

south london aqm news

Croydon, Epsom, Purley, Streatham & Sutton local Quaker meetings

October 2011

News of Friends

We welcome into our AM **Rosemary Houlston**, transferred in September from NE Thames AQM.

Wanda Hayman of Streatham meeting died on 21 September in St George's Hospital. Her funeral is on 21 October at South London Crematorium.

Erica Johnson, long an attender at Croydon meeting, died on 2 October at the age of 92.

Anna-Tina Jashapara's class at school are focusing on the theme of Conflict this term and Ashok has put the teacher in contact with Ken Aldous who has expressed willingness to go in and talk to the children about conflict resolution.

Anthea Underwood and **Marjorie Evans** will be celebrating their respective birthdays by inviting Friends to a catered lunch at Croydon meeting house after meeting for worship on 23 October. Lunch will be followed by a session of Desert Island Discs, with words and music provided by Croydon Friends.

Carol Contant (Sutton) had a wonderful experience at the end of July. She was invited to the Trinidad and Tobago embassy in London for a celebration of musicians who have been performing steel band music. At time of writing, however, she is in Epsom Hospital for a knee replacement operation.

Carrie Comfort, a Streatham attender, had a baby girl, Harriet, in July. She is a sister for Delia.

Christopher Odey (Sutton) has begun his university course at the University of East Anglia, doing Environmental Studies.

Elizabeth Page (Sutton) is working with the Coull Quartet, a string quartet who are based in Warwick University. One project is to develop a simultaneous performance combining music with table tennis, as part of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad.

Emily Collins achieved a merit in her Art Foundation course and is now studying for a degree in art history at Lincoln, while sister **Sophie**, with 3 'A' grades at A-level, has started at York University to read History.

Jeff Grant, Croydon meeting's computer guru, was due to undergo an operation on his foot on 12 October.

Kathleen Bell (Croydon), settling in well at Bernhard Baron Cottage Home, Polegate, is recuperating from a mastectomy.

Mamadu Tyson completed his Catering course and has been awarded an apprenticeship as a chef in a Patisserie and Chocolaterie.

Ruth Hawley (Streatham) has much improved in health since her illness last September, but remains quite weak and unsteady. She has lost weight and despite an improved appetite has too little energy to be able to attend meetings for worship. She would welcome visitors, but please phone her first (020 8673 6710) to see if she is up to it.

Yvonne Kassim (Croydon) is recuperating at Rustington after successful open heart surgery.

Quaker Steel Band on YouTube

The popularity of the Sutton Quaker Steel Band goes from strength to strength. They recently went to Croydon Meeting House for a recording session, Croydon being selected for its acoustics. The plan is to put a brief performance on YouTube. A professional recording team were there and the meeting house was fitted out with masses of lights, reflectors and cameras. The band played two popular items from their repertoire: Bring me Sunshine, and El Condor Passa, but they had to play each of them half a dozen times! The recordings will be edited and should be on the Internet within a few weeks.

New beginnings

Jade Flahive Gilbert, having achieved a 2.1 in her BA Music degree at York University and now starting her MA in Community Music, writes:

I am really excited about beginning my Masters in Community Music at the University of York. The past three years studying Music at York have been challenging and inspiring and I know that the Masters will just build on the experiences I have already had. The course itself is very flexible and we have the opportunity to shape it to suit our particular interests and goals.

During the year I plan to look into the use of music as therapy for those with different learning difficulties and mental health issues, and as a tool for conflict resolution and community building. I have a strong enthusi-

asm for community music with a deep belief that music is capable of achieving amazing results whether that be the rehabilitation of those in prison, helping a person with Alzheimer's to recall a past event or educating young people in a school with a poorly resourced music department. The MA in Community Music will take my passion and equip it with the useful skills and important knowledge necessary for working and achieving in the community music sector. There is a good mix of theoretical and practical elements on the course and I look forward to building up a portfolio of interesting and inspiring work. It is going to be an exciting year working with enthusiastic and motivated people and I can not wait to get started.

