

# CROYDON FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

## November 2015

**Dear Friends,**

November looks to be as busy as ever for us at Croydon, and other Quaker meetings. As well as our own activities, there are the Quaker Quest meetings on Monday evenings and Kindler talks on Wednesday evenings at Friends House. Claridge House has a marvellous programme of events, though be aware that it closes for refurbishment on 5 January.

This month we are reading *Quaker Faith and Practice 23: Social responsibility*. There are many opportunities for us to participate in political and social action, some of which are detailed below.

**Gillian Turner**

### Unseen

Present met Past  
Said, I am your Future.  
But Past walked by  
Without look or gesture.

Present then strained  
To define Past's nature,  
But his sight was too short  
To catch every feature.

While Present looked back  
Absorbed in the creature,  
Future walked by;  
Unseen. Without gesture.

**Gerda Mayer** (submitted by Nic Plaice)

### News of Friends

**Paul Piqué**, whom many of us in Croydon will remember as a much loved member of our meeting, died peacefully on 22 September at the age of 94. His funeral was held at Croydon Crematorium on 5 October after the manner of Friends, with refreshments afterwards in the meeting house. We send our love to Pat and family and will continue to have many fond remembrances of Paul.

**Francis Clarke**, Mary's son and brother of Tim, died on 3 October and his funeral also took place at Croydon Crematorium on the 20th after the manner of Friends. The majority of those present were unacquainted with our customs but joined fulsomely in remembering him with spoken contributions including songs from two soloists. Few of us at Croydon were well acquainted with Francis, but it soon became apparent from the tributes paid to him how much he was loved by a wide circle of friends and colleagues. During refreshments afterwards at the meeting house some who had never previously attended a Quaker funeral said they had found it very moving. Our love goes also to Mary, Tim and his family.

**Jeff Grant** has finally had his book published! Entitled *Albatross – the Scent of Honeysuckle*, it appeared on 22 September and is available from Amazon <http://www.amazon.co.uk/Albatross-scent-honeysuckle-Jeff-Grant/dp/0993332803/>, both in paperback and as a Kindle e-book.

**Alexander Plunkett**, David Parlett's 15-year old grandson, has started earning on his own account by writing computer game reviews for an online publisher. Evidently starting young in the family tradition.

**Jade Flahive Gilbert write from Indonesia:** All is good here in Solo, though I am really behind in class. This term seems to have suddenly become really fast paced and even though I am practising at home and having private lessons to catch up on what I don't understand I still am behind. But I am enjoying everything nonetheless. I just have to try to not panic and do my best because the students here have been playing gamelan since childhood so it is in their blood!

Recently I helped run a workshop in a primary school here, making owls out of recycled fabric. It was for the community who make puppet performances from rubbish, and they promote reduce, reuse, recycle. The school we went to was amazing. All of the children wear Wellington boots to school because they do gardening every day, growing fruits and vegetables. They had decorated the school with things made from rubbish and knew all about environmental issues. It was really amazing because here sometimes it feels like no one knows or cares about these things. The

workshop was good for me to practise my Indonesian too, because the children couldn't speak English.

Also I helped a teacher here to teach an English class to university semester 1 students on Monday. He wants me to help with some other classes so I asked him if we could do a swap and he could teach me Indonesian (he also is an Indonesian teacher) and he said that would be good, so on Tuesday I will start lessons with him.

Aside from all that I have been going to the mountains and the beaches, and to hot springs, and have three performances playing my flute in the next two weeks for Javanese new year, a full moon celebration and the opening of a creative conference. So everything is really quite great. But I do miss home a lot and hope everyone is well.

My plans for the end of year break are to go to a meditation retreat which is donation based so not much money and travel around Java cheaply, and also practise at home to catch up!



Here is a photo of me showing some boys how to make owls out of old fabric. Health and safety is so different there, as I was going around with a stick of glue and a lighter, heating up the glue like that... I also had to try to remember how to sew! The kids were really lovely and asking me all about England, whether we have beaches there (they live at the beach) and what kind of swimming strokes I like.

