



THE DORKING GRAPEVINE

Dorking Quaker Meeting

(available on the web at: www.dorkingquakers.org/index.php/newsletter)

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December 2020

No. 552

DIARY

Churches can re-open on Wednesday 2 December. If the regulations change, Friends will be informed by email or phone, but meanwhile the Meeting House will be open as follows.

On Sundays from 6 December – Meeting for Worship (10.30 to 11.30 am) in the Meeting House and on Zoom – probably blended meetings.

On Wednesdays from 2 December – Meeting for Worship (12.45 to 1.15 pm) in the Meeting House. Friends can bring lunch to eat afterwards if they wish.

Sat 5 Dec	10 am – 2.30 pm	Traidcraft stall in Christian centre (see page 2)
Mon 7 Dec	8.30 – 9.00 pm	Upholding prayer session for those in need. On Zoom or in own home.
Fri 18 Dec	3.30 – 5.00 pm	Meditation and Spiritual Development Group meeting on Zoom - contact Romy Elias for Zoom Link.
Fri 25 Dec	10.30 – 11.00 am	Christmas Day Meeting for Worship. You can choose to join Friends in the Meeting House or on Zoom - contact Romy Elias for Zoom Link.
Monday 4 Jan	8.30 – 9.00pm	Upholding prayer session for those in need. On zoom or in own home.
Sunday 17 Jan	from 1.30pm	Study group on Simpler Meetings, on Zoom. See page 5.
Saturday 30 Jan	10.30 – 12.45	Regional Meeting. On Zoom. Topic: <i>Simpler Meetings</i> .

Sunday Children's Meeting on Zoom Contact alison.carlier@icloud.com or katy_nunn@yahoo.co.uk

DECEMBER COLLECTION – chosen by our children

The children came up with a thoughtful selection of charities they would like to support and after discussion decided on Cool Earth and Surfers Against Sewage.



Cool Earth works with rainforest communities to halt deforestation and its impact on climate change. They understand that effective conservation is only possible when local people who are uniquely suited to manage and protect rainforest are put first. See <https://www.coolearth.org> to donate online or send your cheque to the following address: Cool Earth, Tremough Innovation Centre, Penryn, Cornwall, UK, TR10 9TA



Surfers Against Sewage is a marine conservation charity working with communities to protect oceans, waves, beaches and marine life. They are working to reduce plastic pollution and have an active schools programme to motivate young people. More details on their website <https://www.sas.org.uk/> where you can donate online.



If you don't have access to the web, send a cheque to Surfers Against Sewage Limited, Unit 2, Wheal Kitty Workshops, St Agnes, Cornwall TR5 ORD or ring 01872 555947 for details to do a bank transfer.

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR HELPING TO CREATE A FAIRER WORLD

UNDOING THE CUT IN UK OVERSEAS AID

Katy Nunn writes: I'm not sure how many read the Times, or indeed if it will be published, but I have just been forwarded the letter below, written to the Times by an old friend of my mother, and I thought it makes for interesting reading. (I also rather liked the slightly cheeky way in which using gift aid obliges the government to cough up money it is trying to withhold). It might be worth mentioning that the woman who wrote it is rich, and it mightn't work for many people in the current climate, but it might be possible for some.

Sir,

Many of your readers will share the dismay voiced by former Prime Ministers, religious leaders and those involved in overseas development projects at the planned cut in the UK Government's contribution to help the world's poorest people.

May I suggest that at least a partial remedy lies in our own hands? Scribbling on the back of an envelope, I calculate that the £4 billion anticipated cut in aid this year represents £133 for each of the 30 million taxpayers in this country. If every taxpayer pledged to donate £2 a week this year to an overseas aid charity of their own choice, and ticked the 'Gift Aid' box, this would more than make up the shortfall, since the Treasury would be required to chip in £810 million through Gift Aid tax refunds to the charities.