Adult School Hall and car park at Croydon

Work on the Adult School Hall (ASH) started on 12 September. Six Weeks Meeting, who are responsible for maintaining the ASH, arranged this work in order to keep the building secure and weatherproof and it was originally expected to take four weeks. During this period, the car park spaces next to the ASH have had to be fenced off.

Unfortunately, once the scaffolding was up, it was found that the brickwork, lead flashing and pipework had deteriorated more than had been thought and significant additional work was needed. This means that the car park may be out of action for longer than expected.

We regret that parking is not available while the work is carried out, as the spaces near the outside wall are block-booked by a local firm. If this is likely to cause

difficulties for disabled Friends, please contact Peter Tayler, our buildings administrator (e-mail tayler.peter@sky.com or telephone 020 8655 0169.)

Rhiannon Rees, Acting Clerk of Premises Committee

Note: Area Meeting at Croydon on Saturday 19 November will take place in the adjacent Unitarian Church as the meeting house is now let to hirers on Saturday afternoons. If there is no space in the meeting house car park it may be possible to park in that of the Unitarian Church, though space is limited. Entrance to the Unitarian church and car park is reached by passing the meeting house, turning left at the lights, and taking the first turning on the left, which passes directly behind the meeting house. – Ed.

Our commitment to peace

Sutton Meeting's Tuesday Discussion Group recently spent a useful evening thinking in general terms about issues of conscience. With the help of Pat Piqué we reviewed the various ways in which Quakers and non-Quakers from the 17th century to the present day felt it right to refuse to conform to common demands of the society in which we live. They include, for instance, total abstinence and the refusal of registrars and doctors to deal with people whose moral position they cannot accept.

For Friends, conscientious objection to participation in war is of course in the forefront of our minds. We were greatly helped by a thoughtful paper prepared by Ken Aldous. Ken registered as a CO in 1943, joined the Friends Ambulance Unit, and served for six years in places as distant as Europe, India and China. At that time he was committed to the Quaker peace testimony. But Ken went on to tell us that over the years he has come to take a less clear-cut view of the evil of military action. He was influenced by the refusal of Quaker Peace and Service to send aid to Kosovo in 1992 on the grounds that it would have required a military escort. He also felt that the evils of Nazi Germany, with its military aggression, mass extermination, torture and ethos of a master race, left no alternative at that time to going to war to restore law and order in Europe. We have to consider what the consequences would have been for Europe and the world if we had not done so.

Ken addressed the issue of public and private morality. He felt that in all circumstances our motivation must be love and compassion, with the use of reason to consider how justice can best be achieved. At times some of us, perhaps most of us in practice, may compromise on principles of equality and justice in order to carry out our responsibilities to meet the needs of people we love, whilst others may stick to principles. This may involve sacrifice, which leads the way to finding practical alternatives to violence, on the basis that in the long run it is love that transforms.

In the discussion which followed we asked the following question: when the country embarks on what is

widely felt to be a Just War should we as Quakers firmly oppose this, or may we acquiesce whilst also maintaining that we ourselves will not fight? We do already take the view that it is right for public pronouncements by Britain Yearly Meeting to be uniformly anti-war, whilst accepting that some of our membership would in some circumstances join the military.

We were reminded that our historic peace testimony of 1660 is unequivocal: 'All bloody principles and practices we do utterly deny ...' and we in Sutton Meeting have at times used this when explaining to non-Friends the basis of our peace testimony. Some of us still hold to this, but other Friends read it in the context of the English Civil War and the need at that time for Quakers to assure Charles II that we were a peaceful religious sect that posed no threat to the crown.

Towards the end of a valuable and wide-ranging discussion we found ourselves passionately concerned about three current issues -

First, the amount of violence presented in the media, on television or DVDs. These are widely viewed by young people and may well be encouraging aggressive attitudes and behaviour. **Secondly**, there is the enormous gap between the massive funding for the UK military machine, including arms sales, and the funding that is devoted to world peace. Is it not time for the UK to have a high-visibility Peace Fund? **Thirdly**, at a time when there is widespread concern for the over-consumption of non-renewable resources and the resulting effects on global warming and the environment (with India, China forging ahead and third-world countries seeking to catch up with our standard of living) what is the sense in western nations continually pushing for GROWTH?