### **Autumn visit to Claridge House -The Way and the Signposts**

“Love one another; as I have loved you”. *John 13*

Recently, I attended a four -day group retreat at Claridge House in Dormansland, Surrey. Run by the Friends' Fellowship for Healing, this wonderful house is a true oasis of calm in a busy and sometimes overwhelming world. Jim Pym, Quaker, Buddhist, Spiritual Healer and author, led the course as we considered a range of religious and mystical thought including that of Lao Tzu, Meister Eckhart and selected readings from Quaker Faith and Practice.

Jim facilitated some deep, guided quiet times sometimes using the “loving kindness” meditation. The simple, but transformational idea of, “let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me”, was a good reminder to begin with the self when considering wider issues and not assume that conflict always begins outside. We were reminded that as we seek to practise the blessing of compassion, we need to include ourselves or the circle is not complete. Of course, we know that “Love thy neighbour as thyself” and “Love one another; as I have loved you” are required of us but it is easy to forget that others will receive only the same measure of love and understanding that we give to ourselves. So uplifting to know that to love oneself is not selfish but a necessity!

Phiroz Mehta, poet, philosopher and religious teacher, advises in “The Heart of Religion”, that we consider the following when seeking to express love:

“The meditator...having calmed the mind, develops loving kindness by strongly wishing, first for himself, ease, wellbeing and happiness, and freedom from enmity, injury and disturbance. When the mind glows with friendliness for himself, he directs the ‘metta’ to others: the teacher and those dear to himself; later on, with growing proficiency, to all others, including enemies; and finally, to the whole world”.

The course naturally highlighted the parallels between mystics, poets and prophets of different belief systems, times and places. I came away with many ideas concerning the need to listen to the heart and know that, as the Sufi, de Saint- Exupery wrote, “what is essential is invisible to the eye”. The need to simplify, show compassion, look within and make conscious contact with the divine consciousness was suggested by much of the course material.

On our last evening, Jim read from a piece by Frederick Parker-Rhodes' from Quaker Faith and Practice (26.41) and commented on the beautiful simplicity of his words:

“ .....What am I commanded? To seek patience in suffering, humility in success, steadfastness always. What is forbidden me? To reject another’s love, to despise another’s wisdom, to blaspheme another’s God. And to what purpose? To help others, that we may enter the Commonwealth of Heaven together, each to find our Being in the Whole.” **Barbara Earl**

### Wisdom Schools

When you tell anyone that you have been on a retreat on Holy Isle in Scotland they usually assume that you have been to Iona. Some way south of Iona, however, just off the east coast of the Isle of Arran, there is a smaller island owned by a little-known Tibetan Buddhist organisation. To reach it, you take the ferry from Ardrossan in Ayrshire to Brodick on Arran and then take a bus to Lamblash from where a much smaller ferry takes you to Holy Isle.

Cynthia Bourgeault, (author of *The Meaning of Mary Magdalene*, amongst other books), led a five-day Wisdom School Retreat in both 2014 and 2015. Required reading for the first were two of her books entitled *The Wisdom Jesus* and *The Wisdom Way of Knowing*. If you put aside what you *think* you know about Jesus and approach the Gospels as though for the first time, something remarkable happens: Jesus emerges as a teacher of the transformation of consciousness. He is also seen as a wisdom teacher in a tradition older even than Judaism. Those two retreats have helped me to define wisdom much more clearly, partly by realizing what it is not. Wisdom as a state of consciousness is the opposite of angst and insecurity. In *The Wisdom Jesus*, Cynthia makes extensive use of *The Gospel of Thomas* which includes Jesus’ use of paradox far more than do the four biblical Gospels. Wisdom helps us to embrace paradox as “both... and” rather than “either... or”.

