

CROYDON FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

October 2015

Dear Friends,

We have two important initiatives starting up in October, our Spiritual Review, and our programme for reading *Quaker Faith and Practice*. Our Spiritual review asks us to respond to a short list of questions, discussing them in small groups, meeting once and following up with a plenary session.

Our reading for October is from QFP chapter 21. This chapter explores aspects of our personal journeys as Friends, including: our youthful experiences, coming to know and accept ourselves, living a full life, creativity, getting older, and our approaches to death, suffering and healing.

Further details follow.

Gillian Turner

Quaker Faith and Practice 21.02

When I was about seven years old, I announced that my favourite text was 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped me.' The elders were amused, but I am not so sure that it was funny after all. The distance from one birthday to the next seems infinite to a small child, and 'the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts'. Looking back over many years, I fancy my choice now would be much the same. I am not prepared, here and now, to analyse and define the reasons, but I can only say that this quiet certainty has run all through my life linking up babyhood and youth and middle age with the latest stretch of the road and 'hitherto', though sometimes almost slipping through one's fingers, that golden thread has never wholly escaped my grasp.

Elizabeth Fox Howard 1943

News of Young Friends

Albert French and Jacob French (Albie and JJ) were 7 on 25 September.

Rachel's Shine Walk

Last weekend I finally got my chance to do the walk I have always wanted to do – a night time walk in London raising money for a charity. Previous images I had seen of this walk always looked so special and amazing and I had wanted to be part of that.

However this walk came with more personal meaning - I wanted to do in memory of my young cousin and my father in law, but also for those still battling this awful disease that cancer is – my mother and now, my mother-in-law.

A friend of mine mentioned she was doing this walk and was originally going to do the full marathon – 26.2 miles. I encouraged her to do the half one instead so another friend and I could join her. Before the night we had did lots of 5-8 miles walks in preparation and then a week before hand I walked 12.1 miles around Bromley, Shirley and Croydon. During this last walk, I cut it down a mile so I could get home before my hips gave up on me – I ached loads in that last mile of the walk and then had fears I might not be able to manage on the night. The following day I could hardly walk....

On the night, we arrived at Southwark Park at 6.30, an hour before we due to start. We had time to sort ourselves out and then decide whether we were Power walkers, Stride walkers or Strollers. We were the Power walkers. There were four walks: 7.30pm, 8.20pm, 9.30pm & 10.20pm with over 17,000 people participating on the night! The atmosphere was electric and vibrant!

At 7.30 we were off and we sure were! My friend made sure we were near the front of the queue, and not before long, we were storming on ahead. There were regular marshals in bright yellow t-shirts encouraging us along the routes of London, left and right, with their big foam hands and positive attitudes. Occasionally we had to stop to cross roads and occasionally we had people cheering us along once they read our T-shirts and understood why we had flashing bracelets and bright purple T-shirts on. Two of us moaned we might not be able to keep the pace up towards the end as we were averaging 14 minutes a mile. The other one quite simply said just keep going and, no, we were not going to ache.

When we crossed over Westminster Bridge we knew we were nearing the end, just a few miles left. People cheered us on, one of the marshals stated we were in the top 30 and we felt quite exhilarated to know that we were managing ourselves with surprisingly no aches! London Bridge got nearer and one mile left. Down to Billingsgate Market and we stopped – traffic lights on red for what it felt like forever! Then we made it. We ran the last 100 metres to the end and to the clock: 10.40pm. 3 hours 10 minutes and in the top 20 to finish first. We were ecstatic.

Next year the full marathon beckons!

A very big thank you to everyone who supported and sponsored me on this walk. So far monies raised have topped £450!

Rachel Edgson

Simone Weil's "Waiting on God" : one "petition" of The Lord's Prayer

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil".

Weil felt that in the first three petitions of The Lord's Prayer our attention is fixed solely on God. In the last three, our focus turns to ourselves in order to ensure that we make these petitions to God a real and not an imaginary act.

To Weil, the only temptation for man is to abandon himself to his own resources particularly in the presence of evil, or discord.

"His nothingness is then proved experimentally".

Although the soul receives supernatural bread at the moment when it is asked for, we become afraid that we can only ask for it for the present. Christ is our bread, we can only have him now: "Actually he is always there at the door of our souls, wanting to enter in, though he does not force our consent". This supernatural bread, however, cannot be stored up for future use and therefore we fear our potential lack, hence the humble supplication of this particular petition. Weil suggests that we move from this fear to confidence which will allow us to develop the strength to face this uncertainty and not fall as a result of it.

