



THE DORKING GRAPEVINE

Dorking Quaker Meeting

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Quakers: Simple, Radical and Contemporary

Events for June – in Meeting House, unless otherwise indicated

NB: There is a half hour Meeting for Worship (12.45 – 1.15 PM) **every Wednesday** followed by a simple lunch of soup, bread, cheese and fruit. All are welcome.

Mon 4 June	8.30 – 9 pm	Healing/Upholding Prayer Group (in Friends' homes)
Sun 10 June	6.30 – 7.30 pm	MfW (Park House, Leatherhead)
Fri 15 June	2.30 – 4 pm	Meditation and Spiritual Exploration (see p.5)
Mon 18 June & Wed 20 June	2 pm	Ideas exchange (at Su's – 3 Nower Lodge)
Sun 24 June	12.30 pm	Friendly lunch – all welcome

AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE

Elizabeth writes: It is now three years since large areas of Nepal were damaged by a violent earthquake – with homes and schools demolished – and many lives lost. The reconstruction work continues and I had a wonderful afternoon last month in the home of Sutton Friend, Elspeth, who several years ago trekked to Base Camp and fell in love with Nepal. She now organizes fund-raising days – coffee, cakes, savouries, plants and beautiful hand sewn gifts – to support the rebuilding of schools in the devastated region, and she has just sent off over £1,500. One project has been to buy water filtration plants so that children can have access to clean water. We, in the West, are all aware of the pollution caused by single use plastic water bottles, but we forget that there are many parts of the world where people do not have access to clean and cheap water. Elspeth will be running another day in October, and some of us will be arranging a date for a Dorking visit to Sutton Meeting in the Autumn.



JUNE COLLECTION

The collection in June is for Britain Yearly Meeting and was proposed by Romy.

YEARLY MEETING 4 -7 MAY 2018



Catherine Brewer has sent us this report – many Friends will remember her as she grew up in Dorking Meeting, attending regularly with her parents Anne and Colin.

One of my earliest memories of Yearly Meeting is of 1994, when we adopted the current Quaker Faith and Practice. This time I felt like I had come almost full circle, as we considered whether it is time to revise our Book of Discipline once more.

One of the themes that stood out for me was diversity, in different forms. Religious diversity was very evident, and on the whole we saw it as something to celebrate. In talking about the language we should use in our book of discipline, it was interesting when (mainly) older Friends said that we should use simpler and more modern language, but under 19s spoke up strongly for keeping some of our traditional, more archaic terms, because they felt that these terms were more ambiguous, and therefore could encompass different individual interpretations. The concern to be more inclusive of social and cultural diversity, which arose at Yearly Meeting Gathering last year, was also present. When we split into parallel sessions on Saturday afternoon, I went to the session on ‘missing identities’: looking at whose experience is not reflected in our current book of discipline. Friends shared experiences of feeling isolated or invisible – as transgendered, differently abled, or not fitting the ‘norm’ of educated, white, middle-class. But hearing the voices of others in the group, Friends started to say that they felt less alone, and there was the sense that the idea of that ‘norm’ is a myth that needs to be challenged.

My experience of this Yearly Meeting was dominated by being convenor of epistle drafting committee, so I had less time than usual to connect with old or new Friends. Breakfast was an opportunity to stop and sit outside in the sun and greet people as they arrived for the day. After that most breaks were spent working on the epistle. There were five of us, and between us we tried to get a flavour of the many activities happening at Yearly Meeting, including interest groups and the Children and Young Peoples’ Programmes, as well as all the main sessions. One of the main challenges of writing the epistle is time, and being able to distil the experience of the weekend into a couple of pages. A week or two after Yearly Meeting you can look back and see what still stands out as significant, but in the midst of the sessions you don’t have this perspective. Inevitably everyone has their favourite phrase that they think needs to be included, and after we shared the first draft, the boxes for contributions were full of suggestions and counter-suggestions. It’s also hard to step back and reflect on how words and phrases which seem so meaningful in the context of YM will sound to those who were not present. As with all ministry, we have to trust that Friends will hear ‘where words come from’. Nevertheless, it was a rewarding experience, and there was a sense of relief and satisfaction in the way our disparate notes and ideas came together into a serviceable epistle.

BRICKS AND SLATES?

Some unwanted ‘antique’ bricks and pieces of slate are available from the MH garden. If you are interested speak to Theresa.



MENTAL HEALTH IN OUR MEETINGS

Alison Mitchell, newly appointed Quaker Mental Health Development Worker, has prompted Quakers to consider this very important subject. Sally facilitated a lively **discussion amongst Dorking Friends on Sunday 29 April**, which was considerably helped by those present who have some professional knowledge and awareness.

