

CROYDON FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

October 2018

Gillian Turner has been unable to work on the Newsletter this month, so I've been doing as best I can without her usual input. She asks me to tell you that Godfrey now receives good quality caring four times a day. He sends his love as always to his friends at meeting, and is grateful for all the support he and Gillian receive.

David Parlett

The Lake Isle of Innisfree

*I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.*

*And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.*

*I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.*

W B Yeats

News of Friends

Award for Joyce Trotman

In September 2018, the Guyanese High Commission has introduced, on the 70th Anniversary of the arrival of the Empire Windrush, a new award. The Windrush Lifetime Service Award recognises the contribution of the Windrush generation who paved the way for others to follow. The award pays special tribute to those recipients for their sacrifice, courage and pioneering spirit. Joyce is one of ten recipients.

Her citation states: "Joyce Trotman embodies the spirit of excellence and forbearance of Guyana's Windrush generation. Joyce worked as a teacher in London's East End throughout the seventies and eighties and dedicated her early career to the education of young people in the face of significant racism. Her love for Guyana and its people was exemplified in the publication of her 2006 book *The Proverbs of Guyana Explained*."

Marjorie Evans, after a further short stay in hospital, is now recovering at home. Although she cannot get out, she is pleased to be home and to see visitors from the Meeting. If you would like to visit her you will need to find out from someone who has already visited her how to get in to the house.

Celia Snaith has now moved to Reading, but at the moment we don't know her new address.

The Human Form Divine

William Blake, visionary, artist, engraver and poet, was born in Soho, London in 1757 into a society riven with inequality and destitution. Never a fan of conventional schooling and the 'cruel eye' of teachers, he was educated mainly at home by his mother. (Later, in his poem, *The Schoolboy*, he was to write: '*How can the bird that is born for joy, Sit in a cage and sing*') Blake joined a drawing school at ten years old and was apprenticed to master engraver James Basire seven years later. In 1779, he was accepted into the Royal Academy. As an adult, he was to combine poetry and art in works such as *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*'. One of his best known works, of course, are the words to the hymn, *Jerusalem*.

At different points over the years, Blake has been described by various commentators as a genius, mystic and, less flatteringly, a madman. Certainly, his art was way ahead of his time and not readily accepted by his contemporaries. Added to which, others often misunderstood his wide but unconventional intellect, political beliefs and rebellious nature. He was a critic of what he saw as the detrimental consequences of industrialisation upon the ordinary individual and a powerful anti-slavery advocate. Blake loathed war, hypocrisy, authoritarianism and dishonesty and not everybody appreciated his strong moral stance and rather direct manner. (Although he did not leave himself out when satirising falsity and self-congratulatory attitudes.) In 1803 he was tried for sedition in Chichester for allegedly swearing at a soldier who had wandered into his garden. From then on, Blake had to be very careful about how he put his views across and symbolism became a feature of his poetry.

Blake and his wife initially lived in Hercules Buildings, near the south side of the Thames, in Lambeth. He was appalled (much as we are today) at the grinding poverty and other negative effects of social injustice which he saw all around him. In *London*, one of his most outspoken, political poems, he observes a fallen city full of want, ignorance and unhappiness:

*I wander thro' each charter'd street.....
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness,
Marks of woe*

Blake abhorred the abuse of children as slave labour, in particular, the common practice of using young boys as chimney sweeps. Often apprenticed at the tender age of 7, these young lads were brutally exploited by Masters, who left them unwashed, insufficiently fed and inadequately clothed. Many dangers faced the young sweep, such as constant fear of burning or suffocation. Cancer of the scrotum from sooty, filthy clothes was an occupational hazard. As the boys grew too big to clamber up chimneys, they were turned out on the streets to beg. In *The Chimney Sweep*, Blake highlights the woe of the abandoned child who has to pretend to be cheerful to survive:

*And because I am happy, and dance and sing,
They think they have done me no injury.*

Years later, the essayist Charles Lamb used this poem as his contribution to a book of propaganda against social injustice. Blake believed that political, social and economic justice was needed along with kindness and compassion being shown to all.

Blake's religious beliefs were, unsurprisingly, non-conformist and he was a follower of Swedenborg, the Swedish Lutheran philosopher and mystic. In *The Divine Image*, he describes God:

*For Mercy Pity Peace and Love,
Is God our father dear'
Blake believed that humans are divine form:
'For Mercy has a human heart
Pity a human face:
And Love, the human form divine,
And Peace, the human dress.*

Blake felt that God dwells in human form in each one of us and is present in everyday acts of love, kindness and compassion. In other words, 'That of God in everyone'. One wonders why Blake was not drawn to Quakerism, as he seems to have shared many views with Friends. Perhaps Quaker involvement with industrial practices did not sit well with his personal views on its more negative effects?

