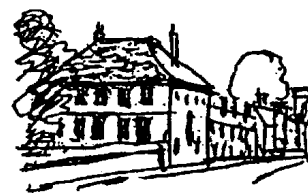

THE COLEBROOK COURIER

WINCHESTER QUAKERS NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2016

MEETING HOUSE, 16 COLEBROOK ST., WINCHESTER SO23 9LH

EDITOR DOREEN PEARCE



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EDITORIAL

I had hoped to do a small study of how long attenders waited before they became members and if they felt a difference once they were members. It didn't work out. Either I asked the wrong questions, or the wrong people, but I didn't get enough replies to come to any conclusion. I suppose that was the conclusion that each person feels their own way. Some of us felt we weren't good enough to be 'real' Quakers, some knew straight away that they had 'come home' and quickly became members.

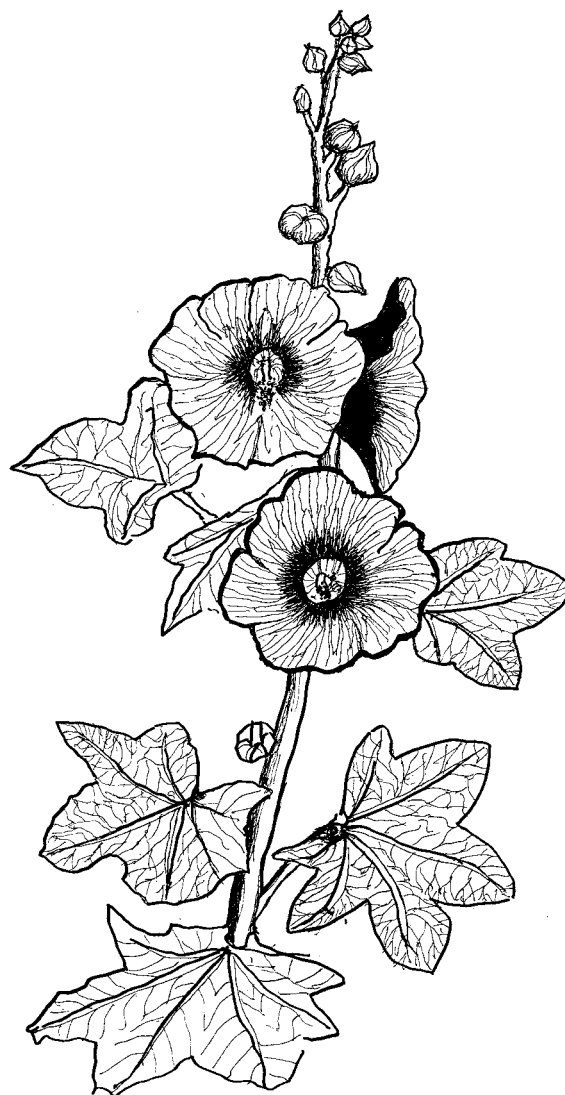
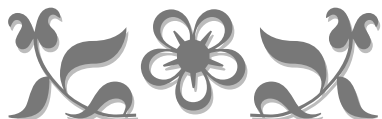
Did it make any difference? Personally I felt that, although there were no rules, I expected certain standards of behavior of myself. Anything that was expected of other Quakers was also expected of me, so I should not, if asked to do something light-heartedly refuse because I didn't feel like it. In Meeting I was a small link in the chain of worship.

I have been reading, or rather re-reading, Geoffrey Durham's book *On Being a Quaker*. I know it was written for newcomers but it does me no harm to let his clear, simple explanations remind me of what we are basically about. *Quaker Faith and Practice* provides us with strong meat but I need a little milk as well.

By the time you get this Autumn will be upon us – season of mists and remembering your flu jab. I have always thought of my body as quite separate from my spirit. The difficulty is I have to work hard to keep the body going as a container for the spirit.

Doreen Pearce

doreenbessiepearce@gmail.com



Poetry

Do you enjoy poetry – listening to it, reading it, enjoying old favourites, exploring new talents? If so you would enjoy our poetry reading group. It meets roughly every six weeks on a Monday afternoon in a member's house.

The next one is on November 21st, 3.00 pm, at 2 Mede Villas, Kingsgate Road, Winchester.

For more information ring

Peggy Souter 01962 861932

Doreen Pearce 01962 864370

A WALK THROUGH MEDIEVAL JEWISH WINCHESTER

The history of the Jews in Winchester is very poorly documented, not least as a result of the malign influence of John Hooper Harvey, the archivist at Winchester College until 1964, who was a noted anti-semitic. That has been being corrected in recent years, and Winchester City Council has launched a Jewish Trail, identifying some of the key sites. Tony Stoller led a group of Winchester Quakers and members of the local Jewish community around this trail – and elsewhere – as part of our season of after-Meeting walks.

