

CROYDON FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

September 2016

Dear Friends,

We pick up on news of Friends and last month's events as ever this month, and look forward to a busy Quaker September. The most important event for us is Area Meeting on Sunday 18, held at our Meeting House, which will include an exhibition and sale of Mary Clarke's paintings. We will also be preparing ourselves for Quaker Week, to be held during the first week of October. We are planning an open day, a Meet the Quakers type event, in the Adult School Hall, and our Fourth Sunday talk in September will help us to know what to say in answer to those sticky questions I was recently asked, such as Quaker belief in the Holy Spirit and how do we pray. We look forward to seeing you at these events and supporting our meeting.

Gillian Turner

The 15th-century poem below, of unknown authorship, was chosen by Cecily Taylor:

The Messenger

*Thou shalt know him when he comes
Not by any din of drums
Nor the vantage of his airs,
Nor by anything he wears;
Thou shalt know him when he comes
Neither by his crown
Nor his gown -
But his coming known shall be
By the holy harmony
That his coming makes in thee.
Thou shalt know him when he comes*

News of Friends

We are delighted to have **Mary Clarke** and **Marjorie Evans**, now recovered from their illnesses, worshipping with us once more.

Godfrey Turner sends thanks to all those who sent loving greetings on the occasion of his 80th birthday. In the hope that you will look up and read the psalm, Godfrey writes: *Some while ago, in ministry, I misquoted a couple of lines from Psalm 139. If you look it up, and exclude verses 19 – 22 where cultural assumptions intrude, the rest of the psalm has a wonderful and timelessness about it, which is truly inspiring.*

Betty Ellis is in St Christopher's Hospice, visited by her son and daughter-in-law, and her many friends. We sent a loving card signed by those present at meeting for worship on 28 August which her son Martin read out to her.

Our Friend **Robert Silver** died on 17 August. Robert first attended Croydon Meeting in the mid-1980s. He returned to Meeting in the last couple of years, despite failing health, which meant he had to attend in a wheelchair and could not always attend the whole Meeting, but ministered from time to time about the importance of Meeting in his life. We were pleased to welcome him into membership last September. Robert wished for his body to be donated for medical research, so no funeral arrangements are likely to be made for some time.

September 1916

My Father remained at home for the remainder of 1916, leading a full life and wondering when the authorities would be contacting him again.

From 1915-1917 London suffered from Zeppelin air raids but, as far as I can make out, most of the damage occurred in North London. However, my Father records he saw a zeppelin ablaze in the sky on the early morning of September 3rd, and on September 23rd he reports a bad air raid with the sound of guns and bombs exploding. On September 6th some of the family were at the funeral of the Secretary of the Native Races Committee at Mitcham Road. Strangely his name is

given as John Newton, the author of John Brown, but I am wondering if this is an error in the diary. There is apparently a connection here with the Temperance Movement.

My Father was looking for some form of work, and with the help of another CO, he obtained a job with Heinemann's, the publishers, at Howley Street, under one of the arches of Waterloo Bridge at 25 shillings per week sorting and moving paper in the warehouse – this was only to last a month – reasons not given.

Sunday, September 17th he received a visit from Philip Sleep, who had just returned from imprisonment in Dyce Camp in Scotland. In the morning Mark had visited Mitcham Adult School to speak on Francis Thompson, his favourite poet. Later that week Mark Guy Pearce from Croydon was arrested and 'handed over'. The rest of the week was taken up by Non Christian Fellowship work. He moved a resolution on the Home Office Scheme at a meeting at the Portman Rooms, and made a speech which 'seemed acceptable'. In the evening Francis Meynell was in the chair when Bertrand Russell, Fenner Brockway and Clifford Allen spoke.