This would also result in financial support going to projects and good causes which British taxpayers actually feel are important and worthwhile, with a level of accountability and transparency through annual reports and updates for supporters which is not offered at present through Government overseas aid programmes.

December is an excellent month to make a start on this giving. Many of us will be receiving a Winter Fuel Payment from the Government which we can do without, and by donating this with a Gift Aid Declaration we can add 25% to its value to a charity. Next week sees The Big Give, in which many overseas development charities are able to double the value of gifts made between 1 and 8 December (thebiggive.org.uk).

Let us show that as a nation we are still generous with our own money to those on our planet who are in most need. Yours etc

SUPPORTING TRAIDCRAFT

Elizabeth Dobson writes: I shall be holding a sale of Traidcraft goods - principally craft items, but also the food and household stock - at the Christian Centre, Dorking, on Saturday 5 December, from 10 am to around 2.30 pm.



Covid precautions: it should be Traidcraft customers only in the building, limited to 6 in the sale area at any one time. You will need to wear a mask and to sanitise your hands on entering and to leave contact details. Everything on sale will be well spaced out to allow up to 6 people to browse maintaining social distance; I will aim to have disposable gloves available. Payment by cash or cheque, or BACS transfer.

Please use St Martin's Walk carpark - free all day on the 5th.

Traidcraft are rapidly selling out of their current catalogue items, so if you wish, do browse the website, www.traidcraftshop.co.uk, in advance, and let me know of anything you want to purchase; I'll do my best to secure it and bring it for collection on the 5th.

SUPPORTING LOCAL FOOD BANKS



And of course, there are always the food banks in Dorking and Leatherhead. Details of what is especially needed each week are sent out by Sarah Freeman on email. Contact Sarah if you wish to be added to her circulation list.

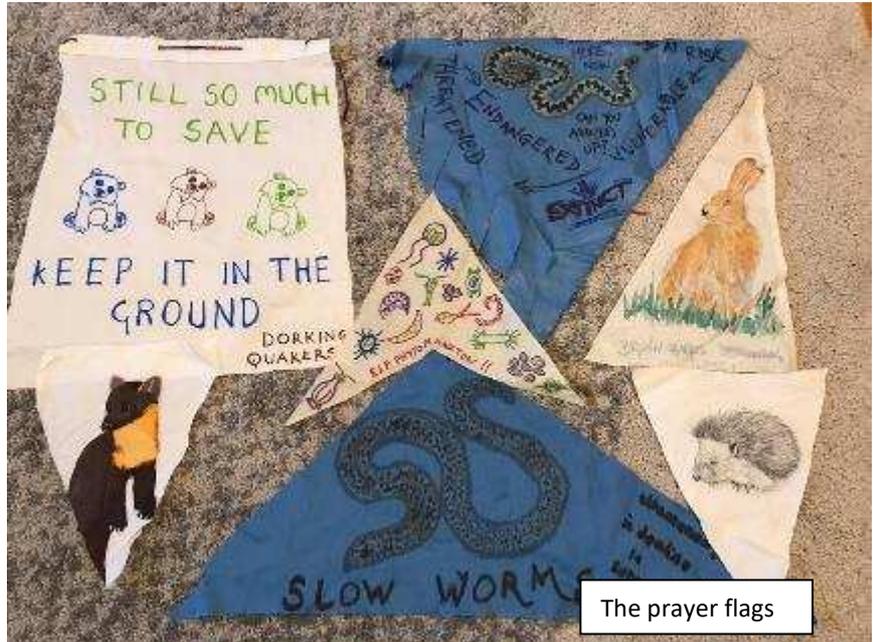
SHARING OUR EXPERIENCES

Friends were invited in the November Grapevine to share some of their experiences during this unusual year. I am pleased to be able to bring you the following five contributions.