Jews were originally brought into England by William the Conqueror from Rouen in 1070, who wanted to use their business skills to build a richer nation. The first record of Jews in Winchester is in 1148, and by 1175 there were up to 200 Jews in the City, making it one of the half dozen largest Jewish communities in England. Winchester Cathedral still has two records to see of the presence of Jews. There are depictions of Jews wearing the archetypal conical hat in the wall paintings decorating the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre, one of which may be meant as Joseph of Arimathea washing the body of Jesus beneath the Cross. And Stephen Gardiner's Chapel has a statue of Synagoga, holding the two tablets of the Ten Commandments but blindfolded, indicating that she was ignorant of the New Testament.

Although there is no mention in situ, at the heart of Winchester Castle was the Jews Tower, which served as a place of refuge (and probably also living quarters) for the minority. They were known as 'The King's Jews', and made their homes in and around the Castle, so that they could retreat back to the Tower for safety. The Jewish Massacres of 1189/90 elsewhere in England did not affect Winchester, which later made much capital of its good treatment of them. Richard of Devizes wrote in the 19th century that "Winchester was the Jerusalem of the Jews" (though, of course, the Jews' Jerusalem was always Jerusalem itself, since the time of Solomon).

The main Jewish houses were along what is now called Jewry Street. The 'Jewry' simply means the area where Jews lived, but not a ghetto. The name is not original. The road was



Statue of Synagoga, Winchester Cathedral

known as Scowertenestrete (Butchers' Street) until 1302, and then narrowly escaped being renamed Northgate Street by the Pavement Commissioner in 1856. There are no physical remnants still extant, but the location of the medieval synagogue, and of the house of Licoricia of Winchester are known. Licoricia – now something of a feminist icon – was a wealthy Jewish trader, money-lender and financier, who was murdered in 1277 along with her Christian maidservant.

Anti-semitism was never far below the surface in England. In 1232 Abraham Pinch was accused of the ritual murder of a one-year-old boy, found dead by St Swithun's Priory. The boy's mother fled, destroying the case against Pinch, but he was hanged anyway, for the theft of a florin, on a gallows erected in the courtyard of the synagogue.

Equally, toleration of the Jews in general did not last long. From 1253, all those aged 7 or over were obliged to wear a badge of yellow felt, shaped like the tablets of law held by Synagoga. In 1264, Simon de Montfort laid siege to Winchester, and massacred many of the Jewish population. In 1270, Henry III took the remaining Jewish population under his protection, but after his death two years later the Jews of England began to prepare for renewed exile. Many took refuge in the Jews Tower in 1287, where a graffito in Hebrew script – written by Licoricia's son, Asher – can still be seen. All Jews were expelled from England by Edward I in 1290, ending the medieval history of Jewish Winchester.

Tony Stoller

IS HEAVEN FOR REAL? – the significant implications of Near-Death Experiences

This was the striking title for a recent conference hosted jointly by the Institute for Theological Partnerships at Winchester University, and the Scientific and Medical Network. The inspiration for the conference came from Shirley Firth, Visiting Research Fellow at the University, who helped to create the event and welcomed us as a hostess; while Paul Newman, also of our Meeting, chaired a discussion forum. Shirley and her fellow organisers had attracted an impressive array of speakers, widely known for their contributions to the subject. It is one in which I have long been interested - and the weekend surpassed my hopes for it.

Amongst the speakers were David Lorimer of the Network, who gave us an overview of the subject, including a wide review of the literature; the cardiologist Pim van Lommel, who has conducted extensive research into NDE's and 'non-local consciousness' in Holland; the neuro-psychiatrist Peter Fenwick on the continuation of consciousness after death; Marianne Rankin of the Alister Hardy Trust on NDE's in the context of religious experience; Paul Badham, Emeritus Professor of Theology University of Wales on the implications for Christianity; and Patrick Gaffney, a director of Rigpa, the Tibetan Buddhist Meditation Centre, on the contribution of Buddhism. Between them they opened up a huge field to us. It is now widely recognised that many people have such experiences, and research has shown a very impressive consistency in accounts from across the world and in different cultures.

Classically, the NDE is described by people who have suffered cardiac arrest or a similar state, and are understood to be clinically dead, with a flat EEG and other such signs. It is generally assumed that it is impossible for consciousness to be present in such circumstances. The NDE characteristically produces what is effectively the opposite: an expanded state of consciousness, with powerful perceptions of unity, love and light. From these states people usually return to living only reluctantly, having known a state more 'real' than the reality of

ordinary life. Their experiences are vividly remembered, with profound and life-changing effects.