The following day he attended a meeting of the Croydon NCF. The last Sunday of the month included a visit with his Father to Selhurst Congregational Church, to hear Dr Alfred Garvie, (1861-1945), a Congregationalist, who had contributed widely to the 1911 Encyclopaedia Britannica, and wrote an enormous number of books. He was 'not a pacifist, but a peacemaker', and he did much work after the War in bringing together the church leaders from the countries estranged by the War. The same night Streatham railway station was bombed...by a zeppelin. **WEFH**

Better by Far (1916)

If 'tis a lonely furrow that you tread,
 Seek there contentment till the work is done;
 Better, by far, in sorrow earn your bread,
 Than work without a conscience 'neath the sun.
 Go on believing that each sod you turn,
 Teems with the life of which new days are born;
 Better by far, plough on with eyes that burn,
 Than fail the Reaper on the Harvest Morn.
 So shall your toil find sweetness at the end;
 Through all the world your name be counted true;
 Though you should lose the love of every friend,
 Better be reckoned with the faithful few!

MHCH

Echo Chamber: A sound installation and photographs project inspired by WW1 Conscientious objectors

Although this exhibition at Friends House has now ended, I mention it here because the first person we saw mentioned in the accompanying booklet about the voices we would hear was Mark Hayler. We remembered his voice well. G>

Mark Hayler who, between 1916 and 1919, was imprisoned in Aldershot Camp, Kingston Barracks, Wandsworth Military prison, as well as Winchester and Dartmoor prisons.

Steadfastly throughout he maintained he had the right to refuse to fight. Later he became a Quaker and was chairman of the Croydon Peace Pledge Union during World War 2.

Bearing each other up with a tender hand

It is perhaps, surprising to find spiritual subtlety in the TV soap "Eastenders" but in a perfectly-timed episode last November after the Paris bombings the character of Tamwar Masood, played by talented young actor Himesh Patel, gently explains why he follows Islam to his non-Muslim girlfriend, Nancy. In a brilliant short scene, he gives his translation of a passage from the Koran:

"Do good to relatives, orphans, the needy, the neighbour who is near of kin, the neighbour who is a stranger, to the companion at your side, and to the traveller". He goes on, "that to me is what Islam is about. Be kind to people, family and strangers alike, and love them".

The beauty, timing and sensitivity of this actor's delivery cannot be overstated and the words on the page do not do justice to the profound message portrayed. The scene is on YouTube and well worth a watch.

After viewing Tamwar's scene, I thought about my difficulty at times, of living up to a life of loving others. I was then put in mind of one of the prayers of Mother Teresa where she counsels us to be kind, forgiving and loving regardless of the response of others:

“People are often unreasonable, irrational and self- centred,
Forgive them anyway,
If you are kind, people may accuse
You of selfish ulterior motives,
Be kind anyway.”

The prayer goes on to advise that we give our best, which in the final analysis, may never be enough. This, however, does not matter as it “is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.”

Our own *Advices and Queries* (17) of course, challenges us to examine our motives and intent by posing the question, “Do you respect that of God in everyone though it may be expressed in unfamiliar ways or be difficult to discern?”

It goes on to suggest that we listen patiently and seek the truth which other people's opinions may contain for us. We must avoid the use of hurtful criticism and provocative language.

The paragraph ends with this immensely powerful recommendation:

“Think it possible that you may be mistaken”.

Barbara Earl

In Fox's Footsteps

I enjoyed a 'pilgrimage' to Swarthmoor Hall, visiting places where Quakers started in 1652. If you get a chance to go, I highly recommend it - it is a very comfortable 'pilgrimage'! We had glorious weather, to enjoy the wonderful views. The rewarding experience owed much to the thoughtfulness and knowledge of our facilitator, Jenny Foot, Resident Friends Gordon and Sasha, our driver, Robert, and local Friends who welcomed us everywhere.

“As we went I spied a great high hill called Pendle Hill, and I went on the top of it with much ado, it was so steep; but I was moved of the Lord to go atop of it ... and the Lord let me see a-top of the hill in what places he had a great people to be gathered.” (Journal of George Fox)

Pendle Hill was indeed steep, and I only got part way up, but we could still see for miles over the surrounding fells. Others held Meeting for Worship at the top.