Joe Barford-Everett, one of our lovely group of children has shared the following on their behalf:

On Sunday, November 1st, 2020, the monthly Faith at the Gate at Horse Hill Drilling Site marked the Remembrance Day for Lost species. Quaker children from the Dorking meeting house designed beautiful prayer flags depicting lost or endangered species across the world. Fellow Quaker Sarah Freeman kindly offered to collect them up and deliver them to be displayed on the wire fence at Horse Hill Drilling Site for all to see!

We also did a special session where we thought about our favourite endangered animals and how to save them from the brink of extinction. The whole event was live streamed on a Zoom meeting, so our family, along with dozens of adults, were able to join in from home. I designed a bear flag, and it felt amazing to watch local vicar Helen Burnet read it out loud in front of everyone watching, even though they weren't there to see it in person. Overall, it was a really great event. Big thanks to everyone who took part and helped to organise it!



Gill Whitman offers this entertaining but thoughtful poem:

Covid 19

Zooming in and zooming out
Is that what Covid's all about
Or is it there've been lessons learned
Or have our climate boats been burned
Our town folk breathed in clean fresh air
But now they drive without a care
A metre's length's no mystery now
Though distancing may cause a row
To mask or not to mask, it's clear
That people have their own ideas
The young will join a massive rave
The elderly through windows wave
And even though you're in a bubble
You must never, ever, cuddle
A child will always break this rule
Whether in or out of school
Exam results are in a mess

Estimated (more or less)

No one now can have a hug
We face each other with a shrug
Suffering comes in many forms
No one can say what is the norm
The city streets are looking dead
How will we earn our daily bread
Is your future filled with dread
How safe a pathway do you tread

The sea we see is never in that form again
Impermanence is what it can explain
But how to find that still small space within
That's not attached to any other thing
A place that's out of time and out of form
A place where we can shelter from the storm
Here there is peace
Here there is nothing that will change
Perhaps, one day, we will no longer find this
strange

A contribution encouraging us to wear our masks comes from **John Ovretveit**, who used to come to Dorking Meeting some years ago and now joins our zoom meetings from Sweden. He is a Professor of Improvement Implementation and Evaluation, in a Swedish Medical University, so he has been much involved with Covid and the value of masks

Sarah Freeman shares a 'Kaleidoscope of Lockdown':

The question in my mind was how to centre down in my mind amidst change. So much was going on, yet, contrarily, we had slowed.

'Making each other sick. Keeping each other alive.'
Community looked at itself afresh.

'As the roar of the traffic eased, we arose to birdsong.'
Nature alerted us to our symbiotic relationship with the living world.

In the early days of Lockdown an extraordinary still fell on the land. Hearts pumped with fear, but also wonder at traffic free towns and emerging nature made us rejoice.

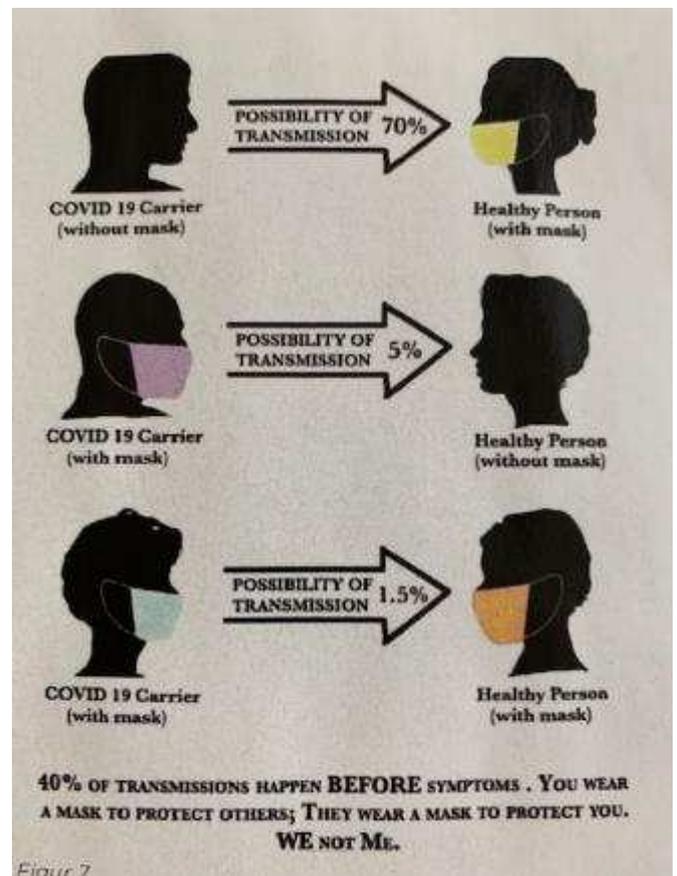
Then a myriad reflections of human responses dispersed into a novel culture through creative, spiritual, technological, emotional and intellectual ripples.