Blake is buried in the dissenters' graveyard, Bunhill Fields Burial Ground in City Road, London, along with, among others, George Fox and John Bunyan. **Barbara Earl**

The Blake Room, Tate Britain has an unrivalled collection of Blake's work
Songs of Innocence and of Experience, William Blake (Oxford University Press)

Afterthought: Blake might well have been drawn to Quakerism, but in his time most Quakers were birthright Friends and the Society drew in few outsiders 'by convincement'. – Ed.

The Roots of Violence

I do not always take real note of things, they slide past my conscience mind, and there are so many Quaker concerns and good causes that I could not think about them all, anyway.

But someone helped to focus my mind on Purley Meeting's concern, which made me look into it more closely.

Joanna Doherty, who has been the inspiration behind this concern, sent a short description of the project, which made me realise the importance of the work.

I then looked up the web link to "Quakers in Britain" which is the main Quaker web site from Friends House, and I began to understand the vital aspects of this project.

Many years ago someone from Croydon Quaker Meeting, George Hoskins, began to research the root causes of violence, and developed what is now known as WAVE, (World wide Alternatives to ViolencE). This is now an internationally known and respected organisation.

Its goal is to make the world safer by reducing the root causes of violence including child abuse and neglect.

One of the key findings is that child abuse and neglect are significant root causes of later violent behaviour, and also that the crucial period in the formation of personality is from conception to the age of 3 years.

Joanna's concern has been about supporting mothers and expectant mothers, who are refugees or asylum seekers or women who have been trafficked, many of whom are isolated and traumatised, during this key time.

If you would like to know more about this work, please ask me, or look up quakers.org.uk/our-work/our-stories.

Mary Jakeman

'The Hedge': Quakers and the world

Spending time at Woodbrooke is no hardship. It's getting there that can cause trouble. Off the train at New Street and on to the 63 bus: even for an old girl, that's piece of cake. But the ride down the Bristol Road is a different story as there seem to be repair works in every section. Eventually – and I'll say that again, with feeling: eventually, there's arrival at the right bus stop, walking along the boundary greenery, through the gates, waiting for someone to open the front door, the acquiring of a room key which is also a security pass and, wait for it, I'm in.

It was, I hasten to add, worth waiting for. Woodbrooke remains a quiet, beautiful haven with friendly people to chat with and learn from. The course that is supposedly the purpose of this visit rejoices in the title, 'The history of the hedge: Quakers and the world'. It is led by Ben Pink Dandelion, who is an impressive combination of a chap with a relaxed, approachable manner and a guy who really knows his stuff.

As with many religious groups that can come quickly to mind, from their beginning, Quakers became a distinctive group that made choices, some of them controversial and non-compliant, about how they participated or not in the mainstream of society. So, why didn't Quakers withdraw from 'the world' like the Amish? Why did some course participants arrive by car (and not horse and cart)? Why is it clear that most of us, even at Woodbrooke, keep in touch with whatever we want to keep in touch with, by the omnipresent mobile phone? (Of course, there are more profound differences). The explanation starts with a useful definition. 'The hedge is a self-identified/defined barrier or boundary marker between the 'pure' way of faith and the 'impure' world with its consequent behaviours and beliefs". As a religious group moves from the status of a sect to that of a denomination its 'world-rejection' and separation can move more towards a world-accepting or, at least, a world-accommodating or ambivalent status. In the case of Quakers in the modern world, the emphasis is placed on the outward behaviour of an individual – essentially, the public enactment of one's faith, can be seen as reflecting on/linking with that individual's inward life. This would seem to be a view acceptable many Quakers. However, this has a lengthy historical path before it. Ben discussed the rebellious days of Quakers in the seventeenth century; the 'greyiness' and withdrawal from the world in the eighteenth century, and the more vibrant, more confident and relaxed form of Quakerism in the nineteenth century (which was accompanied by the admission of Quakers to universities for the first time).

It could seem that today the hedge is minimal. However, as the showing of the Hollywood film 'Friendly Persuasion' one evening reminded us, though old and now generally obsolete Quaker

customs of dress and speech can be gently mocked, the 'world' cannot easily dismiss the peace testimony. Its relevance remains fundamental. After all, we live in a country so militaristic in its societal culture that primary schools have an Armed Forces Day*. So, it is clear that the hedge is mercifully and meaningfully still there.

Helen Johnson

* Quaker News, No.101 – Autumn 2018 pps. 8-9, 10 and 11

How understanding our Unconscious Biases can help/make a Difference

London Quakers workshop at Friends House, Saturday 8 September

This afternoon workshop, run by Carey Haslam, was only an introduction to the concepts of unconscious bias. She did a marvellous job keeping participants on track, successfully side stepping red herrings yet at the same time being respectful of each concern that was raised.

There was no time to explore how our increased knowledge of unconscious bias might help or make a difference to increasing diversity amongst Quakers. This needs to be explored as a follow-up perhaps in our own meetings.

