

south london aqm news

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

June 2011

News of Friends

Welcome to **Glenys Gadd** of Epsom meeting, **Michelle Esezobor** of Streatham, and **Simon Kewer**, also of Streatham, who were accepted into membership at May area meeting. Three more applications for membership were announced at the same meeting, a number unprecedented in recent years. Could our revised procedures for membership applications have been at least partly responsible? Perhaps; but it is interesting to note that five of the six asked for a traditional visit by two seasoned Friends.

Also at May area meeting we received from Sutton meeting a Minute of Record of the life of our late Friend **Douglas Day**. Croydon meeting had two deaths to announce. **Marjorie White** died on 14 May at the age of 91. A family funeral was held on 24 May at Croydon Crematorium and a Quaker memorial meeting at the meeting house on 11 June. Though not widely known within the area meeting, Marjorie had been an active and faithful Friend at Croydon for almost 30 years. Her ecumenical interests led her to serve for a while as Quaker Borough Dean. Her many other interests included the arts (she wrote poetry and produced some fine calligraphy), and ornithology. Earlier in the year Croydon lost a faithful attender of many years in the form of **Jim Labbett**, who was 92. Jim had been a trade union official for most of his life and was active in CND. During the Second World War he had been imprisoned as a conscientious objector and had come to know Quakers by this route.

Third time lucky, **Reg Briscoe** has at last had his hip operation and, at time of writing, is resting at Rustington Convalescent Home, near Littlehampton.

Love and congratulations to **Zoë Papadopoulos**, of Croydon meeting, who has announced her engagement

to her long-time partner **Matthew Coggan**. They plan to marry in early summer of next year.

Sutton Friends were glad to welcome **Liz Page** back in March. She and Robin have given up their work in Scotland and returned to their home in Carshalton.

Helen and John Drewery, as part of a recent holiday in France, visited Saumur where the town square was being renamed 'Place William Penn', in memory of the fact that Penn studied at a Protestant academy in the town in the late 17th century.

Sheila Heard's son **Daniel Shao** has gained a place at the Purcell School of Music (near Watford). He is showing remarkable ability on the flute and played beautifully at a recent social evening in Sutton, accompanied by John Drewery.

Philip Barron, formerly of Croydon meeting, who moved to the Bernhard Baron retirement home at Polegate last year, has now been formally accepted into East Sussex AQM. Not content with the quiet life (except in meeting for worship) he is already serving as co-clerk of Polegate meeting, and in May returned to Croydon to present the eighth in his annual series of Music for a Summer Evening, this time reverting to the works of George and Ira Gershwin. The retiring collection raised £70 for the Croydon Friends Family Group concern (see page 2.)

In March **Barbara Cairns** opened her home to the public to demonstrate its 'green' features, including: Low-energy light bulbs, Room thermostat kept at 17.5 deg., Double glazing, Loft and cavity-wall insulation, Condensing boiler, Solar panel (for hot water), and Photovoltaic cells. Barbara said "The installation cost just under £15,000, which I reckon will be repaid in about 23 years, so it is not a casual investment, but I am pleased with the overall effect."

**Silent worship is the presence of meaning
in the absence of words**

History of Sutton Meeting (1932 – 2010)

Gordon Steel has now updated his outline history of Sutton Meeting to the end of 2010. It consists of

- Extracts from the minutes 1932 – 2010
- Minutes of record of the lives of 67 Friends and attenders, some slightly abridged
- Additional text – lists of New Year pantomimes, summer outings, plus many interesting documents, articles and poetry
- Around 600 images of Sutton Friends, some taken prior to 1970 but the majority since 2000

This material is now available on a single CD disc. Gordon is making it available free of charge to any

one who wishes it, with the suggestion of a £5 donation to Sutton Meeting Funds.

Sutton Quaker Steel Band

The band are continuing to have a rather busy schedule. Recently they performed at Richard Sharples care home in Christchurch Park and at Len Bance's 80th birthday party. In the next few weeks they will be at a special school in Caterham and at a Churches Together meeting at the Sutton Christian Centre. And more engagements are in the offing. There are nine regular members of the band and they have now built up a varied repertoire of 23 pieces.

Support for Croydon families

In May, area meeting endorsed a Concern (as tested by paragraph 3.13 of Qfp) already adopted by Croydon LQM and initiated by members of their Children's Committee.