At Sawley, Ben Pink Dandelion greeted us in the community centre, as the Meeting House had just been closed. Like many old Meeting Houses, it was built in a remote village during the persecution. Sawley Meeting hope to purchase premises in Clitheroe, where the people now live, but we visited old Meeting Houses at Settle, Brigflatts (with its women's gallery and pen for the sheep-dogs), and Kendal (with the Quaker Tapestry).

“...there was a great fair at Sedbergh.... I went into the steeplehouse yard and got up by a tree, and most of the people of the fair came to me...” (JGF)

Unlike George Fox, we went in to Sedbergh church, where a tapestry includes a picture of him preaching outside.

“..and so I came and sat me down a-top of a rock, for the word of the Lord came to me I must go and set down upon the rock in the mountain even as Christ had done before. In the afternoon the people gathered about me, where it was judged there were above a thousand people...” (JGF)

At Firbank Fell we held our Meeting for Worship sitting under a rocky outcrop overlooking the valley.

Thursday was a day of contrasts. There were peaceful views over Morecambe Bay from Margaret Fell's birth and burial places. Furness Abbey is a ruin but the Buddhists have restored Conishead Priory and built a temple. We were brought harshly back to the present by seeing one of Europe's largest arms-making plants in depressed Barrow-in Furness.

“In the year 1652 it pleased the Lord to draw (George Fox) toward us....our house being a place open to entertain ministers and religious people at.....” (Margaret Fell's account)

It was a special experience to worship daily in the panelled chamber at Swarthmoor Hall where so many early Quakers met. We also walked to Swarthmoor Meeting House, where we heard from a local Friend how much work goes into maintaining the apparent simplicity of the building.

Rhiannon Rees

Visit to see the Quaker Tapestry panels

On the last Saturday in August seven intrepid Friends set off for Chelmsford to view the Quaker Tapestry Exhibition at the cathedral. Led by Mary and with Rhiannon taking up the rear to support anyone falling behind, together we braved Southern Rail to Victoria, narrowly avoiding being separated when the gates to the underground were closed because of the crush, found our way to Liverpool Street Station, walked the full length of the concourse to our train, and off we went, congratulating Joyce on her true grit at coping with so much walking.

There to meet us at Chelmsford was our dear and much missed friend Dave Perry, who told us that this was only the second time he had been to Chelmsford, and he wasn't quite sure where the cathedral was! It didn't take us long to find it, and in we went, gasping for a cup of tea. We introduced ourselves briefly to the exhibition organisers, but headed in a body for the lunch table, introducing Won Hang and Ian whom Dave didn't know, and filling him in about the goings-on at Croydon Meeting since he left, while he told us about his new house which he had recently bought.

Soon we were tracked down by Jonathan and Jennie Hodgkin, Rachel Edgson's parents and Joshua and Olivia's grandparents, and taken to hear an introduction to the history of the Tapestry. I won't go into the details as there is a brilliant book in the library in the Common Room with all the details, but we heard about how it started, in a children's meeting with Anne Wynn-Wilson, who planned a series of sessions based on Quaker history, and when discussing this with the one child who came, decided to research and then draw a series of drawings. It was the boy, Jonathan Stocks, who suggested using embroidery. The first panel was George Fox, and the last, number 77, was of the World Family of Friends.

There were 12 panels on view and it was wonderful to see them close up and have time to examine them. The panels chosen showed not only Quaker history but also Quaker involvement in the social history of the country and overseas. So we had the early Quakers George Fox and Elizabeth Fry, William Penn; our involvement in banking, industry and commerce; in the terrible injustices of the Irish famine and the Slave Trade. Then in our own times: poverty and war, with the panels on Conscientious Objection and The Friends Ambulance Service.

Cathy Spence told us about the panels she had worked on, particularly Mary Hughes who worked in East London in the early years of the twentieth century. We gathered round while she showed us the section she had worked on and the cat she had embroidered in the window, and we read the quotation *Once we have said "Our Father" in the morning, we can treat no one as a stranger for the rest of the day.*

Along with the panel showing Quaker Marriage, we examined Jonathan and Jennie's marriage certificate (Cathy and I both have ours). Their Quaker connection goes back four generations, and they were looking forward to setting Josh and Livi a quiz to fill in when they visited later in the week. We thought perhaps we should have a copy too. Finally we looked at the close-up examples of the stitches, bought some of the beautiful cards, had another cup of tea, and set forth again, hugging Dave as we went. We were all glad we had gone, especially Rhiannon who had recently seen the exhibition in Kendal

Do look up the website - simply key in "Quaker Tapestry". You can see photographs of the panels and read about the exhibition.