We were given a very moving first-hand account by Tanya Garland, a Friend from Oxford, who had 'died' during a difficult childbirth. She found herself, as have so many others, at ceiling height looking down on the procedures below. She wanted only to move further on into the place she had entered, when a voice told her to go back for the sake of her children, and she knew she must. At this point she felt herself becoming intensely heavy, and went down reluctantly to re-enter her body and resume her life. While she spoke the whole hall was motionless, gripped by her deeply moving story.

The current materialist philosophy claims, of course, that consciousness cannot exist independently of the brain. Those who suggest otherwise are confronted with many ingenious explanations of the NDE phenomenon, but often these are clearly produced to fit the existing belief, rather than to address the findings as they actually present themselves. Van Lommel himself, originally a sceptic, but having now conducted longitudinal NDE studies in 10 hospitals over 10 years, has come to the conclusion that 'most likely the brain has a facilitating and not a producing function to experience consciousness'.

Perhaps the most important concept toward which the evidence points is that of a universal consciousness, or Mind, of which our own individual consciousness is but a part. One way of seeing it is that Mind is the generating centre, and we are the receiving and distributing centres – though only if we 'plug in' to the original centre. I was struck by the analogy of the internet 'Cloud', which we access via our individual receivers. Another concept is of brain is individual and separate, mind as universal and shared: the conclusion is that 'we are one another', not an unfamiliar idea.

The conference did for me what such events rarely do – it actually shifted my perspective,

(continued on page 5)

QUAKERISM AND THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE

As I seek to deepen my understanding of Quaker ways I am often reminded of my three year training, thirty years ago, to become an Alexander Technique teacher. Then, it was suggested that I write down my impressions in the first term for never again would I be so confident of my understanding. It was good advice but I ignored it. Being new to Quakerism and appreciating that the more I learn the less I will know I have decided to heed that past advice. In doing so I have found unexpected similarities between the teachings despite one being concerned with our relationship to each other and God, and the other with how we use our own selves.

Quakerism and the Alexander Technique use different terminology yet in both we are encouraged to stop, to find that quiet space within ourselves where listening can take place. Reasoned behaviour, what F. M. Alexander called 'thinking in activity', usually leads to more a positive outcome than the heedless thought or gesture. Alexander coined the terms 'end-gaining' (unhelpful) and 'means whereby' (helpful) to describe the way in which we often allow the pursuit of a specified goal to cloud our judgement both regarding its cost and its merit. Determining an end, he suggests, limits us for it assumes that we have enough understanding and experience at the start, to dictate the outcome; it allows little room for growth, change or new insights. Expectations, whether they be low or high, are inherently limiting, they imply an end, a full stop.

Addressing the 'means whereby' a goal might be achieved, on the other hand, allows us to address the steps we take as we take them so that with luck the outcome will be the best it can, while doing as little damage as possible along the way. Alexander's dream was to help everyone fulfil their true potential. That potential was individual and free of judgement: Alexander offered a tool, not an end result.

As Alexander Technique teachers we share our knowledge with our pupils. We offer what enlightenment we can, we pass on our understanding to the best of our ability but each pupil has to make of it what they will.

Quaker practices are, similarly, a powerful tool for unlimited growth; a spiritual development focusing on the inner means and not the outward ends. For this insight to thrive inner peace is required, a space within where change can happen, where the light can be discerned. Being true to one's conscience in any given moment is essential but trying too hard to be good, like all 'end-gaining' is usually counter-productive. Quakers believe that everyone is blessed with inherent light, Alexander believed that stopping doing the 'wrong' thing would allow the embodied 'right' thing to do itself. Fundamentally, we don't have to 'do' anything to be enlightened; we have to stop doing all those things that prevent our light, our inner godliness, our physical and emotional well-being from flourishing. How? Alexander suggested using inhibition.

Inhibition, a misunderstood concept these days, is both a Quaker and an Alexander Technique precept. It implies taking stock of a given situation and reflecting before reacting. Inhibiting those habitual responses so that other options are available to us: to hear spiritual guidance; to find some equilibrium. This is not inhibition as Freud meant it - both systems predate that particular interpretation - rather it harks back to the Latin sense of holding back or prevention. We need to hold back the extraneous noise, the flurry of mental and physical activity, the parasitic business that engulfs us so that we can focus our intent allowing light to dawn in whatever way it will.