Local authority cuts had resulted in the closing down of a Family Group run by a local charity that held weekly sessions in central Croydon for about six years and was attended by many local families. Run by Cathy Spence on behalf of the charity, it provided support, tutoring in arts and crafts and domestic skills for the parents and activities for the children, all under five. Its closure caused great distress to the parents who attended. Many who had avoided contact with statutory authorities felt safe to attend and to share their problems, whether depression, coping with a child with difficult behaviour or an abusive partner, or financial worries,

and group leaders like Cathy are experienced in supporting parents in accessing the help they need.

Children's Committee felt led to enable the family group to continue to support them, there being no other group in the area offering this particular form of service. They approached Premises Committee, who agreed to allow the group to use the meeting house free of charge.

But funding will be needed to the extent of over £1000 per annum, and the group is to approach Quaker bodies and Croydon Council for assistance.

Meanwhile, however, support from Croydon meeting has enabled the project to get under way, and it is already proving a great success. Some ten families have been attending regularly, and are delighted with the venue, finding it friendly, comfortable and comforting.

Stop the Arms Fair!

The world's largest arms fair, Defence & Security Equipment International (DSEi), is planned to take place at the ExCel in London's Docklands on 13-16 September 2011.

Amongst the repressive governments invited to the last DSEi arms fair in 2009 were Algeria, Bahrain, Libya and Saudi Arabia. Countries at threat of war with each other, such as India and Pakistan, shopped side-by-side. In 2011, DSEi publicity claims that the arms fair will be "even bigger" and will host the "Largest Unmanned & Robotics Demonstration area in Europe".

The 'Stop the Arms Fair' coalition, which includes a number of organisations opposed to the arms fair, is calling a mass day of action on Tuesday 13 September, the first day of the arms fair.

The coalition also organised a day of planning and training workshops at Friends House, Euston, on Sunday 12 June,

which I attended. For more information visit the 'Stop the Arms Fair' web-site www.stopthearmsfair.org.uk or contact...

Rhiannon Rees

Demonstrating?

Anthea Underwood has sent us a sample "Bust Card" produced by the Legal Defence and Monitoring Group 2011. She points out that anyone taking part in a public demonstration can be subject to "unpredictable" behaviour by the police. About twice the size of a business card, the Bust Card contains useful information about your legal rights in the event of arrest. For example, before you can be legally searched you must be told the name and station of the searching officer, why you are being searched, and under what power. It also lists useful numbers to contact for emergency legal advice. For further details and a download of the card itself visit <http://www.ldmg.org.uk>.

Quaker Life Stories and Pilgrimages at Woodbrooke

*Yes, I remember Watford Junction -
The name, because one afternoon
Of heat the express-train drew up there
Wontedly. It was early April.*

(With apologies to Edward Thomas)

I had no idea as I was standing on the platform on 8 April listening to the birds, that there were going to be many, many more days of glorious sunshine ahead and I was feeling disgruntled because I thought I was going to be spending the one nice weekend of the year cooped up indoors at Quaker Life Representative Council. Sitting on the lawn at Woodbrooke in warm sunshine sipping a mug of tea and deep in conversation with a Quaker Life Representative from another Area Meeting my mood lifted.

The theme of the weekend was Stories and Pilgrimages. We looked at various ways Friends could share their stories, following on from the Quaker Life 'Being Quaker Doing Quaker' conference in November

last year and the work done by the Quaker Life Central Committee on this topic.

Quakers do not share uniform beliefs or expectations, we are different ages, we may be old hands or new attenders, some of us were brought up as Quakers, others have come to Friends; our experiences are different yet we have ended up together in a particular place at a particular time. We each have a story of how and why. When we tell our stories it is up to us to choose what we will highlight, what we will share with others and no one can tell us we are wrong - it is our story. Each story is equally valid, and there are common threads, even in the most diverse stories, which bring us together. Learning how to tell this story, to search out its meaning is an activity which seems to resonate with many Friends just now.

Quaker Life is preparing a simple resource to support groups working on personal stories. It will be sent in the mailing at the end of June and will be freely available on the website from the end of July. The May edi-

tion of Quaker Voices also focused on the theme of 'sharing our stories'.