Gillian Turner

Making choices about the history of religion

Richard Holloway is an interesting chap; after all, he is a Scotsman. But there are other factors that can also be considered. In 2000, after a lifetime in the church where he became the bishop of Edinburgh and Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, he resigned from both these posts as he no longer believed in God.

However, he has not turned his back on religion. He is still an occasional church attender – and he writes and broadcasts about it too. In his new book, *A Little History of Religion**, he sets out to tell the entire history of religion from the beginning to the present day in under 300 pages. In this ambitious task, he is writing for 'those with faith and those without, and especially for young readers who might be making their minds up'. All the major world religions and their origins are discussed. He considers the apparent human need to have some form of faith and the current battle between those who do believe in God (in some form) and secularists. (In the final chapter of the book, called 'The End of Religion' he argues for 'secular humanism'). Though clearly erudite,

he writes without pretension though some readers might miss a more rigorous referencing and explanation of his sources and influences.

His choices about what he includes and emphasises as he constructs his argument could be called controversial. For example, in terms of Christian denominations, there are succinct chapters about the Mormons and Seventh Day Adventists - but nothing about Methodists, who after all have had a profound influence on social progress in England. Another group of people, involved in social action, that do warrant a chapter are Friends. So why has he done this? Holloway applauds George Fox for not accepting religion in an authoritarian, 'received', 'done for you' form. Holloway says, 'claims to spiritual or social superiority failed to impress' Fox as he did not need 'any of the operators who had set themselves up as God's official doorkeepers'. For his independence and bravery, Fox is called 'one of the most attractive figures in the history of religion'. Friends' role in the abolition of slavery in a so-called Christian society is noted.

Holloway also argues that since Friends had questioned the Biblical authority for such slavery that another of their major contributions was to end 'a childish way of reading the Bible'. In what has become 'the historical-critical study of scripture', readers of the Bible 'should not fear asserting (their) own conscience against some of its judgments'. The chapter ends by asserting that the Society of Friends has, to put it in perhaps unQuakerly language, always punched above its weight, as a small group of people whose 'influence is enormous'. Perhaps it is possible to speculate that Holloway finds ideas about 'the inward light' – first expressed centuries ago – a very relevant and current part of what he sees as the evolution to a secular humanism. **Helen Johnson**

* Richard Holloway (2016) *A Little History of Religion*, Yale University Press £14.99

'And each slow dusk a drawing down of blinds' - Wilfred Owen

In last month's edition I wrote that Godfrey and I would be attending the funeral of Lilian Stephenson, and that event has set me thinking of the rituals that surround funerals. I hope you don't think this is a macabre subject for a Quaker newsletter, but funerals can be an enormous comfort for the bereaved, and as the years pass, we seem to attend more and more of them, until we are attending our own.

Lilian's funeral stands out in my mind because, after the service, which was held in Old St Mary's Church, Clissold Park, and was a memorial service celebrating the richness of her life, the congregation walked the short distance to the family grave. The procession of mourners was headed by a West Indian steel band and followed by the hearse pulled by two black horses. It made quite a spectacle as it moved through Stoke Newington High Street.

I was in my thirties before I went to a funeral. I had relatives who died when I was a child, but I have no memory of attending their funerals. However, I vividly remember the funerals of our Roman Catholic neighbours. Every house in the square of houses, including ours, drew their curtains and blinds, from the announcement of the death to the removal of the hearse from outside the house, and we, along with those unable to attend, stood respectfully at our gates as it moved off. We didn't go to the funeral, of course, being Protestants, any more than they came to ours, but my mother would deliver a plate of ham sandwiches or a shop-bought cake (much prized over home-made) for the wake, and my father would join the men later in the pub for the chat.