I feel very blessed that I have been offered two remarkable teachings that compliment each other so effectively. Alexander's aim was for us to 'improve the use of the self'. Breathe better, move better, suffer less physical pain and discomfort, think more freely: not be the best, but offer ourselves the best chance to do our best. Guidance, not judgement, is what we aim for as teachers. This is what I have found in Quaker meetings, along with great warmth and deep reflection.

Clarissa Marie Palmer

Recipe: Lemon Fridge Cake

1 packet sponge cakes
4 oz castor sugar
1 or 2 lemons, juice and rind
3 oz butter
3 eggs
½ pint apple juice
Cream to decorate

1. Cut the sponge cakes into three. Line a small loaf tin with foil. Cream the butter and sugar then add the egg yolks. Add the grated lemon rind and juice slowly.
2. Beat the egg whites until stiff then fold into the butter mixture.
3. Put alternate layers of sponge cake and cream mixture into the tin. Cover with foil and press down.
4. Freeze overnight. Turn out onto a dish. Decorate with whipped cream.

Lost for Words

Words fall down cracks in my mind,
disappear in the dust and debris underneath.
Not lost forever like virginity
but lost when you want them
like car keys hidden under a cushion
which turn up later
after you've stopped looking.

Ameliorate or incunabula
could lie in dark corners for months
I wouldn't even miss them.
But they are too large
to slip into cracks.
Simple everyday words like
Tulip, pudding, sympathy
slide down with ease
but take days to recover.

What shall I do when
all the small words have disappeared?
I shall be left with large unwieldy prose,
sledgehammers to crack hazel nuts.

Doreen Pearce

(Continued from page 3)

I suspect permanently. During my life I have moved increasingly toward 'non-theism', and have come to feel that if anything might hold answers to questions about meaning in life apart from sheer randomness, it could be the mystery of consciousness, often seen as the last great enigma that continues to elude science, perhaps definitively. The sheer weight of evidence produced by speaker after speaker about the many scientists, mystics and others who have experienced for themselves, or are otherwise convinced by, the idea of a universal consciousness, moved me from the fear that 'this is all there is' to a re-conviction, and consolidation, of the likelihood of its reality, and of its being indeed more fundamental than matter. As a result, I have taken up meditation again, and this time, at last, it is making more sense for me.

A couple of days ago I went to meet my small group at Winchester prison, where I am Quaker chaplain. Unusually, only one prisoner was present on this occasion, and we fell to talking about the conference. I asked if he had heard of NDE's. He said: 'Heard of them? – I've had one'. During a stroke, he had been technically dead in an ambulance for a full five minutes before he was revived. In that time he experienced himself as 'above the world, and going toward the sun'. Nor did he want to return. He said it had convinced him that we are made up of 'tiny flecks of light'. He also described seeing the image of a daisy while in that state, and how it lived its own life, with a significance as great as ours. I was struck by the imagery of the daisy: a tiny sun, surrounded by rays of white light.

His experience was typical; his telling it was not. So many people have had similar experiences, but do not find it easy to speak of them in our social climate. I am so grateful to Shirley and the others for bravely putting on a conference about something so fundamentally important.

Dorothy Hamilton

A REFLECTIVE TIME TO REMEMBER OUR FRIEND, PETER COTTINGHAM

On 7 May, some Friends gathered together in the Meeting House to share a reflective time in memory of Peter Cottingham - we were pleased to welcome two Friends from Alton Meeting.

Peter was an enthusiastic reader of Thomas Merton so we included two pieces from Merton's writings: it was suggested that these should be sent to *The Courier*.

READING ONE

“The way to find the real world is not merely to measure and observe what is outside us, but to discover our own inner ground. For that is where the world is, first of all: in my deepest self. This ‘ground’, this ‘world’ where I am mysteriously present at once to my own self and to the freedom of all other men, is not a visible, objective and determined structure with fixed laws and demands. It is a living and self-creating mystery of which I am myself a part, to which I am myself my own unique door.”

From: Thomas Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*. Garden City, New York, Doubleday, 1971, p. 234.

Not Forgotten

When friends are ill, I've sometimes agonised over how to help or even what to say to them and their families. Should I visit, or would that be a nuisance? Send flowers? – but didn't I read somewhere that flowers harbour germs and are now banned from hospitals? What about a card? – or might that clutter up the bedside table? Might “I'm sorry – how are things?” be too tiring to answer? Well, now that my own husband is in hospital I'm on the receiving end, and I'm not going to agonise any more.