Another resource available to meetings is a booklet 'Sharing our journeys: Exploring Quaker spirituality with young people and adults'. This booklet, which is available free of charge from Quaker Life, is a guide for mixed-age groups exploring Spirituality, God, Quakerism and Worship. We broke up into small groups to try some of the activities suggested in the booklet and found it a rich starting point for discussion. It struck me as a mini 'Becoming Friends' course and I recommend meetings take a look at this booklet.

The Quaker Youth Pilgrimage for young Friends aged 16-18 will be taking place from Mid July – Mid August 2012. This pilgrimage brings together 28 young Friends from America, Europe and the Middle East on a four week journey to the Netherlands and England including 1652 Country. For further information about becoming a pilgrim or a leader contact Rachel Miller (tel: 01539 737010, e-mail: gyp.emes@gmail.com).

There have been changes at Swarthmoor Hall as well as the 1652 Committee following Bill Shaw's retirement as manager in April this year. The new manager does not live on site and two volunteer Resident Friends will be appointed by Quaker Life each year to live in the staff house for 12 months to provide the Quaker presence at the Hall.

The 1652 Committee has now been laid down and the paid post of pilgrimage secretary/coordinator created instead. Chichester meeting visited Swarthmoor Hall for a long weekend and Quaker Life is now keen to encourage meetings to consider group visits to the Hall. Group sizes can be up to 10 people in single bedrooms or up to 18 if people are prepared to share. A new booklet 'The 1652 Country: Planning your pilgrimage' is available from Friends House.

*Leslie Bell,
Deputy Quaker Life Representative*

Adlestrop, by Edward Thomas (1878-1917)

(Leslie was surprised at how many Friends were unacquainted with the poem parodied in the opening of her article. So was I. Just roll your tongue round the last line and imagine yourself writing in the trenches of World War I. - Ed)

Yes, I remember Adlestrop --

*The name, because one afternoon
Of heat the express-train drew up there
Unwontedly. It was late June.*

The steam hissed. Someone cleared his throat.

*No one left and no one came
On the bare platform. What I saw
Was Adlestrop -- only the name*

*And willows, willow-herb, and grass,
And meadowsweet, and haycocks dry,
No whit less still and lonely fair
Than the high cloudlets in the sky.*

*And for that minute a blackbird sang
Close by, and round him, mistier,
Farther and farther, all the birds
Of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire.*

Faith in Action: Exploring the Work of QPSW

In March I attended the Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW) Spring Conference in Derbyshire.

QPSW's aims state that it '...works with, and on behalf of, Friends in Britain to translate our faith into action. As Quakers we are impelled by our faith to make our lives an active witness for peace and justice. Our historic testimonies to equality, justice, peace and simplicity and truth challenge us to alleviate suffering and seek positive social change.'

It was very encouraging that the Conference was well attended and the majority of the 96 delegates were fairly new to Quakers. Those I spoke to came away enthusiastic and some said they had had no idea of the range of QPSW's work. As always, it was good to meet Quakers from other Meetings and hear about their work, as well as the work carried out centrally on our behalf.

There were so many people to meet and such a choice of workshops that I can only pick out a few highlights (for me). Diana Francis gave a thoughtful and inspirational keynote talk on her experience of living out the Peace Testimony over many years of work on conflict transformation in a variety of conflicts. We heard about some of the patient work that Quakers do as mediators in conflict situations overseas, some of which are too sensitive for the work to be publicised. We also saw the updated DVD from the 'Turning the Tide' pro-

ject on achieving change through non-violent direct action, which gave rise to lively discussion in our group!

We had the opportunity to meet staff and one-year peace-workers and hear about their work. I heard about the work of the Quaker United Nations (UN) Office (QUNO) in Geneva, where staff represent the views of Friends in international meetings and also open up channels for diplomats to meet informally to achieve progress on the three key programme issues of peace and disarmament, human rights and refugees. Their work on economic issues is moving into the areas of food and sustainability and climate change and migration, with a current project focusing on intellectual property rights in relation to seeds. This is not to mention the work of the Ecumenical Accompaniers in Israel/ Palestine or the work at home on crime and community justice!