Most telling for me was the example of auditions for the Royal Philharmonic orchestra, or some other prestigious orchestra. Almost all the players were men and, of course, so were the selection panel. The panel was convinced that they were unbiased against women however it wasn't until the players were obliged not only to play from behind a screen but also to remove their shoes that women began to be selected on merit. It was discovered that they were distinguishing men from women by the sound of their shoes.

We were introduced to all sorts of unconscious bias and it was emphasised that this is **unconscious** and part of our upbringing. Only when we become aware of bias can we choose whether to alter our behaviour or not.

Frances Touch (in Epsom Newsletter)

Premises News

Building work

Works completed so far: (1) Painting of end elevation almost completed as is the painting of the ground floor windows in the ASH; (2) new drains installed in the car park, reducing issues with damp in the ASH; (3) in the flat a fan has been installed in both kitchen and bathroom.

Still to complete: (1) kitchen, started 2 October and to take 7-14 days; (2) new fire door in the flat and new entry system for the flat; (3) West and East room walls need replastering for damp issues; (4) external main wall to the car park to be re-pointed. All works to be completed during October.

National Community Service use of the Adult School Hall during July and August

We had very few problems for most of the time the young people used the hall. Unfortunately, in the last week when there was less supervision, we had some damage, particularly to the wall of the meeting house with graffiti which needed a specialist company to remove. John Dash, manager of London Quaker Property Trust, has reclaimed the cost from our insurers.

Damage to exterior wall following accident

John Dash has advised us to obtain an estimate for repairing the wall from the builders already on site. The cost will be eventually recovered from the driver's insurance.

The annual Fire Safety Inspection has been carried out and Premises Committee and Peter Tayler are studying the recommendations. Peter has dealt with the more urgent ones already.

Lettings

Amongst the new lets, Cressey College is booking the ASH on a regular basis along with the meeting room.

September Area Meeting

Area Meeting (AM) was held at Croydon on 16 September. As our 'spiritual activity' Liz introduced us to 'sophrology, a form of mindfulness that uses mental and physical exercises to achieve an alert mind in a relaxed body. Then Gordon led us in a meditation, focussing on the question 'Who am I?' He recommended the book 'The Reality of the Spiritual World' by Thomas Kelly.

Local Meeting (LM) clerks reported that all the LMs had given careful consideration to the questions raised by London Quakers and London Quaker Property Trust (LQPT) relating to 'Where

shall we meet in 2030?' As members had not seen all the written responses, the meeting asked the clerks to circulate them all to members before AM returns to this in November.

The minute of record of the life of our Friend Cecily Taylor, prepared by Mary Jakeman and Kay Papadopoulos, was presented. As Cecily was not well known in other LMs, the Meeting decided not to request that a Testimony be prepared.

Much of the Meeting was devoted to consideration of membership matters: The membership of Jane Smith, of Streatham and Brixton, was transferred in; Visitors had been appointed to a couple worshipping at Streatham and Brixton; The membership of Antony Barlow was terminated under the terms of Qfp11.30 (c).

Gordon Spence was appointed to attend the Sustainability Conference in Derbyshire from 19-21 October, if a place becomes available. Eleri Pengelly was released from service on London Quakers and Kitty McVey's appointment as a trustee of LQPT until December 2021 was confirmed.

LMs were reminded that the service of all our Premises Committees ends in December and they should bring nominations for Premises and, if necessary, AM Committee, to AM in November. We were reminded of several vacant AM appointments, including a second Trustee on LQPT; an Assistant Registering Officer; and a Custodian of Records.

AM had also been invited to nominate representatives to three conferences:

A diversity and inclusion national gathering at Woodbrooke 18-20 January 2019;

An All-age Outreach conference at High Leigh: 15-17 February 2019;

Quaker national interfaith and inter-church conference at Woodbrooke: 8-10 March 2019.

Bob Rogers had sent a written report of his first Meeting for Sufferings in July and we had the opportunity to ask questions.

Rhiannon Rees

Refugee Youth Group Outing in October, 20 - 24

The Refugee Youth Group (APOW) which meets at our meeting house and Adult School Hall every Friday, has been offered a stay at a wonderful residential centre in West Wales, at the edge of the Snowdonia National Park.

Braich Goch (<https://www.braichgoch-redarm.org>) is a project funded by Ros Norton who supported Refugee Youth until she died of cancer really recently. We are trying to support her legacy. Ros bought this residential centre in Wales for the development of migrants and refugee groups in particular.

Braich Goch (BG) is run and developed by people from our network. The methodology and principles of youth work and participatory action research are in line with RY methodology.

Refugee Youth would like to support the project which will give us mutual growth and will enable us to strengthen our work, ethos and methodology.