I remember the funeral of my cousin who died aged 22, and the disapproval of our Irish relatives when the church service played 'Bridge over troubled waters', his favourite song, instead of a hymn. I hope they would take the singing of Crystal Palace's anthem, as we had at Alan Yardley's funeral, in their stride nowadays. I remember the month I attended three funerals, all for much-loved relatives: the first a packed country Church of England ceremony in Lancashire, everyone clad in black; the second a sparsely attended service in a Pentecostal church with a harmonium; and the third a Quaker meeting here in Croydon where the non-Quaker mourners coped gamely with the silence and even ministered. Then there were the burials – how can I forget my mother-in-law's? - in a thunderstorm with a vicar with a hacking cough; Blanche's, the graveyard awash after weeks of rain with the coffin-bearers in green wellies; and Pat Roberts', the silent group around the grave while the birds sang.

That final line from Owen's 'Requiem for Doomed Youth' quoted above, has always moved me. The reminder of the natural cycle of life, the ending of the day, and the love and respect we show to those we grieve for. But always, after the ceremony, no matter where and what kind, come the refreshments. I have, this year, discussed with two dear Friends before their death the

organisation of their memorial meetings for worship. Both asked specifically for, and were comforted and cheered by, the thought of refreshments in the Common Room afterwards for all their friends and relatives. This breaking of bread is our communion. **Gillian Turner**

Area Meeting September 18 at Croydon Meeting. Art Exhibition

This is the not- quite- new arrangement, which also gives us the opportunity to see, and perhaps buy, Mary Clarke's paintings, which will be on show in the meeting and common rooms, and the corridor upstairs, between 12 and 2, at the same time we have our lunch.

We have our usual meeting for worship followed by tea and coffee, but then we have lunch from about 12.45 (rather than tea afterwards as of yore), until 2pm. Between 2 and 4pm we have a spiritual input session lasting about 45 minutes, followed by the business meeting, which should last about an hour, finishing about 4, The exhibition closes at 5.

This is a great opportunity to experience Area Meeting, and to meet Friends and attenders from neighbouring meetings. The spiritual exercise gives us opportunity to discuss our feelings following the Brexit result of the Referendum. Further details of the agenda will follow.

Refugee Day Centre Appeal

The centre reopens on Tuesday 6 September; now the schools are reopening people will be available to help at the centre again. They offer a cooked lunch and give out clothes and food to refugees, they also talk to them to find out their needs.

The centre would like clothes clean and in good condition for men, women and children. Winter clothing would be ideal as winter will soon be here. They would also appreciate new men's underwear and socks: adult wear in small sizes are ideal as the majority of asylum seekers are thinner than we are. Shoes in good condition would also be welcomed. Suitcases, backpacks, bags are also needed to put these things in.

Some people are moved to different parts of the country and would appreciate toiletries such as soap, shampoo, toothbrushes, toothpaste.

It is good to give tinned fish, tinned tomatoes and dry pasta, then they will be able to cook a nutritious meal, or similar, beans and other tinned food. Such items are needed by people to live.

The centre is open between 9am and 12 noon on a Monday to receive these goods. Parking is available by going halfway round the island and entering through the back and driving up and entering behind the Baptist Church.

The donations table is for the Refugee centre this month.

Our Children

Our children's meetings begin on 18 September, coinciding with Area Meeting, to which they are invited. They happen every first and third Sunday of the month: October 2 and 16; November 6 and 20; December 4 and 18.

World Quaker Day October 2

As the sun rises in each area of the world, we want to remember that Quakers are worshipping through every time zone, celebrating our deep connections across cultures and Quaker traditions. We are united in love and can accompany each other on this special day that draws us together. As we worship, let us hold each other in prayer and thanksgiving, and let our hymns of praise resound across the world. **FWCC**

Also happening...

Tuesday 6 September. Peace film screening: 19:00 to 21:00 at the Empire Cinema, Walthamstow, 267 High Street, The Scene, Walthamstow, E17 7LD. Price £10.50. One of the most powerful peace films of the last 25 years, "A Bold Peace" explores the amazing, little known story of Costa Rica's experiment in living without a military for over 65 years. It was made with the close cooperation of Quakers in Costa Rica and several of them appear in the film.