Weil notes that we end this prayer with "but deliver us from evil" which could be described as a negative, but entirely appropriate desire:

".. it is expressed as a fear; therefore it corresponds to the highest degree of humility and that is a fitting way to end". For after having contemplated "the name, the kingdom and the will of God, after having received the supernatural bread and having been purified from evil , the soul is ready for that true humility which crowns all virtues".

Barbara Earl

Memories of visiting Philadelphia

It would seem to be a statement of the obvious that every visitor creates the city or place that he or she is visiting. Choosing to see this means that there is no time to see that – and a visitor is likely to depart with his or her own design of impressions and memories.

In this, Philadelphia is no different from anywhere else. On my visit last year, I bunked off from an education research conference – well, wouldn't you? – and started to pick off items from the tourist menu. Conveniently near the conference centre was the famous Reading Terminal Market, the huge farmers market, where, among others, smiling Amish young women were selling fruit and vegetables. (And it was also possible to try there the famous Philly cheesesteaks, long bread rolls filled, as only Americans can fill, with sautéed beef and melted cheese). After that indulgence, it was time to pull myself together and do something a little more serious. Yes, a tour of the city's historic sites. (It wasn't that serious... after all, the tour guides were in period costume). There are very important historic sites in Philadelphia – the place where the American Declaration was signed in 1789 and the home of the Liberty Bell are just a couple of many. (There are others that are somewhat more recent...no tour is complete without a visit to the Rocky steps at the entrance of the Philadelphia Museum of Art).

Philadelphia has history – and it also has a focus on education. (There are over eighty colleges, universities and other institutions of higher education). It is the home, among others, of the University of Pennsylvania – and further out, of Villanova University. It was a basketball game between these two, using their nicknames, that produced the memorable newspaper headline 'Quakers rip Wildcats apart'. So here we are at that thing that makes Philadelphia so distinctive. After all, lots of places have history but not many of them have Quakers. Nobody can avoid seeing



Statue of Mary Dyer outside Friends meeting house, Philadelphia (Photo by David Parlett)

the statue of William Penn gazing down on the city that he founded. There are many old meeting houses. (For example, the Arch Street Meeting House was built in a two year period from 1803-1805. Its Quaker burial ground goes back to 1683). In Cherry Street, a quiet side street, in the heart of the city is the Friends Centre. So there are buildings to visit, historic sites to investigate, and meetings where the visitor is made welcome.

But, enough of these items, some perhaps taken from the tourist menu. For this visitor, the memory is of an earlier visit to the city has forever shaped how I think of Philadelphia. Quite simply, it was how the 'City of Brotherly Love' fully lived up to its name – and where the presence of Quakers did not have to be sought out down quiet side streets. In 2003, just before the Iraq War, the Quakers of Philadelphia had put out anti-war banners in Philadelphia's main streets. The banners were there for the visitor, for everybody, to see. Just being there made a statement about Quakers values (and American freedom). Most of all, a statement was made about the wrongness of this war, of all wars. The point was made – and, of course, they were right.

Helen Johnson

The Two Immortals

I had a request from the editor – 'please would I write an article on the hymn *'Immortal, invisible, God only wise'* which I remember singing when I was at school (many years ago). Written by Walter Chalmers Smith (1824-1908), a Scotsman, the first line is taken from the 1st Letter of Timothy: *To the King eternal, Immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever.* 1Timothy 1:17

The hymn originally had five verses, but it was suggested to the writer that changes were necessary and the eight lines of the last two verses were combined into one. The last verse explains the use of the word 'invisible' 'tis only the splendour of light hideth Thee'. Does it? A debatable statement with which some would not agree. The well-known tune *St Denio* was a Welsh traditional tune called *Joanna*, set to an old song *A Hundred Years from Now*. It seems unlikely that there was a saint called Denio, although it is the name of a Welsh parish, which includes the town of Pwllheli (Pwilly-Willy), best known for its Butlin's Holiday Camp.

But there is another immortal -

In 1899, seven volumes of John Greenleaf Whittier's poetical works were presented to my grandfather for work for an organisation in the North of England. This is interesting as none of my family had Quaker connections at that time.

Whittier wrote an enormous number of poems, most of them long forgotten, on many subjects and quite a number that mirrored his Quakerism in America.

Amongst these poems, was one called *Our Master* which has 38 verses – there was no television in those days, so people could read long poems.

A small selection of the early verses of *Our Master* resulted in the hymn 'Immortal Love, for ever full', and the later verses in *O Lord and Master of us all* Indeed, the first verse of this hymn is also the last verse of *Immortal Love*.

The lovely tune *Bishopthorpe* was written by Jeremiah Clark (1676-1707), known as the composer of *A Trumpet Voluntary*. Some of the verses that were left out were possibly too Quakerly for church worship, with their non-acceptance of the communion of bread and wine and the use of incense.