Most of our time was in silence, the evening meal being the only one at which conversation was acceptable. Each day started with two twenty-minute centring prayer sessions separated by a contemplative walk round the large meeting room. Breakfast followed and then the first teaching session of the day. We were a very attentive school, but if anyone put up a hand to ask a question Cynthia almost always took the question. The final morning session before lunch was voluntary work in the vegetable garden doing a variety of jobs which included weeding and harvesting leaf and root crops which provided our vegetarian meals. Our afternoon and evening sessions were taken up with chanting, sometimes accompanied by a guitarist, and more teaching. Our last teaching session was devoted to Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and we ended with a eucharist followed by a recitation of George Herbert’s mystical poem entitled *Love*.

Although the midges were a pest I am sorry that that we shall not be returning next year.

**David Rees**

### Our social responsibilities

Quaker Faith and Practice Chapter 23 reminds us of our social responsibilities.

*Facing turbulent times, Quakers in Britain seek a future where Quakers work collaboratively  
We are well aware that we can’t put the world to rights all by ourselves. We value the important  
work of others. By engaging with them we are already changing the world. We want to break down  
barriers; we refuse to prejudge who is or not an ally.* Britain Yearly Meeting 2015

**Nightwatch** reports that in its Harvest Festival Appeal it has received a much reduced donation of tins of soup and other foodstuffs while the numbers of people in need increases.

**The Refugee Centre** continues to ask for tins of food and household goods.

### Floating Shelter Appeal

Saturday nights in November and December. (Up to Christmas)

St. Augustine’s will be hosting the annual shelter for the homeless again this year. We are particularly looking for volunteers who will be involved in cooking meals on a Saturday evening or staying overnight in the shelter. We would also appreciate help with clearing up at about 7.30 am on Sunday mornings.

### **The White Poppy: Thinking about Peace**

The white poppy is a reminder of our inability to settle conflicts without resort to killing, but more important it is a symbol of commitment to work for a world where conflicts are resolved without violence and with justice.

In contrast to the red poppy with its implicit and explicit support for armed force, the white poppy aims to foster an understanding that there are alternatives, and rallies support for resistance to the growing militarisation of our society.

White poppies are on sale at the Meeting house.

### **CND Stop Trident Campaign**

There are several forthcoming opportunities to campaign against Trident. There is a mass lobby of Parliament on Wednesday 4 November. I have written to my MP, Gavin Barwell (Croydon Central) to ask for a meeting that afternoon and invite you to write to yours about the issue.

Recent press reports have suggested that the Government is considering bringing forward the vote in Parliament on Trident replacement from next year to this December, in order to split the Labour party and avoid the SNP making the Scottish Elections next year a referendum in Scotland on Trident. There have been separate reports suggesting that the estimates of the total cost of replacing and maintaining the Trident missiles have increased from £100 billion to £167 billion (there are no reliable cost estimates in the public domain).

Croydon CND have also been invited to have a stall at Ruskin House on Saturday 7 November for a meeting of the Croydon Assembly. This is an organisation of trade unionists campaigning against racism and the hostility to refugees and also has an anti-austerity agenda. John McDonnell will be the speaker. I have said I will run the CND stall (if they can provide the table, as I don't have a car) and should appreciate any help that you are able to give.

There is also a major anti-Trident demonstration planned for 27 February 2016 in central London.

**Rhiannon Rees**

### **Events calendar**

#### **Fourth Sunday Talks followed by a simple soup lunch**

In her talk on the Christian roots of Christianity (25 October), Joyce Trotman took us through the historical background to George Fox's ministry and the importance of the Seekers.

'Fox around the age of 19 needed his personal religion, so he set out seeking advice from both the priests and the dissenting ministers. We read of his disillusionment with them and of his great OPENING: that there was only one Christ Jesus that could speak to his condition, and the joy he experienced at this revelation: "*How every man was enlightened by the divine light of Christ. .... This I saw in the pure openings of the Light without the help of any man, neither did I then know where to find it in the Scriptures; though afterwards, searching the Scriptures, I found it.*" So Fox found Jesus both by way of revelation and in the Scriptures. The Bible was his main reading and it was later said of him that 'though the Bible were lost, it might be found in the mouth of George Fox.'

The Seekers were diligent Bible students, and their earnest search for truth had taught them the emptiness of mere outward profession and they found in Christ and in submission to His light and guidance the reality for which their souls had been seeking.'

