

# CROYDON FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

## MAY 2015

Dear Friends,

May brings with it, as it does every two out of three years, Britain Yearly Meeting (the third year is a summer residential meeting), and I hope to have the newsletter with some details of events, in your inbox before it begins rather than afterwards. Also a report on our business meeting in April which dealt with the Erica Johnson Bequest, along with other events. At the heart of all our activities is our meeting for worship, and the words of George Fox, written in 1658, in the section on Prayer, still speak to us.

**Gillian Turner**

*Be still and cool in thy own mind and spirit from thy own thoughts, and then thou wilt feel the principle of God to turn thy mind to the Lord God, whereby thou wilt receive his strength and power from whence life comes, to allay all tempests, against blusterings and storms. That is it which moulds up into patience, into innocency, into soberness, into stillness, into stayedness, into quietness, up to God, with his power.*

**Quaker faith and practice 2.18**

### News of Friends : Death of Elsie Sawell

We have just received these messages from Helen George at Streatham and Brixton Meeting: "I'm sorry to have to inform AM that Elsie Sawell died peacefully on Sunday 19th April after a brief illness and at the nursing home where she had been living for some time. I will let you know the details of the funeral and memorial meeting when these are known. Her funeral will be at Chilterns Crematorium near Amersham where some from Swarthmore Nursing Home can attend on Friday 15th May at 2pm. Although Amersham is on the tube line it is then a taxi journey. There is no date yet for the Memorial Meeting in Streatham though everyone is of course welcome to both".

**Rhiannon Rees** adds: I will remember Elsie as an exceptionally faithful member of both Streatham Meeting and South London Area Meeting, attending AM business meetings regularly until the age of 100, despite increasing deafness. She was a kind and thoughtful Friend and her spoken ministry was always helpful. She particularly loved a quotation from Blake:

*Man was made for joy and woe  
Then when this we rightly know  
Through the world we safely go.  
Joy and woe are woven fine  
A clothing for the soul to bind.*

Should anyone be attending the funeral you might like to note that Amersham FMH have an exhibition that week (Christian Aid Week) commemorating VE Day by showing the story of European refugees in 1945, although it is only open until from 11am to 2.30pm that day. They have a Christian Aid lunch from 12noon to 2pm.

### Funeral of Kathleen Bell

Ten of us from Croydon Meeting attended Kathleen's funeral at Eastbourne Crematorium. It was a very full service taken by her son Robert and with readings of poems by her granddaughter and passages from Matthew 25 and Philippians 2 read by her grandson. Her daughter Mary gave the eulogy. Her long life of loving service to her family and her community was celebrated, and I was particularly struck by the fact that she supported the Refugee Centre and Nightwatch when it was originally based in the Adult School Hall, and how pleased she was when it returned.

Remembering how often she quoted well-loved hymns in her ministry, I wasn't surprised that we had a number in the service: For the beauty of the earth. Oh worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. All my hopes in God is founded. And one which was sung at her 90th celebration and which she wanted included and which so much exemplified her life: Sing for joy -

*Love is for giving wherever you go,  
Love is for showing you care.  
Love is compassion and friendship and trust,*

*Love is a song for everywhere.  
Peace is for spreading all over the world,  
Peace is the ending of war,  
Peace is for justice and freedom and truth,  
Peace is a song for evermore.*

Her daughter sent the following: A big thank you to you, and all the Quaker Friends who came to say Goodbye to mum yesterday and those who kept us in their thoughts from Croydon. It was extra special to us that so many of you made the journey and were able to come back for tea and share memories of her.

Please pass on our thanks  
With love and best wishes  
Mary and Robert

### **Croydon meeting for worship for business, 12 April 2015**

#### **15.033 Erica Johnson bequest**

We have considered the use of the legacy from our late Friend Erica Johnson. The amount received by Croydon Meeting is around £115,000. Following our previous consideration (minute 15.007) our Treasurer has explained the financial situation. We have received a number of proposals: from Premises Committee for improving our buildings; for a new notice-board for Outreach/visibility; from an informal group for benefiting the local community and from Kay Papadopoulos for continuing our support for the Friends Family Group.

We have considered the balance between spending now and investing capital with a view to yielding more regular income. We have borne in mind the effects of inflation and also the better yield on investments at the moment. We consider it prudent to set aside a substantial amount of capital with a view to yielding income that could be used, for example, to assist Friends and others associated with the Meeting in times of hardship. We ask Legacies Committee to set aside a substantial amount of capital for this purpose.