We all noticed how challenging it can be to talk about mental health, as the choice of vocabulary in itself can be fraught with difficulty. It was noted that the word 'mental' is often used pejoratively and that is very easy to start discussing this subject in 'them' and 'us' terms which can be very alienating.

We reflected that the simplest of gestures can be powerful and effective: the offer of a country walk, a mid-week cup of tea in a local café, or a lift to Sunday/Wednesday Meeting to make it easier for someone to attend. Our upholding prayer group which contacts people on their list every month, to see how they are, is very helpful.

Many Friends shared their concern about taking an initiative and 'getting it wrong', using language which might upset, or saying something in a tone that offends. We were all aware of heightened sensitivities for people who are under the pressure of being mentally unwell. Some sad stories of 'getting it wrong' in the past were shared and it was agreed that these should provide opportunities for learning as we move forward. Sally will look into inviting a local therapist to run a listening skills workshop for people keen to help but wary of being unhelpful!



Friends with professional experience highlighted the notion of mental health as a continuum and pointed out how easy it is to conflate the emotional effects of loneliness with serious psychotic illnesses; this is indeed a complex subject. They also pointed out the possible need for regular professional support for people who offer listening (or other) support to a Friend who is experiencing mental health problems. It was agreed that this discussion would benefit from inviting outside expertise.

Minute 6 of Dorking PM on May 6th

Mental Health. An after-meeting discussion on 29 April resulted in a report which will appear in the next Grapevine, is on file, and will be sent to the AM Clerk for AM 13 May. This topic is already on the AM Agenda. Dorking Friends propose inviting Alison Mitchell to facilitate further discussion, on the 10 November, when the AM will be held at Dorking meeting house. This minute will be sent to the AM Clerk.

In the discussion at Capel on May 13th with members of other Local Meetings, it was agreed that that there are broadly 2 aspects to this issue:

1. how to deal effectively and lovingly with people, maybe, strangers, who behave quite inappropriately in Meeting for Worship and appear to be mentally unbalanced.
2. how to be aware of, and offer appropriate support to, members/regular attenders who have one-off or periodic bouts of mental disturbance such as severe depression.

Within these two categories there are many variations and degrees of challenge to the Meeting and it was agreed that the next appropriate step would be to invite the Quaker Life mental health cluster group to run their 2 hour workshop 'Opening the door to talking about mental health' at the AM Fellowship session on Saturday 10 November at Dorking. The Fellowship Group have agreed to go ahead and book this session.

WHAT'S THIS ABOUT AN AREA MEETING FAITH AND PRACTICE GROUP?

Anne B. writes: You may have seen pinned to the notice board in the small hall a minute from Capel Meeting on setting up an Area Meeting Faith and Practice Group, which was approved at the last Area Meeting. I have talked to Audrey Garnett of Capel Meeting about this and she has explained how she hopes such a group will operate.



The Group could consist of an interested Friend(s) from each Local Meeting willing to report to Area Meeting on activity(ies) taking place in their Meeting, which demonstrate Faith in Action. For example, the actions for sustainability by Blue Idol Friends in standing against fossil fuels and by Horsham Friends with their Ecover refill service and hosting of a repair café. The reports could be verbal ones to an Area Meeting or written contributions to an Area Meeting Faith and Practice newsletter, circulated by email like the Fellowship News. This could encourage mutual help where possible or inspire other Meetings to start a similar activity. The Group could also agree on actions they would like to encourage individual Friends to consider.

Meanwhile here is an invitation from West Kent Friends to join them in a witness for Peace. West Kent Friends are planning to have a peace stall at a summer event/show in Paddock Wood (West Kent). The event is called 'War & Peace', but appears to focus much more on the war than the peace. See <https://warandpeacerevival.com/>

Maidstone Friends are putting together a rota of Friends to be on the stall for a day or half day between 24-28 July. If any Friends are interested in coming along, can they contact Sue Laidlay, clerk of Maidstone meeting, at: slaidlay@hotmail.com. Volunteers are of course welcome to stay on the stall as long as they like. There will be a minimum of two people on at any time and Friends would need to be able to offer at least half-day shifts.

BEING MORE PEACEFUL

The Blue Idol Retreat Day. April 23, 2018

Anne Williams writes: Fourteen people, gathered with different reasons for choosing to be present, experienced a day of peace, solace, refreshment and sheer delight in the glorious garden and Meeting House at the Blue Idol.



Firstly, a coming together followed by a three hour silence, then a sharing of our individual experience of the day. I spent my time walking and drawing in the – oh, so beautiful garden; an oasis of calm and tranquillity. The silence concluded with visitors breaking into groups and sharing their feelings and the benefits of such a Retreat from the every day.

I found that I had, whilst drawing (see accompanying picture of my 'Being more peaceful' tree), considered our unsatisfactory, difficult world which offered few answers to its problems, but I was eventually able to leave all that aside and enjoy just 'being'. How we need more occasions that afford this opportunity to just 'Be'.