Joyce ended her talk by saying: ' In A&Q 4 we read that The Religious Society is rooted in Christianity. Margaret Fell in her tract to King Charles II writes: We follow the way of Jesus. It is this same Jesus that George Fox followed, it is this same Jesus that his Seeker adherents followed. May I suggest that 21st Century Quakers do the same and I hope that the day will come when Quaker posters will read QUAKERS FOR JESUS.'

**22 November:** Elders will introduce a sharing session on spoken ministry – what does it mean to you and how do you know you are called? Afterwards we will share our lunch with members of the Turkish Muslim community in Croydon. This arises from a message sent to us by Parahat Akmuradov on behalf of Lighthouse Educational Society, reading "We are organising a community celebration for Ashurah. Traditionally at this time of year we make a special pudding, called Noah's Pudding, and share it with our neighbours. It symbolises the food that Prophet Noah made at the

end of the flood. We would very much like to share our Noah's Pudding this year with members of Quakers Central Croydon. We would like to bring some Noah's Pudding for your service day on Sunday, 22 November 2015 to share at the end of one of your meeting on or close to the day of Ashurah, which falls this year on 25th October 2015". The clerk and two elders met Parahat last Sunday and we agreed that 22 November would be a suitable date. Our simple lunch will be enhanced by the serving of Noah's Pudding – and from the look of the recipe you would be well advised not to eat too large a breakfast.

### The Art of Quaker Worship

Starting in November the Kindlers will be running a series of five weekly Wednesday evening workshops at Friends House. In "a time to worship & experience: a time to question & explore", we will be led by Thomas Swain, a former clerk of Philadelphia YM now visiting from the US.

#### **Wednesday 11th November: WHO and HOW?**

What is worship? Who are we worshipping? How do we start?

#### **Wednesday 18th November: PRAYER- Babble or Conversation?**

The nourishment of stillness and silence: being in tune – at one with Spirit

#### **Wednesday 25th November: COMMUNITY: The Need for Others**

Being helped and being hurt – finding forgiveness that starts with ourselves

#### **Wednesday 2nd December: QUAKING and SPOKEN MINISTRY**

Testing discernment to break the silence: what is Spirit-led and what is not?

#### **Wednesday 9th December: LOVING MY SOUL INTO BEING**

Glimpses of transformation - the heart of the matter in living the Life

These worship workshops will be participatory with inputs and group-work. 6.30 refreshments for 7.00 pm start – 8.30 pm finish. All welcome - come to any of them, or come to all

**Wednesday 4 November: Quakers and Business** Q&B Annual Conference 2015, 'What is the purpose of business?', at Friends House, 10.30am - 4.30pm.

**Friday 13 November: Living Adventurously** Trevor Bending will lead a discussion on "Is Spirituality real?" looking, he says, at what it means, bible quotations, possible revision of Qfp and language. Sutton meeting house, 7:30 - 9:30pm.

**Sunday 15 November:** Meeting for worship for business From 12:15.

**Saturday 21 November:** Area meeting Streatham & Brixton mh from 2:15pm.

**Saturday 21 November:** Quaker Activist Gathering 10:00 to 16:30 at Friends House Euston.

**Sunday 22 November:** Spoken ministry A sharing session, from 12:15.

**Tuesday 24 November The Middle East in Turmoil: Trends and Portents.** 19:00 to 21:00. The Kingston Quaker-Jewish Dialogue Group invites you to a talk and discussion with Rosemary Hollis, Professor of Middle East Policy Studies at City University London.