BG has offered to host us free of charge. We need to fund our transport, and have asked Croydon Quakers to support us in hiring a minibus to take us and our young people all the way to Wales.

This would be a good experience for us to support our new emerging leaders, strengthen our close partners and networks, get inspired by other group's work and giving us the opportunity to continue reflecting and learning as peers.

Federico Rivas

More about Braich Goch Sanctuary retreats:

Braich Goch-Red Arm (BG-RA) is an organisation of people from refugee and migrant backgrounds who understand and have been through, or are going through, the experience of seeking Sanctuary. This is why we want to offer our centre and expertise to people (with an emphasis on young adults) who are also going through, or have been through, this experience.

At the BG-RA centre we can accommodate groups of up to 20 people for residential experiences which include walking the beautiful mountains and valleys, swimming in rivers and lakes and exploring the wonderful coast of the Snowdonia National Park.

During our residentials we cook, eat, dance, sing and make music together, reclaiming our humanity and dignity, celebrating our differences and learning from one another.

Groups may choose to come for a resting residential to recharge and enjoy the surroundings of the pretty village of Corris, where our centre is located.

Alternatively groups can engage in much more structured sessions where we use critical pedagogies such as Participatory Action Research to engage young people in learning towards social and environmental justice.

We also work with groups to develop capacity and to take concrete action to bring about positive social change in our communities.

We use a vast range of methods and tools to work with people, these include: visual arts, theatre, dance, music, participatory film making, critical reading circles and discussion circles. For more information on our Sanctuary programme please send us an email or give us a call. Braich Goch – Red Arm, Corris, Machynlleth, Wales SY20 9RD. info@braichgoch-redarm.org, 01654 761 256.

Events

Ongoing till December 2018: 100 Years... Peace, Protest, Conflict 100 years... Peace, Protest, Conflict – Exhibition at Museum of Croydon, Croydon Clocktower.

Ongoing till December 2018: Art of Peace exhibition: An artistic response to the themes of peace, protest and conflict which complements the exhibition in the Croydon Now gallery.

Wednesday 3 October: Peace Talk by Sam Walton. 19:30 to 21:00, Westminster mh, free. On 29th January 2017, Sam Walton broke into the airbase where Saudi planes that are bombing Yemen are made. Sam will discuss how his Quaker faith leads him to take action.

Saturday 6 October: Radicals, Quakers and Peckham. 14:00-17:00, Dulwich Library Hall, 368 Lordship Lane, London SE22 8NB, free. An afternoon of local history to celebrate Quaker Week 2018, sharing stories of people who overcame adversity to make change in the world.

Saturday 6 October: Hostility or Hospitality? What it's like to be a young refugee arriving in the UK. 19:00 to 20:00, Ealing mh (17 Woodville Road, Ealing, London W5 2SE), free..

Sunday 7 October: Shadow World (film): 13:00-14:30, Westminster mh, free. In his own words, Andrew Feinstein, executive director of Corruption Watch, presents this film, 'which follows those who have rebelled against the arms trade, including former marine Colin Powell.

Sunday 14 October: Business meeting: Croydon Friends meeting for worship for business from 12.15. All welcome.

Saturday 20 October: Makepeace Daly on the Road. 10:00-16:30 Friends House, free. Old and new songs written and led by Tony Biggin and Alec Davison. A day of hope to banish troubles. All welcome. Bring picnic lunch or eat in the Quaker Centre.

Sunday 21 October: Area Meeting Committee. Meets at Streatham mh, 12.45.

Sunday 21 October: Deep Praise with Diversity. A Big Sing led by John Bell and Iona Abbey Musicians. 18:30 to 21:00 St Columba's, Pont Street, London SW1X 0BD. Free; donations welcome. Book with Eventbrite.

Sunday 28 October: Leavening the Spirit at Muswell Hill. 13:30-14:30. Friends are warmly invited to join Muswell Hill Quakers for this special musical event, following 11.00 Worship and shared lunch. Friends in Tune will be presenting a 60 minute programme of song and story.

Young Adult Quakers have their own meeting at Westminster MH at 5:30pm on 1st and 3rd Sundays. More at their website. Teenage Quakers have launched their own London group. Please contact Dan and Imi on londonteengameeting@gmail.com for further details.

Collected in September

2 SE Cancer Help Centre - £102

9 SLAQM - £44

16 FWCC - ?

23 WAVE - £163 (?)

30 Praxis Community Projects – (not yet recorded)

Collecting in October: 7 Quaker Work at Home and Abroad, 14 South London Area Meeting, 21 Croydon Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia Support Group, 28 Hlekweni Quaker Training Centre, Zimbabwe, 29 Homeless Floating Shelter

The deadline for the November edition is Sunday 28 October 2018

Please give, send or email contributions (no longer than 500 words, please) to Gillian Turner Tel 020 8688 9659 email gillianturner033@gmail.com