If you are not already familiar with the work of QPSW, I do encourage you to take opportunities to find out more, either at Britain Yearly Meeting Gathering, by attending the Spring Conference, going to events organised at Friends House or looking at the web-site <http://www.quaker.org.uk/faith-action>. As I write, I see from the web-site that the Government has made a commitment to grant under-18-year olds the right of discharge from the armed forces, something for which Quakers have long campaigned. - *Rhiannon Rees*

Karen Armstrong and the Quakers

*Karen Armstrong recently published a book under the title *The Twelve steps to a Compassionate Life*. This stimulated Gordon Steel to write to her as follows:*

Dear Karen Armstrong,
I wrote to you in April 2004 expressing appreciation of *The Spiral Staircase* and you kindly replied from the address above. I have now just finished *The Twelve Steps* and, as with all your books, I have found it valuable. I intend to use it as a basis for a series of evenings at the Tuesday discussion group that my wife and I hold for Sutton Quakers (these evenings have been going on since 1967!).

My earlier letter expressed surprise that in the *Staircase* you made so little reference to Quakers, stressing as you do the value of silence in our approach to God. I'm afraid that I am now coming back to you feeling this even more strongly. I feel disappointed that you have not been able to give the Quakers credit for so often being pretty well on the lines that you are advocating.

As I am sure you must know, Friends in Britain have for many generations faithfully been following an approach in religion that emphasises silence as the basis of worship, being 'open to the Light', lack of dogma, valuing progressive studies of the Bible (including your own), an openness to other Faiths (much helped by your writings). In our attempts to live as followers of Jesus we have steadfastly held to peace and non-violence as the way we must live and, as in your last chapter, we have tried holding to the counsel: 'love your enemies'.

Compassion has also been at the heart of the Religious Society of Friends, not only in our attitude to war but also in our daily living. As I worked through your *Twelve Steps* I found myself saying yes, that is what we are already aiming at. We seek to promote empathy and concern for others (you will know of our historic actions on behalf of prisoners, slaves and the mentally ill). In the present day we welcome diversity of race, gender

(including sexual orientation) and faith, and inclusivity is one of our watch-words. You have written much about fundamentalism and we find ourselves echoing what you write.

I need to make clear that I am writing about Quakers in Britain. The USA (where you have travelled widely) has for 300 years been fractured by schisms which still exist. Many American Quakers are liberal and 'unprogrammed' like us, but many are conservative and evangelical. And in Africa, where there are huge numbers of Quakers, they also tend to be evangelical under the influence of early missionaries from the US.

And of course I also need to admit that we Quakers have often failed to live up to what we profess. Many of our Meetings are dull and lacking in inspiration and commitment. We do suffer from arrogance and self-satisfaction.

My purpose in writing is to remind you of these things, which I guess you know already. It's a pity that we did not get into *The Twelve Steps* as an example of a group that has a strong basis in Christianity and which is now progressive and outward-looking, seeking to follow the path that you outline. In writing this I am not trying to get you personally to take an interest in Quakerism, but some of your readers might like to do that.

I am enclosing a little book that we cherish, our *Advices and Queries*. Its history goes back to the 17th century and nowadays it is revised every generation in order to reflect as closely as possible 'where we are'. I hope that you like it.

Yours sincerely...

A few weeks ago Gordon had a reply from Karen, sent by her secretary because she had set off on her latest visit to the US. She thanked Gordon for his positive comments but wished 'to pass on her apology for not giving sufficient acknowledgement to the Quakers'. She promised to do better in future!

**Never be ashamed to say you are wrong.
It is another way of saying you are wiser today
than you were yesterday.**

Trustees' Report for the year ending 31 December 2010

Object. The object of the Area Meeting is the furtherance of the general religious and charitable purposes of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, in the area of South London and beyond.

Governance. The Area Meeting is an unincorporated association with a Governing Document approved at a Meeting on 17th February 2009. Trustees are appointed by Area Meeting on the basis of one Friend from each local Meeting, together with the Area Meeting Treasurer and Assistant Clerk ex officio.

Membership. During the year the membership of Area Meeting reduced from 207 to 205. We welcomed 4 new Friends into membership and received 3 transfers from other meetings, but recorded with sadness the death of

4 Friends. There was one resignation and 4 transfers to other meetings.

Local Meetings. Local Meetings at Croydon, Epsom, Purley, Streatham and Sutton continued to hold weekly Meetings for Worship and a variety of other activities for the spiritual development of their members and attenders and the social life of their communities.

Area Meetings for business. Area Meeting met in January, February, March, May, June, July, September, October and November for mutual support and necessary business, including the consideration of applications for membership, appointment of Friends to attend conferences, and other necessary appointments to assist in the work of the Area Meeting. New procedures for admission to membership were finalised. During the

year we had displays of art works by various members. A residential Weekend was held at the Emmaus Centre in November.