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

### October Collections

*Figures in parentheses are for donations by standing order*

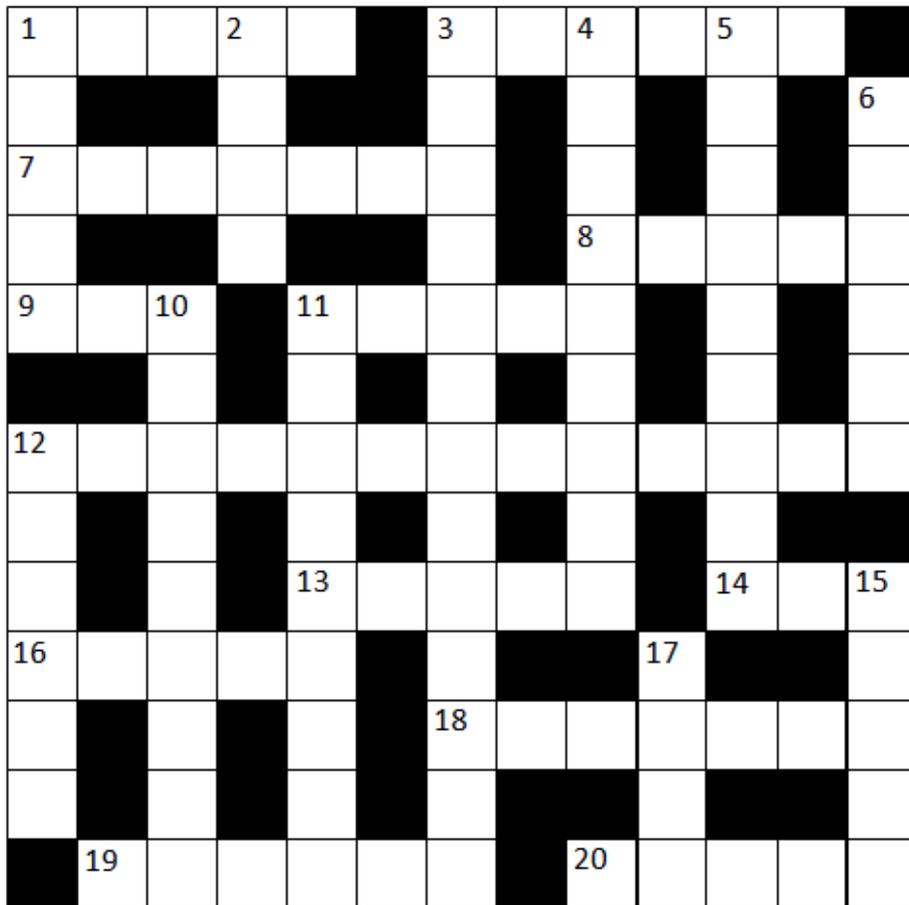
**4** Quaker work at home and abroad £35 YM £87  
**11** South London Area Meeting £20 AM £69  
**18** Croydon Sickle Cell and Thalassemia Support Group £64 LM £284  
**25** Hlekweni Quaker Training Centre, Zimbabwe £96

**November:** 1 Croydon Nightwatch, 8 Quaker work at home and abroad 15 South London Area Meeting 22 Croydon Local Meeting 29 Freedom from Torture

**The deadline for the December edition is Sunday 25 November 2015**  
**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)**

## Friendly Crossword #2

by Grumpy Old Quaker



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish (5)</li> <li>3. Extinct mammal, half zebra (6)</li> <li>7. Mimic (7)</li> <li>8. Rescinded (5)</li> <li>9. It might easily go off (1,1,1)</li> <li>11. Old war (5)</li> <li>12. Missing Quakers, often toasted (6,7)</li> <li>13. Song of praise (5)</li> <li>14. Sandwich avoided by son of Noah? (3)</li> <li>16. Nut (5)</li> <li>18. Stream (7)</li> <li>19. Mass migration (6)</li> <li>20. You can surely see through it? (5)</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Beaks (6)</li> <li>10. She left with a will (9)</li> <li>11. Completely armoured (9)</li> <li>12. Language of numerals? (6)</li> <li>15. Polyphonic vocal piece (5)</li> <li>17. Followed by less, she'd be cruel (4)</li> </ol> |
|---|--|

*Note: Five of the solutions are books of the Bible. Below: solution to #1*



### Down

1. Low dive but well connected (5)
2. Periods of play (4)
3. Royal pastry-cook robbed of produce (5,2,6)
4. Personal snatch (9)
5. Bird of great price? (9)