Verse 38, the last one (not in the hymns) reads:-

*The heart must ring Thy Christmas bells;
Thy inward altars raise;
Its faith and hope thy canticles,
And its obedience, praise.*

Here are the words of the first of the two Immortals:

*Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise.*

*Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, Thou rulest in might;
Thy justice, like mountains, high soaring above
Thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.*

*To all, life Thou givest, to both great and small;
In all life Thou livest, the true life of all;
We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
And wither and perish—but naught changeth Thee.*

*Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
Thine angels adore Thee, all veiling their sight;
All laud we would render; O help us to see
'Tis only the splendour of light hideth Thee.*

Wilf Hayler

Our Spiritual review

Quaker Faith and Practice advises every Quaker meeting regularly to conduct a review of our spiritual life and its expression in caring. It suggests that the process might start in small groups, in which unmet needs could be revealed and confidentially respected, then move on to an occasion drawing all together. 12.16

Elders have drawn up the following series of queries for us all to discuss in small groups (or answered in writing if preferred):

- 1 In the time you have been coming to Croydon Meeting, do you feel the meeting has changed, either spiritually or in its caring?
- 2 What does meeting for worship mean to you?
- 3 What has been your experience of ministry?
- 4 How does the meeting foster a spirit of community? What is your experience of the Meeting as a community?
- 5 In our meetings for business, how do we discern the way forward?
- 6 How do you feel our meeting and its buildings serve the wider community?
- 7 Are there any other matters not covered in these questions you would like to raise?

Elders are offering the following slots for group discussion:

David Parlett (day), Liz Collins (evening), Gillian Turner (evening), Yvonne Kassim (day)
Please email your preferred date to the Friend concerned.

Request for Area Meeting Clerk for November's AM

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to clerk a Quaker business meeting? You could have this experience on Saturday 21 November, from 2.13 to 4.20 at Streatham Meeting House. I have been given the task of writing and sending out the calling letter, agenda and draft minutes, and acting as assistant clerk. I need to find someone to assist me at the table as clerk, while I act as assistant clerk. Please contact me if you would like to hear more.

Godfrey Turner

Events calendar

Wednesday 7 October Conscription, Conscientious Objection and WW1

19:00 to 21:00 at Golders Green mh You are invited to hear Phil Lucas, Human Rights Worker in the West Bank & peace activist. Doors open and tea served: 7:00 Talk followed by questions: 7.30pm -9pm

Friday 9 October: Living Adventurously

Barbara Cairns will share with us some of her experiences doing voluntary work with prisoners and ex-prisoners. Sutton mh, 7:30 - 9:30pm.

Saturday, 10 October; Finchley Meeting Board Games afternoon

14:30 to 17:30. All Welcome and it is free. For all ages. Lots of games will be available but feel free to bring your own. Please bring snacks (crisps etc.) to share.

Sunday 11 October: Meeting for worship for business From 12:15.

Sunday 11 October: At Purley MH after mfw

Purley Meeting is having a bring and share harvest lunch after Meeting on Sunday 11 October, and would like to invite members/attenders from across AM. (it would be also useful if anyone thinking of attending can let us know, so we have an idea of numbers!)

We are also running an extra children's meeting during MfW on that date, to make it easier for families to attend. Parents, please contact us so we have an idea of numbers.

Tuesday, 13 October : Quaker History Talk

"A true friend to China: The lost writings of a heroic nobody". 18:00 to 19:30 in the library at Friends House, Euston. In recent years we have become familiar with NGO's taking medical aid to developing countries but the FAU was an important pioneer of this work. Its ethos strongly influenced Oxfam.

Saturday 17 October: At Sutton Meeting House

The *Death in a Nut* shadow puppet play of a Scots folk tale by Play of Light Theatre Company (Karin Andrews, puppeteer, and Elizabeth Page, cellist) will now be performed at 4 pm on Saturday 17th. It will be followed by tea and biscuits at 4.30 and that, in turn, will be followed at 5 pm by the concert by Leslie Bell and John Drewery, singing a selection of popular and light classical numbers.

Saturday 17 October: The Quaker Way...

Next Steps - Faith in Action - service/discernment (also on 31 October). 10:30 to 16:15 at Friends House, Euston. To help newcomers understand what it means to live, work and worship as a Quaker in the world today. Each day starts with coffee at 10.00 for a 10.30 start, with a buffet lunch, and ends with tea at 4.15. You can attend either one or both as suits you.

Sunday 25 October: George Fox and the Christian roots of Quakerism

A talk by our Friend Joyce. From 12:15.

Saturday 31 October: The Quaker Way...

Next Steps - Faith in Action – Membership and community. The day starts with coffee at 10.00 for a 10.30 start, with a buffet lunch, and ends with tea at 4.15.