Trustees. The Trustees held four meetings during the year. We were mainly concerned with financial matters. We suggested that Area Meeting should sometimes take the form of a shared lunch followed by a speaker, and this format was followed for the July Area Meeting.

Committees. The following Standing Committees of Area Meeting operated during the year: Finance Committee, Nominations Committee, Legacies Committee, Premises Committees for Croydon, Purley, Streatham and Sutton, Link Group Committee, Retreat Planning Group and Website Committee.

Premises. Our financial affairs were, as usual, dominated by the fact that premises costs are borne by Six Weeks Meeting. Six Weeks Meeting owns all the meet-

ing houses in London and gains its funds by means of a quota levied on all the Area Meetings within its area, together with lettings income and investment income, each meeting's quota being governed by the size of its membership. Area Meeting in turn relies upon contributions from members and local meetings for its income. Six Weeks Meeting doubled the quota for 2010, which placed a heavy burden on the finances of our Area Meeting, and in fact we were only able to meet 75% of the year's quota.

Employees. The Area Meeting employs Resident Wardens for Purley and Sutton Meetings and non-resident Building Administrators for Croydon and Streatham Meetings. Epsom Meeting has no premises, but meet in a local school.

Barbara Cairns, Clerk of Trustees

Treasurer's Report for the year ending 31 December 2010

Income - increased

This year's finances were dominated by the doubling of the quota set by Six Weeks Meeting, which goes towards the upkeep of all the Meetings' premises. Friends were exhorted to rise to the challenge and did increase their giving, but not by enough to enable the Area Meeting to meet its obligation. As a result our overall income increased by 29% compared with the previous year to almost the same as the last but one year. 67% of the total income was accounted for by Area Meeting core funds and another 30% by the Local Meetings with the remainder being the income of the Area Meeting legacies fund.

Expenditure - also increased

Not surprisingly, expenditure was up on the previous year, by 14%. The largest component, by far, was the Six Weeks Meeting quota, paid from the Area Meeting core fund. This accounted for 65% of the total, in spite of the fact that only 3 of the 4 quarterly instalments were paid over. Apart from the general costs of running the meetings, which actually fell by 20%, the next largest component was the money given to Central Quaker funds which amounted to 9% of the total. In compensation for the increased Area Meeting expenditure, Meetings were more frugal with their expenditure so that it dropped by 24%.

Area Meeting deficit offset by Individual Meeting surpluses and Investment realisations

As a result, although the Area Meeting made an operating deficit of about £1,000 this was more than compensated by the surpluses of the individual Meetings to yield a surplus of about £1,700. This, together with a healthy profit on the realisation of some of the Area Meeting Legacies Fund's investments, helped to push up the reserves slightly by about 2% to £257,076. Of these, 34% were held by the Area Meeting Legacies Fund, 60% by local meetings and just 6% by the Area Meeting core fund. The reserves of the Area Meeting core fund represented 48% of its expenditure whereas the reserves of the local meetings taken together were about 12½ times their expenditure. There is thus a large disparity between the reserves positions of the Area

and Local Meetings. The reserves of the local meetings themselves vary widely with Croydon, Streatham and Sutton having, between them, 95% of the Meetings total, whilst Purley has 3% and Epsom 2%. About 30% of Croydon's reserves are debtors, the principal one being Six Weeks Meeting.

Other issues

Money was also channelled through the Local and Area Meetings as agents to other organisations. This amounted to 42% of that given to the Local and Area Meetings, showing that Friends were willing to look beyond the requirements of their local meetings.

Although Area Meeting had discontinued the practice of acting as agent for Six Weeks Meeting in passing on net rental income from the Meeting Houses it continued paying for Epsom's meeting premises rental and the revenue costs of employment. However, part way through the year, Six Weeks Meeting began dealing directly with Epsom's lessor and the Area Meeting began claiming the revenue costs from the Meetings. As last year the Meeting House lettings, as a whole, made a net surplus, though slightly reduced, amounting to 6% of the turnover. Although Epsom and Purley made deficits, Croydon, Streatham and Sutton all made surpluses. The cost of the refurbishment of the Warden's flat at Croydon in 2007, funded from Croydon's Legacies Fund, continues to be reclaimed from Six Weeks Meeting.

John Drewery, Treasurer

Would you be interested in helping visitors to Downview and Highdown Prisons?