Friends and neighbours have emailed, telephoned and left food on the doorstep. It's all fantastically helpful. I am overwhelmed with cakes and biscuits, and even if neither Frank nor I can eat them all, it's great to have some on hand to offer to anyone I might invite – invite! – to have a cup of coffee. Not ringing the doorbell is thoughtful

READING TWO

“It is in deep solitude that I find gentleness with which I can truly love my brothers. The more solitary I am, the more affection I have for them. It is pure affection and filled with reverence for the solitude of others. Solitude and silence teach me to love my brothers for what they are and not for what they say.”

From: Thomas Merton, *The Sign of Jonas*, entry for January 12, 1950.

Some information about Thomas Merton (1915-1968)

- An acclaimed Catholic spiritual writer, poet, author and social activist
- A proponent of inter-religious dialogue
- A Trappist Monk in the Abbey of Gethsemani in Kentucky.

A prolific writer, addressing a wide range of issues including social justice, peace, ecumenism and inter-religious spiritual dialogue – hence his great appeal to many Quakers.

Audrey Chamberlain

too, as sometimes it's been beyond me to answer it. Savoury food is a wonderful gift: delicious as cake is, I can't live on it. My favourite? Nourishing soup. All you need do is heat it and pour it down. A card is great. Every time I see it I'm reminded that someone is thinking of us.

Because of course the real value of any gift or any enquiry (and no, “How are things?” is not too tiring to answer – you can choose how much or how little to say) is the concern that prompted it. That's amazingly supportive and makes a huge difference. So in future I'm not going to hesitate. I'm going to make sure, in whatever way, that my sick friends know they're not forgotten.

Wendy Barnaby

PROFILE MICHAEL STEVENS

Michael's parents were both Quakers. If they had wished it, Michael and his younger brother Roger would both have been birthright Friends; but they wanted their children to decide for themselves whether they would join the society. The boys were happy to become members at the age of 16, and both remained active members ever since.

Michael was born on 13 November 1930 at his parents' home in Reading. His maternal grandmother, who was staying with them at the time, greeted his birth by announcing, "It's singing!" She meant the kettle, not the baby.

Michael grew up in an extended Quaker family, going to a Quaker school (Leighton Park) and as a member of Reading Quaker meeting. He has personal memories of those at meeting when he was a child, including Beatrice Saxon Snell who was "an impressive minister but whose sight was poor and drove her car trusting in Divine protection", and William Leech who spent meeting "pedalling" his hassock foot rest. Michael knew about pedalling: from an early start with the piano, he progressed to lessons on the two-manual and pedalled organ at Leighton Park, and later to the four-manual organ at St Mary's, Reading. He still has a reed organ in his sitting room at home, although it's a long time since he's played it.

At university in Newcastle Michael decided he did not have the imagination to become an architect, and studied town planning. After graduating he was to do two years of national service, but went before a tribunal and was granted conscientious objection. He worked in food distribution, driving a van to sell sausages and pork pies to local shops. Later he transferred to a grocery warehouse, serving on the counter where shopkeepers stocked their shops. This he found more interesting, as he was working alongside people he had little in common with.

After national service, in 1957, he found a job with the planning department of Hampshire County Council, spending some of his 17 years there supervising mineral workings in Hampshire. In 1962 he and Sheila were married. She had been teaching maths at the Mount in York but had transferred to IBM in Hursley. Their daughters are Jenny and Alison. In 1974 a government reorganisation gave Michael an opportunity to



switch to Southampton City Council, where he stayed for the rest of his working life providing statistics of population and development to the planning department. After early retirement in 1986, he spent over 20 years volunteering at the Citizens' Advice Bureau. "This gave me an appreciation of people's problems," he says. For some of the time he specialised in helping clients prepare the case they would put to a tribunal after they'd been refused a benefit. "A good many of the appeals were successful," he recalls.

Michael had been Clerk of Reading meeting before he married. His first appointment at Winchester was as Treasurer; since then, he has been an Overseer, a representative at Meeting for Sufferings and three times Clerk. Sheila attended meeting for many years until, with Myf Piggott's encouragement, she also became a member.

"I've felt at home with Quakers and like feeling part of the community," says Michael. "I've appreciated the depth of silence although I've never felt I've had ideas I could pass on in ministry. My role has been more in administration, to keep things going." He is very happy about the social project, and commends the wardens for their work. "I've never been an instigator," he muses; "I'd like to be remembered as a faithful servant of meeting."

Wendy Barnaby

HIROSHIMA AUGUST 6TH 1945

After this year's vigil I wondered why we remember this act of war and not the bombing of Dresden and other atrocities. I came up with the following wording which could be used on posters.

WHY REMEMBER IT?