These pressing issues need the attention of Friends.

Gordon Steel

An electronic copy of Ken Aldous's paper entitled The Dilemmas of a Conscientious Objector is available from Gordon on request

Label me 'Puzzled'...

There is one, even Christ Jesus that can speak to thy condition - George Fox (1624 - 1691)

There is that of God in everyone.

- George Fox (1624 - 1691)

Proclaim unto others what the Lord has done for thy soul. - Stephen Grellet (1773 - 1855)

I have been reading with some puzzlement the exchange of letters to *The Friend* on the matter of theist and nontheist Friends and I began to ask myself why Friends are labelling themselves in this way? There was a time when there were groups in the Society that labelled themselves Christocentric and Universalist. I thought that after one memorable Yearly Meeting that had gone into abeyance. I find, however that this has raised itself again with unhappy consequences.

Now, it seems, that we are faced with a new set of labels with potentially the same result.

The fellow passenger on the bus taking me to Meeting, when I told her that I was on my way to my Quaker Meeting for Worship, remarked. "Oh, Quakers; you are the educated ones." That woman's remark came into my mind, and I said to myself, "The educated ones are at it again."

The whole matter set me thinking again, so I decided to go back to basics. I first consulted our little "don't leave home without it" red booklet, namely *Advices and Queries*, which I consider the core of our lives as Quakers. A&Q 1 reads "*Take heed dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts. Trust them as the leadings of God whose Light shows us our darkness and brings us to new life.*" A&Q4 reads: *The Religious Society of Friends is rooted in Christianity and has always found inspiration in the life and teachings of Jesus. How do you interpret your faith in the light of this heritage? How does Jesus speak to you today? Are you following Jesus' example of love in action? Are you learning from his life the reality and cost of obedience to God? How does his relationship with God challenge and inspire you?*

I have no problem with the language in A&Q1 so I turned my attention to A&Q 4. Who is this Jesus? And why am I advised to follow his example?

I went back to my childhood experience of Jesus. I always say that I can remember myself singing before talking, for I can still have in my memory my mother teaching me to sing "*Jesus wants me for a sunbeam, To shine for him each day.*" I was about four years old and I just sang without knowing who this person was for whom I had to shine. As I grew older it was at Sunday School and at the Methodist Primary school that I met Jesus again. "*Tell me the stories of Jesus*" we sang and most of the hymns told of a loving Jesus, a friend, a playmate, a comrade, a guide, an adviser, a brother, he shared in our laughter, and as we got older, he became our pattern, we sang:

*Jesus good above all other,
Gentle child of gentle mother,
In a stable born our brother,
Give us grace to persevere*

Now I realise that even when we were getting the cane for not remembering (teaching was by rote in those days) that Copernicus maintained that the earth

moved round the sun, or that Oliver Cromwell was born in Huntingdon in 1599, or that Martin Luther was known as the boy bachelor because he obtained his university degree before he was 14, cushioning all this was Jesus our friend and brother about whom we sang each morning in school, and on Wednesday mornings in church and in Sunday School.

Later, there was also Bible reading about Jesus. His mission statement in St Luke 4:18 and how he acted this out in healing the sick, defending the outcasts, giving women equality, his close prayer life with God, his death on the cross to *save sinners*. This last interpretation I couldn't accept, much to the disappointment of my evangelical mother. Even as an adult, now I still think of the Jesus of my childhood. My favourite books are *Sunday School Praise*, *National Sunday School Union*, 1958, and *Jesus in Bad Company*, by Adolf Holl translated from the German by Simon King (Collins, 1972).

In light of this, I ask myself, "What are the uses of these labels?" If Jesus were to return today, what box would he tick? Roman Catholic, Protestant, Church of England, Methodist, Baptist, Evangelical, Quaker-Christocentric, Quaker-Universalist, Quaker-theist, Quaker-nontheist?