Breakfast every Sunday morning from 9 to 10 am.

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

September Collections

Figures in parentheses show donations by standing order

6 South East Cancer Help Centre	100	(YM 87)
13 Croydon Local Meeting	21	
20 Shine Night Time Walk	65	(AM 69)
27 Worldwide Alternatives to Violence (WAVE)	132	(LM 134)

October 4 Quaker work at home and abroad, **11** South London Area Meeting, **18** Croydon Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia Support Group, **25** Hlekweni Quaker Training Centre, Zimbabwe

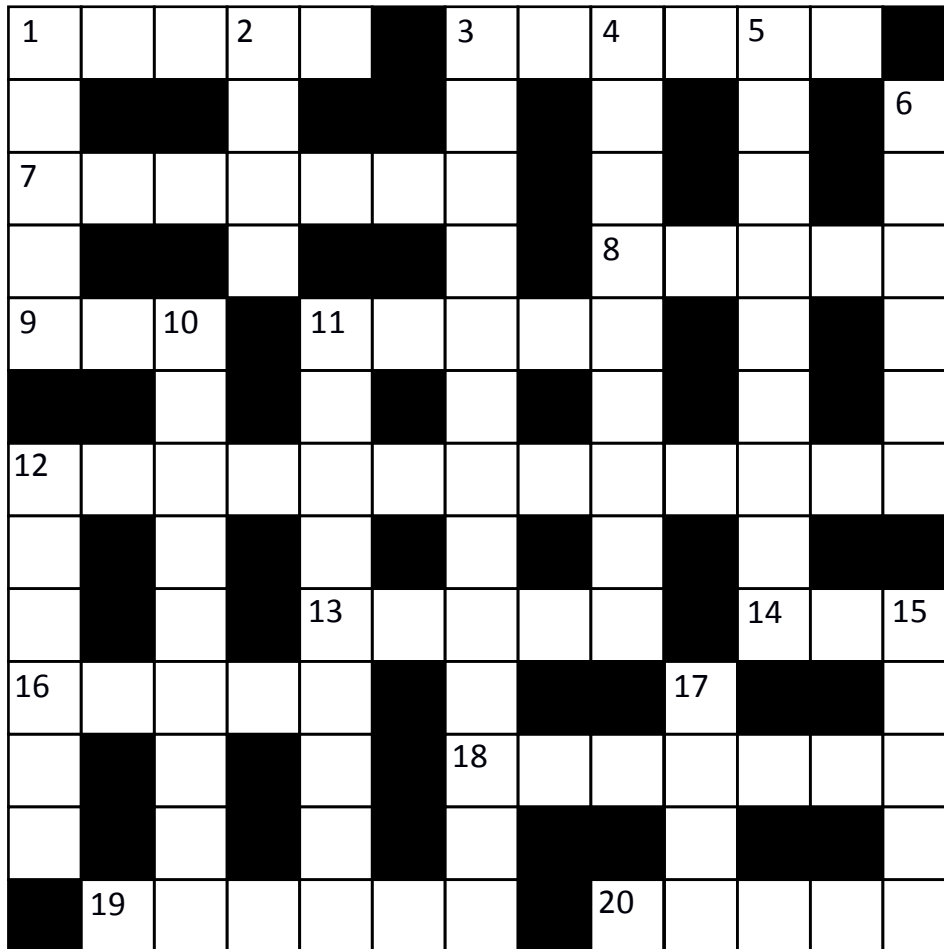
The deadline for the November edition is Sunday 25 October 2015

Please give, send or email contributions (no longer than 500 words, please) to Gillian Turner

Tel 020 8688 9659 email gillianturner033@gmail.com

Friendly Crossword

by Grumpy Old Quaker



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|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Hillock (5) | 1. It's skewered (5) |
| 3. Off course (6) | 2. Many draws (4) |
| 7. As James to Jesus (7) | 3. Friendly quality, hard to argue with (13) |
| 8. Put forth (5) | 4. How to come with heart and mind prepared (9) |
| 9. Auntie (3) | 5. In a peevish sort of way (9) |
| 11. Orthographic magic? (5) | 6. Odd or even, as the case may be (6) |
| 12. Friendly theologian (6,7) | 10. Two-wheeled chaise (9) |
| 13. Lacking (5) | 11. Fire protection (9) |
| 14. Tuber (3) | 12. Expert shuffle (6) |
| 16. Sheep stuffing? (5) | 15. Butterfly title (5) |
| 18. Mother of parliaments (7) | 17. Patriotic stone? (4) |
| 19. Baby birds? (6) | |
| 20. Old script (5) | |

Solution next issue. For a separate print-out of this crossword see

<http://croydonquakers.org.uk/pdf/Crossword.pdf>