At the same time, we appreciate the opportunity that this generous bequest gives us to support concerns of Croydon Meeting, assist others in need, in our own community and beyond, and carry out necessary work on our buildings.

We have agreed a grant of £1,000 a year over three years to support our Concern, the Friends Family Group.

We have also agreed the following grants for the benefit of our community and other Concerns supported by our Friends:

Nightwatch £1,500;  
Croydon Refugee Centre £1,500 for towels and other necessities for refugees in distress;  
Timmame Academy, Nairobi, £750 for a computer;  
Brummana High School, Lebanon £750;  
Hlekweni School, Zimbabwe £750;  
WAVE Trust £750.

We also allocate up to £2,000 for a new notice-board and ask Outreach Committee to arrange for this to be installed.

Premises Committee have put forward a number of proposals. We have for many years been hoping to install a toilet for disabled people. Premises have consulted Six Weeks Meeting and taken advice from Richard Turner of Stiles Harold Williams. They explain that a necessary first step would be to commission a feasibility study. We ask Premises Committee to arrange a feasibility study and have agreed to allocate £750 plus VAT for this purpose; £1,750 plus VAT for a building regulations application and plans; and a fee of £2,000 plus VAT for administration of the works. We recognise that we would need to raise further funds to carry out the building work.

We also agree to allocate:

£10,120 for painting and decorating in the Meeting House;

£390 for painting in the ASH;  
 £300 for painting and re-hanging the pedestrian gate;  
 £270 for tree surgery;  
 £275 for new seating in the Friends Room.

We ask Premises Committee to give further consideration to options for improving the insulation of our windows and for new blinds or curtains for the Meeting Room and to bring back a proposal.

### **Adult School Hall: PAN ARTS**

**Pan Arts** is an intercultural arts organisation dedicated to the exploration of cultural diversity through the arts and how such work can inspire and implement social change. This is achieved through workshops and performances with young people who are marginalised and at risk of social exclusion. Pan helps its participants find a voice through drama, dance, music, writing and film. We work with people from all cultures and religions to encourage a world where we respect and understand each others' lives, discovering the possibilities of our rich diversity.

**The Future Group** is a theatre and arts group for Unaccompanied Minors from all over the world that meet weekly in Croydon to explore their creativity, make friends and improve their confidence and communication skills. The project is generously funded by BBC Children in Need.

The Future Group has been using the Meeting Room for two hours every Monday, and on Saturday 25th they moved to the Adult School Hall for their performance.

The organisers wrote:

It has been a pleasure to be in your lovely premises with the group this year and we hope to be back in September. Your space is very peaceful and perfect for creativity and the young people love it!

We would like to invite you to join us to celebrate the creative work that the **FUTURE Group** have produced this year!

### **A LOVE STORY AND A TIGER Two tales inspired by the Horniman Museum's Collection. Created and performed by the Future Group**

Please come and support us! We will have refreshments after the performance and an opportunity to chat!

We hope to see you all there! Debora, Annabel and the Future Group

Gillian writes: I duly opened the ASH at 11am and soon the organisers and some 15 young people aged 14 or so came to prepare their presentation. There was a lovely cheerful atmosphere and a table of juice and nibbles was much appreciated.

The youngsters had made a circle of colourful tissue paper flowers which they placed in a circle on the floor as the edge of their stage. The audience, officials from Pan Arts and Croydon Refugee Project sat on the floor (except for me, on a chair.)

The Love Story was about two birds, again made from tissue paper, but they were two different species and couldn't communicate. The young people sang and danced their story, ending with the moral that the heart needs no language to show love.

They had made an excellent tiger from cardboard and wrapping paper. The story unfolded in song and dance as each village tried to scare away the tiger and only succeeded when they joined forces and frightened it away. It was very dramatic with lots of shouting and clapping of hands, unlike the romantic singing of the love story.

It was a real pleasure to watch the enjoyment of the boys and girls as they performed their plays and participated so unselfconsciously. They sang beautifully; one young man in particular had a wonderful voice which rang through the space, and it was good to see the Hall being used again for the purpose for which it was built.