All are labels with the potential for sad and unhappy divisions. Why are we spending precious time on these labels when in Galatians 3:28 we read

"There is neither Jew nor Greek,
there is neither bond nor free,
there is neither male nor female:
for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

The Quaker version would read

There is neither Programmed nor Unprogrammed
neither Liberal nor Conservative
neither Universalist nor Christocentric
neither theist nor nontheist
for ye are all one in Christ Jesus

Oh Yes! Christ Jesus. Fast forward from Guyana, via Church of England, Roman Catholic, Congregational, Evangelical, Methodist, to Croydon England and Quakers at Croydon Preparative Meeting. I meet with *Christian Faith and Practice* (1964) and George Fox who, I gathered was the Founder. A young man, in spiritual turmoil sets out to find answers. In the process he first finds three truths "opened" to him:- *Outward profession is not enough*, for none are true believers but those who have passed from death unto life by being born of God. *Learning is not enough*, The Lord opened unto me that being bred at Oxford or Cambridge was not enough to fit and qualify men to be ministers to Christ. *Church-going is not enough*, for God does not dwell in temples made with hands, but in men's hearts.

Then came what I call THE BIG OPENING:- "When all my hopes in them (the priests and the dissenting people), and in all men was gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could tell me what to do; then, O! Then I heard a voice which said, '*There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition*' and when I heard it my heart did leap for joy." I am of the opinion that this is the foundation of our Religious Society of Friends, which was later encapsulated in the 42 para-

graphs of our Advices and Queries, ending with Fox's inspiring advice which bears repeating:

Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone; whereby in them you may be a blessing, and make the witness of God in them to bless you.

Everything else is an offshoot of these. If this is so, why are we spending precious time setting ourselves up under these mini-banners?

I see the present situation in the Britain Yearly Meeting in two models, one geographical, the other commercial. First, geographical: The River Essequibo in Guyana is a very long powerful river with many tributaries. If my memory serves me right, Guyanese are always talking about the activities on the tributaries, for example, gold and diamond mining on the Mazaruni and Cuyuni, trips to the mighty Kaitetur Falls on the Potaro, cattle ranching on the Rupununi. The tributaries flow into this big river as it gathers their waters to finally empty them into the Atlantic Ocean. You travel along the Essequibo, then turn off at one or other of the tributaries, but we never think that if the main big river did not exist, how disastrous this would be. It is time for us to recognise the importance of our main rivers-God, Christ Jesus, George Fox.

Commercial: I was reading recently about Steve Jobs, who, even though he was founder of the company Apple, he was rudely dismissed from the board; he succeeded on his own; when later the company was floundering, he was once more re-appointed. The article ends, "When did a founder ever return to the company from which he had been rudely rejected to engineer a turnaround as spectacular as Apple?" (*Michael Moritz in The Daily Telegraph, 27. 8.11*)

We are expending our time, energy and resources on the tributaries - same-sex marriage, German Holocaust Day, Hiroshima, Sustainability, Equality, Justice, possible change of name of Meeting for Sufferings, Israel and Palestine. It is time for us to re-appoint our founders - God, Christ Jesus, George Fox, so that we can say, "When did a founder ever return to the Society from which he had been so negligently eased out, to engineer a turnaround as complete and spectacular - yes, spectacular - as Britain Yearly Meeting?"

George Fox experienced his great opening then set out to tell the world about it. He shared with others the teachings of Jesus that have inspired Quakers for more than three hundred years. Nowadays, everybody is preaching Peace, everybody is preaching Justice, everybody is preaching Sustainability. These testimonies are no longer the sole preserve of Quakers. The attenders come seeking something different, so, dearly beloved "educated ones" forget about the labels, do remember, "Heaven lies within; in kindness, in humbleness, in unselfishness, in faith, in love, in service. To get these in, get Christ in. Teach all in the house about Christ - what He did, and what He said, and how He lived. Teach it not as a doctrine, but as a discovery, as your own discovery. Live your own discovery. Then pass out into the city. Do all to it that you have done at home." (*Finian Readings: July 10, Celtic Daily Prayer from the Northumbrian Community, Collins, 2005*; and for "discovery" read "Opening".)