1. Because it was the culmination of a weapon system designed for the mass killing of defenceless men, women and children.
To repeat this would be morally wrong.
2. Because it is an unsolved problem for the United Nations, to eliminate an unacceptable and expensive weapon system based on fear and bluff that is still being made more lethal.
3. If humanity is to modify the climate change threat to all species in time, there needs to be a world system based on cooperation, trust, forgiveness and love.

Andrew Rutter



This poem was written by Jose Luce, a member of our Meeting, who died (aged 94) on August 23rd. She read the poem in Meeting on one of the anniversaries of Hiroshima.

AUGUST 6TH 1945

Children run home the dark will come
And turn your dreams to shadows –
What kind of cloud blackens the sun
What seed springs in these meadows?

Meadows of stone to break the heart
And hard beyond enduring
To which bright darkness will impart
A sudden bitter flowering.

No angel holds the sword of fire
That strikes so deep a furrow
Where anger, love, fear and desire
Become an embered sorrow.

Yet now and then where once you played
A little dust now rises:
The god of miracles is dead
But his ghost moves where he pleases.

The dry bones join again from death
The chain of dust becomes a Man:
Dust and spirit, bone and breath –
Be wiser, Adam, if you can.

Sent in by Andrew Rutter

The problems we face are big and urgent and we may feel as if we are standing at the edge of all we know. However, if we have faith and trust in our leadings, when we take the next step together, either we shall find earth under our feet or God will give us wings.

From Yearly Meeting's Epistle

QUAKER SNAPSHOT

The actress, Sheila Hancock, who opened the Quaker Tapestry exhibition for us in Winchester Cathedral, was interviewed for the Spring number of the Woodland Trust magazine, about her life and interests.

I have extracted three things from this that appeal to me.

‘My first experience of the countryside was being evacuated from Dartford to Somerset, aged seven. I soon got in with a local gang. They taught me to climb trees so that we could spy on people, and make camps and go scrumping. To this day If I see a climbable tree I am awfully tempted – though they have to be more easily accessible ‘

When she and her late husband, John Thaw, lived in Wiltshire, they planted lots of trees, including a corner for rowans and field maples which were a riot of reds, yellows and golds in autumn.

Sheila concluded ‘There is a strong environmental aspect to the Quaker Movement,



but this is not what drew me. It was the lack of rules, no one is in charge. We are a community of friends who practise rather than preach. We do a lot of work with the least attractive in society – the people who got left behind. There is an active pacifism too. People plan idiotic wars with enormous precision, so we have to be just as businesslike to bring about peace.’

Andrew Rutter

FRIENDLY WALKS

At the beginning of the year Ian Bartlett and Sally Gale were in conversation about their shared enjoyment of walks and Ian mentioned that at their old meeting they would go for walks together. This provided a little gentle exercise, and more importantly was an excellent way to get to know other members of the meeting since you would chat with different people as you walked. They discussed this with Jane Bennett who started arranging some walks.

The first walk was in February and was a ‘trial by mud’ for the participants. The plan was to walk out to St Cross, but after some wet weather there were plentiful puddles and in some places expanses of mud across the path. However a brave few battled through to St Cross and it turned out to be a very enjoyable experience. Some people then took the bus back and others made a longer walk around by the bottom of St Catherine’s Hill and back to the meeting house. This first attempt was encouraging enough that we have tried some

more walks since then. A scouting trip around the Winnall Moors revealed a much firmer path and boardwalks over any wet sections, so the next walk around there was much less adventurous and was blessed with fine weather. Our most successful walk was led by Tony Stoller and was a guided walk around the Jewish landmarks of the town. We were lucky enough to be joined by some members of the Jewish community in Winchester, and I think everyone was amazed by the wealth of history that Tony was able to share with us. Another attempt at St Cross was made in finer weather and this demonstrated that anyone on a small mobility scooter could join us as well.

The walks are usually advertised in Promptings and on the Meeting noticeboard in the Small Meeting Room. Unless otherwise stated they start from the Meeting House at 12:00 on Sunday, and all are welcome. Ideas for walks are welcome.

Jane Bennett

IF ONLY

The way to a man's heart is through his stomach. If only I could find as simple a way to win over my computer. From the moment it entered the house it became my implacable enemy. Why, I cannot understand. I made it welcome, gave it not only a table of its own but a whole room where it could reign supreme. I spent time with it every day so it couldn't complain of neglect. I tried to tempt it with little treats

'Would you like to play Free Cell this morning?'

'How do you feel about a little stroll on the internet? Nothing too strenuous.'

The result was always the same – non-cooperation of a quietly bitter kind. You would be amazed at the number of different annoyances it could think up, from go-slow loading to abandoning a web page in the middle of a shopping order, refusing to open emails, refusing to close down.