The visitor centres at our local prisons are in need of more volunteers. Anne Bance and Ros Emberson already do this and can tell you more about it. There are a range of duties from helping adult visitors, working with the children, and serving refreshments. For further information please contact Gordon Steel.

AM Legacies Committee Report for the year ending 31 December 2010

In 2010, as a large call on funds was not anticipated, the Committee reverted to the policy of granting up to one half of the cost of events where requests for assistance had been made.

An exception to this was the 'Equipping for Ministry' course provided by Woodbrooke. Two applicants had chosen to meet most of the cost from their own or other resources.

The Committee was concerned that a small but significant number of grants were made in both 2009 and 2010 but not used. The Committee is keen to meet its obligations under the Terms of Reference wherever possible. While accepting that participation in an event may have to be cancelled at the last moment, members and attenders are reminded of the need to have a serious intention of taking part before applying for assistance.

There was an accumulation of unspent income of £4,545 at the beginning of the year. In the light of this

fact, the Committee decided to donate £500 to Area Meeting, £280 to Quaker Peace & Social Witness, (in response to an appeal for its three-year Sustainability and Peace Programme) and £220 to Britain Yearly Meeting's common fund to be used where most needed. Total donations and grants, including £518 reimbursed to Area Meeting for its sponsored courses, came to £2,186. At the end of the year, the unspent income was £4,113.

The Committee is able to report that the deficit of £432 is more than offset by profit from the sale of some investments, prudently re-invested following the Treasurer's advice and resulting in funds at the end of the year being up by £2,343 as shown in the Accounts.

Communication problems with Friends Trusts Ltd served to make the Treasurer's job more difficult in the early part of the year but these have fortunately been resolved.

David Rees, Clerk of Legacies Committee

Habeas Corpus

(For Don Cupitt)

When I am dead
were I admitted to heaven
I would not feel at home.
How I would miss the Spring.
I sit in an April garden
deep-blue-scented with hyacinths
amid yellow crown imperials.
Would I want a heavy gold crown
for a life achieved? I want this,
which changes every day,
one petal now ragged
where an insect has bitten in,
everything pressing, passing.

How I would miss the Summer
with higgledy-piggledy picnics
on the Heath, even when someone
gets lost, arrives late cross
and it threatens rain.
I prefer that to an angel choir
where I don't belong,
habeas corpus being
sine qua non
of a human song.

Untidy city with your muddle of people
living their lives, still falling short.
Earth with your beauty so old and so new
that does not stay but slays me
again and again with each different recurrence,
kind and careless habitat
where love can flower (or not),
and every body lives and dies
and the heart's desire tantalises.
I would be homesick in heaven
and hanker.

(This poem appears in the 100th issue of Sofia, the magazine of the Sea of Faith movement, and was written by its editor Dinah Livingstone.)

Being there

Do you need me? I am there
You cannot see Me
yet I am the light you see by
You cannot hear Me
I speak through your voice
You cannot feel Me
yet I am the power at work in your hands.

*from "I am there" by James Dillet Freeman
(contributed by Meg Barnes)*

Things That Help Me Grow...

People of all faiths and none are welcome to the
Sutton Quaker Universalists Group
which meets at Sutton Friends Meeting House 10
Cedar Road, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5DA every second
Friday of the Month between 7.30 – 9.30pm. Next meet-
ing 15th July. Contact Ashok on 020 8647 8141 or
ashok@jashapara.com for more current details

From a Letter in The New Scientist, 7 May 2011

If I believe, as I do, that we are animals, and no more than animals, this does not belittle my view of humanity. What it does do is greatly enhance my view of what an animal can be.

If I then come to believe that animals, including ourselves, are no more than mechanisms and therefore, in theory, deterministic, this does not make untrue all that I know of human love, altruism, ingenuity, self sacrifice and greatness. All it does is enormously expand my view of what a mechanism can be.

If I go further, as I do, and come to believe that all mechanisms, including us, are no more than the interactions of neutrons, protons and electrons, guided perhaps by the fuzzy laws of quantum chromodynamics, this does not undo my wonder at humanity. It takes to a new level my appreciation of the fundamental laws of physics and the wonders of stuff. If as in fact I most certainly do not, I were to believe in a creator God, this new knowledge of the capabilities of the simplest components of the universe might make me want to worship Him. *Tim Stevenson*