A last word from Clive Sanson, "It is time we reminded ourselves that the uniqueness of Quakerism does not lie in its pacifism, or in its concerns with social reform, education, mental health, and international affairs. It lies in its capacity for spontaneous worship, and for the spontaneous expression of that worship." (from *Heart and Mind Prepared*, first published in *The Friend*, 1962.)

Joyce Trotman

How to be an artist

As recorded in Epsom Friends' July Newsletter

Learn to watch snails - plant impossible gardens

Invite someone dangerous to tea

Make little signs that say "Yes" - and post them all over the house

Make friends with freedom and uncertainty

Look forward to dreams - cry during movies

Swing as high as you can on a swing - by moonlight

Cultivate moods - do it for "love" - take lots of naps

Give money away - do it now - the money will follow

Take moon baths - and candle baths

Believe in magic - laugh a lot - celebrate every gorgeous moment

Have wild imaginings - and perfect calm - and transformative dreams

Draw on a wall - read every day - imagine yourself magic

Giggle with children - listen to old people

Open up - be freed - bless yourself

Entertain your inner child - you are innocent

Drive away fear - play with everything

Build a fort with blankets - get wet - hug a tree

Write love letters

Sing...

Sing here

Another Quaker Singing Workshop will be held on Sunday 6 November 2011 at Sutton Friends Meeting. The workshop will start at 1 pm and run until 3 pm with a short tea break in the middle. You are also invited to bring a packed lunch to eat together at 12 noon before the workshop. Everyone is welcome, whether you've been before or not and whether you are a brilliant singer or not. We sing a range of joyful songs, some in rounds and some in harmony parts and some in plain unison, but the overall aim is to enjoy ourselves! Please contact <quakersinging@yahoo.com> if you need any more information. We'd really welcome you!

Gay McDonagh

From Meeting for Sufferings, June 2011

Friends will be interested to hear how many Area Meetings are responding to the decision to boycott Israeli settlement goods. More support can be given by sharing insights and problems on the MfS website. Friends are concerned that boycott should not block dialogue. There has been a meeting with members of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the first of a series of meetings. The forum would be a good place to post up positive suggestions

The subject 'Radical Resistance and the State has many aspects most of which we did not address.

We heard a little about Turning the Tide Programme. We heard of some repressive policing in Britain at demonstrations. It would be helpful if Area Meet-

ings would consider the topic in as much depth and breath as possible.

How should we challenge repressive policing?

How can we make nonviolent protests more effective?

How can we support activists - perhaps especially Young Friends - who take the risks involved?

Two topics that Area Meeting could think about for the autumn are (1) the decriminalisation of drugs and (2) the Framework For Action: how aware are our meetings of AFFA, how has it influenced their thinking /planning. Who uses it and how? Is it helpful? Does it need changing?

Dates mentioned are 2009 to 2014. But what after that?!

Anthea Underwood

A religion I wish I could vote for

In The Guardian dated 29 September, just ahead of Quaker Week, Anne Karpf wrote:

Newspaper ads and posters over the next 10 days will feature attractive people involved in conflict-resolution, nuclear disarmament and campaigns against the arms trade. Though they look like activists from some radical pressure group, they are actually all members of a religion - the Quakers.

Indeed, Quakerism is more like a political movement or even party - a kind of wish-the -Labour-party-were- like-this party. Quakers played a prominent role in the abolition of slavery; were instrumental in setting up Amnesty, Greenpeace and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament; and for the past two years have campaigned for same-sex marriage.

While Quakerism would make for an unusual political party, it's also (pretty much for the same reasons) an odd religion - one without priests, hierarchy, creed, sacraments, catechism, scripture, liturgy or dogma. Though it's based on a personal relationship with God, many Quakers are reluctant to even utter the G-word without qualifying it. Christian by roots, nowadays they can accommodate pantheists, and even non-theists too.