### **Croydon Quakers Twitter account @CroydonQuakers.**

Did you know that Croydon Meeting now has our own Twitter account? The address is @CroydonQuakers. When we discussed the Election at our March business meeting David Parlett

told us that he had set up a Twitter account for the Meeting. We encouraged Friends to exchange information about opportunities to take action, such as attending hustings and writing to our candidates about issues of concern to Quakers, so we have mainly been using the Twitter account for information related to the Election and Quaker work.

So far our Twitter account has more followers outside than inside the Meeting. More followers would be welcome and also any ideas for whether and how we should use Twitter after the Election. We could, for example, use it more to advertise our meetings and other events at the Meeting, such as talks or study groups. Suggestions welcome!

### **Is Meeting for Worship at the right time?**

At our April business meeting we asked Outreach Committee to arrange for a new notice-board to be put up outside the Meeting House. Before the time of Meeting for Worship is painted on it, Friends might like to consider whether it should continue to be at 10.30am on Sunday morning or whether the time might be changed back to 11am. Perhaps you could think about this before the business meeting on 10 May?

**Rhiannon Rees**

### **Highlights of Britain Yearly Meeting**

***Theme: Living out our faith in the world***

**Friday 1 May 13.30 – 14.45:** Salter Lecture Quaker Socialist Society *Trade Deals: Realistic concerns or rabble-rousing*

**15.00 – 18.00** Guided tours of refurbished Large Meeting House

**19.00 – 21.00** Welcome and required business

**Saturday 2 May 9.30 – 12.00** Introduction to the theme

**12.00 – 2.00 and 17.30 – 19.00** Special interest groups

**14.00 – 17.00** *Responding to inequality and injustice: Housing, a tested concern*

**19.00 – 20.30** Swarthmore Lecture: *Faith, power and peace*

**Sunday 3 May 9.30 – 12.00** Meeting for worship, BYM Trustees report and further consideration of the theme.

**12.00 – 2.00 and 17.30 – 19.00** Special interest groups

**14.00 – 17.00** Amendments to *Quaker faith and practice* and further consideration of the theme.

**19.00 – 20.30** Groups Fair

**Monday 4 May 9.30 – 12.00** *Living out our faith in the world – meeting the challenge*

**14.00 – 16.00** Minutes from Children and young people's groups. Epistle from Junior Yearly Meeting and Britain Yearly Meeting.

### **Other London Quaker events**

**Saturday 13 June: Building relationships in children's meeting - nurture and discipline**

10:30 to 16:00. A new workshop for all those who work or want to work with Quaker children and young people. We are very excited to be able to have Quaker Children and Young Peoples team run this new workshop Building relationships in children's meeting - nurture and discipline in Friends House facilitated by Mary Penny and Helen Chambers. The workshop will help you build confidence in working with children and also looks at behaviour issues and how to handle them. This workshop is open to all in the UK (as are all LQ events), but booking is required (online at London Quakers events).

**Saturday 20 June: What can we do with what we've got?**

Friends House Euston, 10am – 4:30pm. Simon Best of Woodbrooke is running a day for those in meetings where there are not enough people to do all the jobs. £40 course fee. Book via London Quakers website or 07806 663 023.

### **May diary**

*Events at Croydon meeting house unless otherwise stated  
For details of items marked \* see <http://www.londonquakers.org.uk/events>*

**Sunday 3** - Meeting for Upholding (Prayer for Healing)

**Sunday 10** - Croydon meeting for worship for business, from 12.15. All welcome

**Saturday 16** - Garden working party 2 - 4pm

**Sunday 17** - Area Meeting at Purley MH 2.30-4.30

**Sunday 21** - Fourth Sunday Review of Britain Yearly Meeting, especially for those unable to attend. Followed by a shared lunch.

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

### **April Collections**

*Figures in parentheses = by standing order*

5 April St Christopher's Hospice £71

12 April Quaker Work at Home and Abroad £20 (£87)

19 April South London Area Meeting £29 (£69)

26 April Quaker Concern for Animals £40

### **Collections in May**

**5** St Christopher's Hospice, **12** Quaker work at home and abroad,  
**29** South London Area Meeting, **26** Quaker Concern for Animals

**The deadline for the June edition is Sunday 24 May 2015**

**Please note that this is earlier than usual because Gillian is away at the end of the month.**

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)

### **The Peace of Wild Things**

When despair for the world grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.  
I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought  
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars  
waiting with their light. For a time  
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

*By Wendell Berry (1934 -)  
contributed by Cecily Taylor*