I decided that it was being mischievous, rather like a naughty child trying to get attention. In that case I would ignore it and it would soon get bored and behave properly. How wrong I was. Eventually I had to face the truth – it was

malicious and evil. It was hot-wired to cause mischief. I began to feel bad vibes directly I entered the room.

Before I decided on a course of action I needed to know if its enmity was directed at me or the whole human race. My neighbour tried it and couldn't see what I was grumbling about

'It's fine, absolutely fine,' he declared 'a mite slow but most machines are in this area..'

My son tried it and it played all its old tricks

'Get rid of it,' he said 'you'll never get anywhere with a brute like that.'

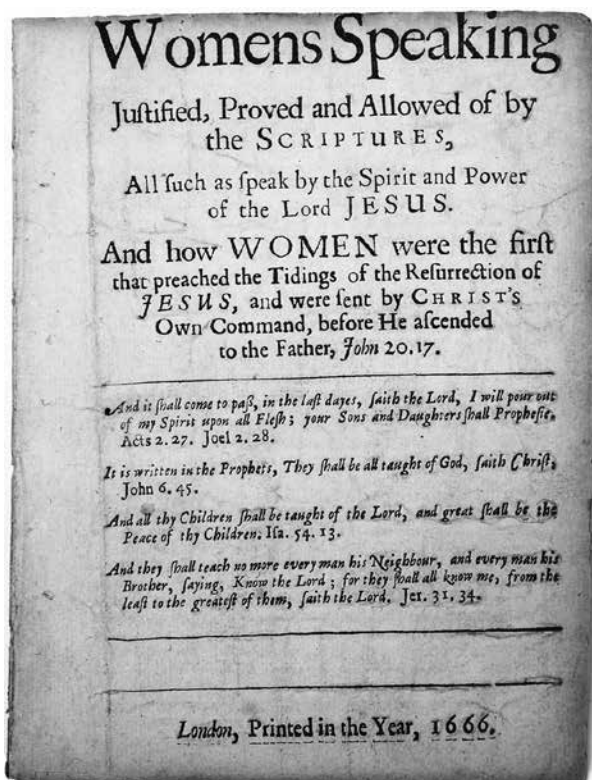
It seemed a shame to throw away a potentially good machine so I gave it to a worthy cause. It would be fine as long as it kept away from my family.

The following week my daughter came in

'Surprise, surprise. I saw this nearly new computer on a charity stall and I thought that's ideal for Mum, so I bought it for you.'

She didn't expect me to scream and run from the room.

Doreen Pearce



Text quoted from: <http://users.wfu.edu/zulick/340/Felltext.html>

Mark this, you that despise and oppose the Message of the Lord God that he sends by women, what had become of the Redemption of the whole Body of Man-kind, if they had not believed the Message that the Lord Jesus sent by these women, of and concerning his Resurrection? And if these women had not thus, out of their tenderness and bowels of love, who had received Mercy, and Grace, and forgiveness of sins, and Virtue, and Healing from him, which many men also had received the like, if their hearts had not been so united and knit unto him in love, that they could not depart as the men did, but sat watching, and waiting, and weeping about the Sepulchre untill the time of his Resurrection, and so were ready to carry his Message, as is manifested, else how should his Disciples have known, who were not there?

From *Womens Speaking Iustified, Proved and Allowed by the Scriptures*. Margaret Fell, 1666

WHAT HAPPENS IN CHILDREN'S MEETING . . .

Hearing some space was left in The Colebrook Courier, I decided to send in the following observations. With a bit of luck, I might get some answers in the next Courier from others . . .

After meeting for worship today, parents of the children, children's committee, and some helpers met in the children's room to discuss our children's meeting. I came away with more things to ponder, and more questions raised, rather than answered. Someone said that the rest of the meeting should be much more aware of our children and what goes on in children's meeting. They should know what are our themes and what we are trying to teach the children, and **how could we let the children be more part of the whole meeting?** 'Could we perhaps also be more welcoming to grandchildren and others?' I felt, that perhaps I am just too happy to tick along. But it would be nice to have suggestions, answers from others in Meeting. Another question from two at the meeting was: **'What do we (as helpers) teach the children about Quakerism/Quaker values?** There's got to be some 'content' for our three older girls, and perhaps others who come.'