Yet probably the main reason that Quakerism, though essentially a small movement (around 23,000 members in the UK), remains such an interesting phe-

nomenon is its holistic scope. It's rare to find a movement prepared to point out, for instance, that economic structures contribute to personal problems like self-harm and domestic abuse; or to critique consumerism without blaming the consumer.

Today, alongside cynicism about religion and politics, there is an almost palpable yearning for a space where ethics and politics, environmentalism and spirituality, come together. Quakerism, with its active social engagement, and its injunctions to "try to live simply" and "step lightly on the earth", seems to provide one such example.

Anne's article was originally entitled "A religion Richard Dawkins could sign up to" but, wisely, changed before publication. Appearing in the Guardian online edition under the Dawkins heading it attracted a large amount of feedback, much of which is painfully ill-informed. If you can bear to wade through it, see <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/sep/28/quakers-religion-dawkins-sign-up>. Perhaps the most amusing comment was: "Have you ever been to a Quaker meeting? Can you seriously imagine Dawkins being able to keep quiet for any length of time?" – Ed.

What we learn to do we learn by doing

Aristotle (quoted in Epsom Friends' August Newsletter)

Quakers Working for Justice, Peace and the Environment

Sutton Meeting's contribution to Quaker Week 2011 was an outreach event at the meeting house on Sunday 2 October. Elders provided a bread and soup lunch. Various organisations that use the meeting house had been invited to the event and some of them displayed posters and we heard brief talks about what they do. Then Helen Drewery, General Secretary of Quaker Peace and Social Witness, gave an excellent illustrated talk about the work that Friends are doing in this area. It was a successful occasion with a good number of non-Friends present.

News from beyond the Pale

Why Irish Quakers are asking their Government to provide more support for first time parents

One of the central tenets of Quaker life and belief and the one for which we are perhaps best known for is our Peace Testimony which has been there right from our beginnings in the seventeenth century. As it is put for us today it is in the form of a question – 'Do you live in that life and power which takes away the occasion of violent conflict and, with God's help work for reconciliation between individuals, groups and nations?.'

It is with this very much to the fore that we bring to you our concern about the levels of physical and emotional violence which appear to be such a constant and intractable feature of Irish Society.

We have become aware of the following:

1. Violence and the effects of violence are estimated to cost the Irish Exchequer approximately €1.7 billion pa.*
2. Every act of violence requires a trigger event and a response from an individual with a propensity to be violent.
3. It has been demonstrated that an individual's propensity to be violent is established as a child in the first three years of life.
4. It has also been shown that the cost of providing basic attunement, or bonding skills, to inexperienced parents is paid back many times over (at least four) in savings directly related to a reduction in costs resulting from violence. Parenting support in these early years also produces many other improved outcomes for the child in terms of enhanced mental and physical health and increased education attainment which are gained from very early childhood interventions.

This long term approach involves early childhood intervention programmes which go from before birth to the age of 2 or 3 with the specific focus of fostering empathy and attunement in a parent or parents with their baby. Research has shown clearly that, as the attached report puts it 'the propensity to violence develops primarily from wrong treatment before age 3', and that

there is a direct correlation between an individual's propensity to violence and the absence of parental or primary caregiver empathy and attunement.

Therefore we urge the Government to ensure that necessary resources are put at the disposal of groups that are working in this area such as the Community Mothers Scheme, currently operating only in HSE areas Dublin North East and Dublin Mid-Leinster. Their aim is as follows, and we quote from their own literature:

'It is a parent support programme in which friendly local women known as Community Mothers carry out monthly structured visits to first-time and some second time parents by appointment during the first two years of their babies' lives, providing empathy and information in a non-directive way to foster parenting skills and parental self-esteem'

The thinking of the Irish Quaker violence reduction campaign "Why Violence?" has been informed by the comprehensive research findings and reports of the WAVE Trust charity (Worldwide Alternatives to Violence), an organisation started in Britain by a Quaker, George Hosking. A copy of their very comprehensive and well researched report "Violence and what to do about it", of 2005 is attached.