Sunday 11 September: Meeting for worship for business Croydon Friends business meeting from 12.15pm.

Saturday 17 September: Hope for the Future advice surgery in Waterloo 14:00 to 17:00, at St Andrew's Church, Waterloo, entry free. Hope for the Future is a Christian climate change charity that is partnered with Quaker Peace and Social Witness. It is holding an advice surgery in Waterloo for people who may be meeting with their MP about climate change. Meeting with your MP for the first time can feel pretty daunting. Maybe you are planning an event with your MP or have already met them and are wondering how to move the conversation forward? Perhaps your local climate group would benefit from some ideas of how other groups have effectively engaged their local MP. To register your interest, please contact Jo.

Saturday-Sunday 17-18 September: Mary Clarke's art exhibition will be open to Friends and the public on the Saturday afternoon and to Friends only on the Sunday.

Sunday 18 September: Area Meeting Following a picnic lunch at Croydon meeting house, clerked by Sutton Friends.

Thursday 22 September: People and planet The new name for the Sutton Living Adventurously group is People and Planet. Their next meeting will be at Sutton meeting house on Thursday 22 September from 7.30pm. The speaker will be Amanda Edge, who will be talking about "The Economy as if People Mattered". Please let Margaret Onians know if you would like to attend.

Saturday 24 September: Ceilidh dance for YFGM, Westminster fmh (52 St Martin's Lane, London WC2N 4EA), 18:30 to 22:00. All ages are invited to a ceilidh dance (Scottish social dance) to help raise funds for Young Friends General Meeting (YFGM). The Green Kite Ceilidh band will be playing live and call the dances so you'll know the moves. Tickets include food, cost £15, and can be purchased at www.jumblebee.co.uk/yfgm Doors open 18.30.

Saturday 25 September: Fourth Sunday talk Speaking our faith in Quaker Week. From 12.15pm, followed by lunch.

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

Collected in August

7 Quaker work at home and abroad **49**
14 Croydon Refugee Centre **61**
21 South London Area Meeting **55**
28 Mind in Croydon **50**

Collections in September: **4** South East Cancer Help Centre **11** Croydon Local Meeting **18** OPEN
25 Worldwide Alternatives to Violence (WAVE)

The deadline for the October edition is **Sunday 25 September 2016**

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

Happy Birthdays!

**Joshua Edgson will be 11 on 4 September and
Albert and Jacob French 8 on 25 September**

To view video recorded in the Adult School Hall see:

<http://ukfilmlocation.com/Media.aspx?ShowreelID=479957b9-7db2-4c8e-8136-8557aac7be29>

Solution to Crossword #11 (with apologies for the mistake. Change 18 down to "8 ac changed by French rule", giving *regle*). **Across**; 1. Friend of Piglet (Winnie-the-Pooh); 8. Bright arrangement of 11 ac. (glare); 9. Rampart (bastion); 10. Charity (Shelter); 11. Musical arrangement of 17 ac. (Elgar); 12. Things given in quantity surveying (datums); 14. "In quires and places where they sing here followeth the -----" (anthem); 17. Broad arrangement of 18 dn (large); 19. A gigantic Philistine (Goliath); 22. An explosively gigantic quantity (megaton); 23. A well-voiced group (choir); 24. Charlatan sought by Dorothy (The Wizard of Oz). **Down**; 1. Well-gotten gains (wages); 2. Couldn't be closer (nearest); 3. Clumsy (inept); 4. Underground euphoniums? (tubers); 5. Oriental (eastern); 6. It's due to circle before the flank (owing); 7. Murmur and tap your fingers – boring (humdrum); 12. Mark the boundary (delimit); 13. Italian conductors (maestri); 15. Divert guillotine's object? (head off); 16. Things to be discussed (agenda); 18. Royal arrangement of 8 ac. (regal); 20. Clear (lucid); 21. Car hire firm sounds pain-inducing (Hertz).