I know this is being pondered by all helpers, and perhaps the others find it as difficult as I do to know 'what and how'. We are all just occasional helpers and not really teachers. We did have some suggestions in our meeting, like starting to make use of 'Journeys in the Spirit' (the wonderful monthly Quaker guide for children's meeting,) and adjust some of their material. But I really would like to know from F/friends (and not only helpers) what of Quakerism/Quaker values they would like our children to learn, and perhaps, even, how. Who knows, if we have a space to share, perhaps we could learn some things together. (I have discovered for myself, that I take in things more easily, and to greater depth, when it's simple enough for children.)

Most F/friends might have been aware that we did have a long running theme in children's meeting about our concern for children fleeing their country. The children worked also at preparing a sale in aid of 'Save the Children' to help these refugee children. This was held end of July and raised £180 - thank you to all who supported that. In the next weeks we will work at making a big 'prayer flag for peace' to help us 'hold in

the Light' (pray for) the situation of war torn countries, those who flee their countries at war . . .

For me the 'Quaker value/learning content' around this activity would be a very important one, which adults and children grapple with, (going through doubt, and growth?) in realizing that it matters if we can surround people and situations with our love, and perhaps place our hopes for happiness of others and our worries in 'God's hands' and be open to promptings about what is our bit to do. We hope that the adults will help with our prayer flag on 13th November at our All Age Worship.

Other things that meeting does hang together with what the children do and shows our concern: Our collection this month, and the monthly vigils in solidarity with refugees at the Buttercross, organised by the Peace and Justice group. So we are connected in that concern, and it's good to share that with meeting. Perhaps this letter was prompted by that request that we let big meeting know what happens in children's meeting.

Irene Ashby

Loading the Ark

Happily the sheep, cows
And pigs are well behaved
And walk straight towards the refuge,
But the wilder animals
Are proving more awkward;
The leopards squabble in an angry heap,
The lions prowl a tight circle round
The frightened horses whose hooves
Flatten the crowded grass
Where mice and voles scuttle.
Birds perch on overhead branches
Reluctant to be confined,
Stately stags stampede;
Delicate deer dither;
Ferocious ferrets flee;
Enormous elephants escape
And the ducks are just being silly.
In the centre of this chaotic gathering
Noah stands, wipes a weary brow,
And watches the fortunate whales
Swimming free in the rising water.

John Souter

OUR STREAM RUNS DRY

On the weekend of our heritage open days, our stream started to dry up. A young boy came up to me very concerned that he had found baby eels flapping about in some mud. At closer inspection I found them to be lampreys, a prehistoric eel like freshwater hagfish which is very common in the Itchen river.

Although the water had stopped running, there was still a deep water area that contained many fish. By the time Wednesday came along the deep water area was nothing more than a tiny puddle. I rescued as many fish as I could but was quite saddened to see that many hundreds of baby trout, sticklebacks and other species had perished including many hundreds of snails. I decided to investigate.

By asking permission from home owners I was able to gain access to garden areas upstream to see if I could trace the source of the stoppage. I eventually found myself in the overgrown garden of the large derelict house in Colebrook street near the Itchen. The water simply went underground in a concrete conduit . . . where it went to, I had no idea. Unperturbed, I continued my investigation.

Next stop was the Mill. I spoke to the manager who confirmed that the sluice which fed our stream was nothing to do with the mill. He gave me the phone number of the person responsible for flooding and water levels in Winchester. I phoned up and the person responsible was very surprised and very concerned to find out that the small local eco-system in our stream had collapsed. He told me there had been work going on upstream with sluice gates changing a number of levels and flows in order to carry out planned maintenance. He promised me that he would investigate this immediately as an emergency.



I phoned him up the following day and he confirmed that they had raised the water level by the river cottage because the level was too low to spill over into the Colebrook sluice. He told me where the opening was situated, so I finally found out where our water came from. Although he had raised the level quite a few hours ago, he said that it would take time before the water eventually gets through. Sure enough, an hour or two later, the precious water started once more to flow...first as a trickle and then as a heavy flow.

Now I know where the Colebrook sluice is situated, I can keep an eye on the levels so if it happens again, I can make one simple phone call to ensure the life and vibrancy of our stream. I will place a small item in *The Courier* when the fish come back to us and swim in our stream once again.

Geoff Hammond



Afterword . . .

Andrew met a lady who had known Margaret Spence and she told him this story about her.

In the second world war Margaret was a young nurse in a central London hospital, looking after wounded servicemen. Apparently a message was circulated to the Staff that owners of horses in Devon were having difficulty in feeding them because of rationing. They might be forced to put them down.

Margaret decided to buy one of them and look after it. The horse was sent up to Paddington Station. She then rode it out to the end of the Northern Line to a large mental hospital where she could keep it.

From then on she cycled out there every day to feed and see to its needs, before cycling back to take up her nursing duties in central London.

Andrew Rutter