This report sets out that violent acts are triggered in high propensity individuals by many social factors such as unemployment, poor housing and economic inequality. Alcohol and drugs play a significant role in timing of violence. These are long-term cultural trends which are very difficult to change. Consequently addressing the formation of propensity to violence becomes the strategic imperative.

"Immature mothers with no strong parenting skills and violent partners have already borne the next generation of at risk children".

Plea submitted by Ireland Yearly Meeting

* UK cost of violence given by Home Office Minister in 2001 was £21 Bn. (€24.4Bn). The UK population is 62 Million, while the Irish population 4.5 Million. This suggests cost of violence in Ireland pro rata to population, with similar crime rates is €1.7Bn

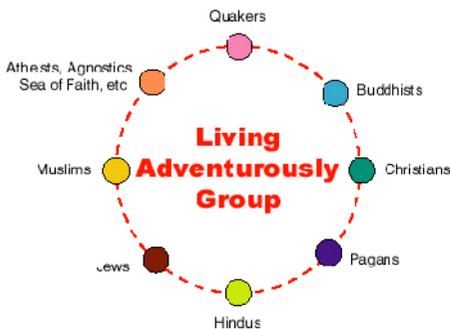
Time brings roses. He who thinks that he has all the fruit when strawberries are ripe forgets that grapes are still to come.

(Christian Entfelder, fl. 1526-44, quoted by Rufus Jones in Spiritual Reformers of the 16th and 17th Centuries)

Quaker Life support for mental health

Discussed at a session on Exploring Mental Health held at YMG in Canterbury was the possibility of forming a core group of Friends who would meet to consider the direction that the cluster might take. Mental Health in Meetings has quite clearly emerged as one of the areas of work that the Quaker Life Network is going to focus on. The hope is that it will be able to create a cluster of Friends spread across the Yearly Meeting who have the skills (either acquired themselves or with additional training from QLN) to work with Friends and Meetings who are experiencing issues around mental health. If you would like to join this cluster please contact Michael Booth, the Support for Meetings officer at Quaker Life, Friends House (tel 020 7663 1023, email michaelsb@quaker.org.uk). For more details about the Quaker Life Network see www.quaker.org.uk/qlnetwork. There is information about some of the other projects to get involved with and an online copy of the latest newsletter produced in the summer of 2011. An online or downloadable expression of interest form can be found here for Friends who wish to become a member of the Network.

Living Adventurously



The **Living Adventurously** Group meets at Sutton Friends Meeting House (10 Cedar Road, SM2 5DA) on the second Friday of the month, 7.30-9.30 pm. For more details contact Margaret on 020 8404 2271 or <Margaret.Onians@blueyonder.co.uk>

11 November - Jennifer Kavanagh: Simplicity made Easy

Jennifer will be sharing her various journeys linked to “simplicity”, showing how we can change our attitudes to bring greater clarity, beauty and purity to our inner and outer lives. Jennifer is an author and associate tutor at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre.

Croydon's Riots – a Quaker Response to Violence and Disorder

Sunday 20th November 2011

We invite you to a simple lunch followed by a presentation by George Hosking, Founder and Chief Executive of WAVE Trust (Worldwide Alternatives to Violence - <http://www.wavetrust.org>)
Lunch (provided) at 1 pm, presentation at 2pm

Croydon Friends Meeting House, 60 Park Lane, Croydon CR0 1JE

Kneeling

After a discussion on silent and spoken ministry at Croydon, a Friend read the poem “Kneeling” by R S Thomas, the Welsh priest and poet

Moments of great calm,
Kneeling before an altar
Of wood in a stone church
In summer, waiting for the God
To speak; the air a staircase
For silence; the sun's light
Ringing me, as though I acted
A great rôle. And the audiences

Still; all that close throng
Of spirits waiting, as I,
For the message.
Prompt me, God;
But not yet. When I speak,
Though it be you who speak
Through me, something is lost.
The meaning is in the waiting.