MEDITATION GROUP

Catherine Carr writes: We had a slightly different session last time. Theresa introduced the Compassionate Mind meditation as a longer and more in depth aspect of our discussion on Buddhist philosophy.

We are considering two ideas:

1. Should we introduce longer meditations? These could be at least 30 minutes, so would take up more time during the afternoon session.
2. Should we, as a group, work to establish a regular practice, and use the group to support this discipline, for example by having a buddy system, or something similar?

Please join us for the next session. Friday 15 June, 2.30 to 4pm.

PREP MEETING, 6 MAY 2018

Some of the matters covered in PM (full minutes available from Su, Trish or Frances P):

- Outreach Committee's future plans. Now the large sign on the Meeting House wall has been installed, other signs and posters will be improved.
Three special Meetings for Worship are proposed:
 - A seeded Meeting in June, focussed on equality.
 - Sunday 7 October – Friends bring a friend to Meeting for Worship
 - Sunday 1 November – evening meeting with focus on personal responsibility for peace.
- Quaker Week will run from 29 September to 7 October. The theme is “Room for More”, and speakers are available from Friends House. Friends are asked to consider whether they are led to put on this event in Dorking.
- Quaker Services Exhibition in available - a series of expandable banners covering Quaker service since the Irish famine up to the present, with a focus on the Friends Ambulance Service and Friends Relief Service, including Displaced Persons in WW2. Friends are asked to consider whether they are led to put on this event in Dorking.
- Mental Health – see page 3 ‘Mental Health in our Meetings’ PM Minute 6.
- Premises and Finance Committee has arranged for the regular survey and maintenance of the bi-parting screen to be done on 27 June.

DELIVERING THE LETTERS



On Sunday 6 May our children delivered their letter about reducing the use of plastic to the local supermarkets. Here is a photo of them with the manager of Lidl.

Pippa writes: Delivering letters was tiring but fun experience, interesting seeing people's reactions – Waitrose manager was best!

Anne B. writes: Should you wish to reduce your use of plastic, how about swapping to a sustainable compostable bamboo toothbrush! If you would like to try one out I have some available at £3 each, along with a recipe for homemade toothpaste so you can avoid the plastic tube as well if you wish!

OUTDOOR MEETING FOR WORSHIP The Kosmon Sanctuary, Walton on the Hill. 20 May, 2018

Elizabeth writes: The familiar noises of the clock ticking, of pages turning, of coughs and creaking benches - these were exchanged for the sound of birds singing, children's voices as they played in the woods and the low background hum of the M25. It was Dorking's first Outdoor Meeting for Worship at the Kosman Sanctuary in Walton on the Hill. Several Friends gathered for Meeting sitting in a circle in the shade of the spreading branches of a large tree. The children didn't stay for the beginning but disappeared into the woods and we settled into a deep silence surrounded by the natural world.

The children then returned to the Meeting after about 40 minutes and Thomas read **Advices and Queries No. 42:** *We do not own the world, and its riches are not ours to dispose of at will. Show a loving consideration for all creatures, and seek to maintain the beauty and variety of the world. Work to ensure that our increasing power over nature is used responsibly, with reverence for life. Rejoice in the splendour of God's continuing creation.*

The children then passed around small observation jars where we could look at beetles, wood lice and other insects – **rejoicing in the splendour of God's continuing creation.** The Meeting then closed, we all shook hands and followed the children deep into the woods to watch the release of the insects and to see the last of the bluebells.

Tea and cake followed and, as we sat in a circle in the sun in the small courtyard, we all agreed that it had been a special morning – and that it had been lovely to see the children running through the labyrinth and being able to be free in the woods.

Our thanks go to Judy who, as a Trustee, arranged for us to use the Sanctuary, and to the Brewers for their support.



One of the Kosmon labyrinths.
Photo from www.kosmonsanctuary.org

Some feedback from Thomas and Ewan: Thomas liked exploring a new place; he really liked being in the woods. He enjoyed showing the ground beetle to the grown-ups though he was a bit concerned that it might have been scared, so he put leaves in with it to try and make it feel more at home. Ewan found catching bugs tricky.



OTHER CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES - A gathering at Box Hill on 29 April and a forest school on 6 May.

Pippa writes: Best thing about forest school was that everyone got to try everything... Listening to and making sounds, blowing the Viking horns, making clay prints, drawing sounds including bird song, roasting marshmallows – including vegetarian ones! and lots of fun stuff. Box hill was enjoyable but cold!!!



Thomas writes: Forest school makes me think. You can have loads of fun but it's in nature and you're not damaging the environment, just using natural materials like when you do clay, making fires and carving. Ewan particularly enjoyed "tickling the fire" and playing with clay.