays from 2-4 pm; A Spirituality Group on Fridays from 10.30 -12.15. In addition through the Welfare Project help is given to people having difficulty in sorting out benefits and finances.

I have given this detailed information as an example of how church people volunteer time and expertise in answer to the question *'Who is my neighbour?'* An appeal for volunteers was made for Croydon Street and School Pastors. For the past twelve years, usually on a Friday night, they have been operating in showing God's love and care to those enjoying the Croydon night life, and other vulnerable people in Croydon.

On a lighter note, Steve Cleary gave notice of a forthcoming performance of BALLET MAGNIFICAT titled 'Deliver Us' the story of Moses paralleled with the Story of Christ to be presented at the Fairfield Halls, on May 22 . Tickets £10 - £20.

One of the aims: 'To bring glory to God and His son our Saviour Jesus Christ through music and dance.'

There was also an appeal for spiritual help, prayers, practical help in offering accommodation to those involved from 21-25 May.

Judi Lane told about the aims and objectives of Croydon Houses of Prayer, and distributed the *Transform Croydon* Booklets in which prayers are asked for 50 days of prayerful support for those working with various groups in the borough, between February 23 and April 11 - the period of Lent.

Our meeting ended with prayers; persons at each table prayed for one another. On my table were Freddie, from Christian Action, Addiscombe; Tom from Croydon Vineyard, Neil from Croydon Jubilee; Rev. James Collins, Purley Baptist Church; Bishop Paul Reid from Grace

Tabernacle, Sydenham, who is now the current chairman of the Forum. This was for me a very heart-warming experience and I left feeling blessed.

Next Meeting: Tuesday 19 May at Spurgeon College.

Joyce Trotman

Our Premises

Coronavirus: Notices of our cleaning regime have been placed in the toilets of each of our buildings.

We have been focusing for the last few weeks on improving the security of both our buildings. The Adult School Hall, in particular, had a set of doors at the main entrance, used by Nightwatch, which were not up to standard for insurance purposes. Steve Betts, who now takes care of our buildings, has checked all outside doors and arranged new locks, along with a new door to the basement. Will Bitten, who is responsible for bookings, has obtained the keys that fit the new locks.

In the Meeting house both our outside door locks have been changed and copied given to our tenants and those who open the building on Sundays.

Next on our to-do list is clearing out and organising all the cupboards and storage areas, especially the gallery room and ASH basement.

As Spring approaches, the garden is cared for by Steve Betts, Kay Papadopolous and Helen Buckland.

Our email address is croydonquakersoffice@gmail.com

Events

Sat 7 March 1030 -1630 – Assisted Dying – do we need a change in the law? [Full.]

Sat 14 March 1000-1600 – Jordans - Experiment with Light Workshop. Contact office@jordansquakercentre.org or 01494876594

Sat 22 March 1400-1745 at Kingston Quaker Centre. What can we do? - A discernment about the apparent erosion of human rights, wherever that concerns any of us.

Sat 22 March 1800 at Kingston Quaker Centre. Music and Faith - John Irving, Quaker and fortepianist, with items from his current recital repertoire.

South London AM is running a series of Saturday workshops at Sutton MH on 22/2, 28/3, 18/4. Details on LQ Facebook Events or via <http://bit.ly/SLAMEvents>

Saturday 28 March: Liz Collins's swimathon. All funds raised will go to Cancer Research UK and Marie Curie. (<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Liz-collins-swim>)

Sunday 22 March 22 Fourth Sunday session: Finding Friends: what brought me to Quakers (led by Pam).

Timanne Primary School

The collection on 1 March was for Timanne Primary School in Nairobi. This is the school run by our Friend Anne Mayonga, who visited two years ago and will be back with us this summer. We have been connected with the school for a long time.

The Kenyan government has recently brought in a new curriculum, requiring new text books, a computer for each child and training for the teachers, but no funding for schools like Timanne. Anne's daughter, who joined us at mfw before Christmas, wrote: 'My mum's school has one computer that was bought with funds from Croydon Meeting, from the money raised in memory of the late Yvonne Kassim. Thank you so, so much for this. This computer is what is being used now for all the children. The money was also used to buy the new text books.

In short, the resources needed for this new curriculum are all courtesy of the good people of Croydon Meeting. It is because of you that these children learn and grow. The desks the children are sitting on are also from your collections too. We are incredibly blessed to know you...

For any collection made, my mum will use the funds to get computers or text books, whichever one will be more affordable. Both are crucial to the new curriculum. She says I should thank you so, so, so much for remembering her. She (and all of us too) is immensely grateful.

(Apologies for the absence of recent collection results. For technical reasons I'm unable to open them from the Dropbox records. - DP)



STOP HATE. START HERE.®

Hate Crime can be:



Name calling



Graffiti or writing

Independent Hate Crime Support

STOP HATE CRIME
0800 138 1625
24 HOUR HELP LINE.®
Text Relay 18001 0800 138 1625

IMAGES © CHANGE. WWW.CHANGEPEOPLE.CO.UK



STOP HATE. START HERE.®

For anonymous independent support, we are here. If you see a Hate Crime happen, or know someone who is being targeted, get it touch by...

Phone: **0800 138 1625**
Text: **07717 989 025**
Text Relay: **18001 0800 138 1625**
Email: **talk@stophateuk.org**
Chat: **www.stophateuk.org/talk-to-us**
Online Form: **www.stophateuk.org/tell**
With British Sign Language: **use the INTERPRETERNOW link on our website**

 Stop Hate UK  @stophateuk

CALL 999 IF YOU ARE IN DANGER

To see if we work in your area, check our website: www.stophateuk.org
For information in other languages or formats, contact Stop Hate UK.
www.stophateuk.org March 2019 Reg. charity 1162992

The deadline for the April edition is Sunday 29 March 2020
Please give, send or email text contributions (no longer than 500 words, please) to
Gillian Turner *Te/07805087981 email/gillianturner033@gmail.com*
Photos to quakers@parlett.eu (If from a mobile phone, please reduce the size first)

March morning unlike others

*Blue haze. Bees hanging in the air at the hive-mouth.
Crawling in prone stupor of sun
On the hive-lip. Snowdrops. Two buzzards,
Still-wings, each
Magnetised to the other,
Float orbits.
Cattle standing warm. Lit, happy stillness.
A raven, under the hill,
Coughing among bare oaks.
Aircraft, elated, splitting blue.
Leisure to stand. The knee-deep mud at the trough
Stiffening. Lambs freed to be foolish.
The earth invalid, dropsied, bruised, wheeled
Out into the sun,
After the frightful operation.
She lies back, wounds undressed to the sun,
To be healed,
Sheltered from the sneapy chill creeping North wind,
Leans back, eyes closed, exhausted, smiling
Into the sun. Perhaps dozing a little.
While we sit, and smile, and wait, and know
She is not going to die.*

Ted Hughes