I felt neither deeply peaceful, nor deeply disturbed because I had waited for catastrophe since I first anticipated it as a child. Something put me on edge long ago, some lack of security turned me into the idea that life was beautiful but going to change.

Now, lucky me, like a cloak I spread these moments around me, and warm spring and summer days of wonder encompassed my Lockdown existence.

Still I was among the privileged few whose life was not harrowed or disadvantaged by family tragedies or social deprivation although others around me suffered.

Life is a mystery but at least in Lockdown it is possible to focus on the minute, on nature, and sit in sunshine in daytime. That corridor kaleidoscope through months and into the new year, has helped suggest to me which captive details the planet's regeneration may entail.



Some people's experience has not been positive, and this is something that has concerned many of us.

Hannah Stuart has expressed one concern in a piece of artwork, which acknowledges the rise in domestic violence during the lockdown. It is a mixed media print called simply Domestic Violence.

FAITH AT THE GATE: HORSE HILL'S MONTHLY VIGIL 6TH DECEMBER AT 4.30PM

Sarah Freeman writes: The next Horse Hill Vigil will be held on Sunday 6th December at the earlier time 4.30pm. Please contact me if you would like to go with Friends' company. I am always keen to see fellow Quakers. If you want to walk from the camp to the gate it is best to arrive at the camp at 4.00pm. I can provide you with high-viz jackets if you don't have one. MORE INFO from the website. The theme this month is **Light in Darkness**.

We will be gathering – socially distanced – at the Horse Hill drill site gates and also live-streaming the event so you can join from home if you prefer.

If you want to join from home, please [check the Facebook event page](#) for the Zoom link closer to the time. If coming in person, meet at the gates in time for 4.30pm.

Please wear a mask, bring a torch, dress for the weather and if possible, wear hi-viz. Bring a tea-light in a jar and a prayer flag for the gate if you so wish too.



CARRIE COMFORT'S MINISTRY

Sarah Freeman writes: Last Sunday, 22nd November, we were glad to have Carrie's company at our weekly Zoom meeting. Anne read the Epistle from British Yearly Meeting. In the final part of this message from BYM Clerk, Clare Scott Booth reported that 'we have seen that it is possible to make changes in our way of life'. Later in the meeting there was ministry about our adaptability, particularly among Quakers, which makes room for hope.

Carrie's ministry followed on from this, signposting us to readings that make it clear that there are hardships that people go through before they can effect change. Hope can definitely be embedded in the future, but it won't necessarily be us who grow into such a hopeful future society.

Carrie referred to Esther 4.14 – *God has made you for such a time as this*. She also referred to a quote used in 'The Overstory' by Richard Powers. This unusual American novel, part novel/part fable is about trees and relates trees to the lives of people – 'reimagining our place in the living world'. In one of the chapters Patty, a young woman, discovers an Ovid quotation *Let me sing to you now about how people turn into other things*. This quotation was noted by her botanist father who has just been killed in a car accident on a field trip, and the quotation is taken from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

STUDY GROUPS

The Elders along with other Dorking Meeting friends will run Study Groups through the coming year every other month. To begin with these will take place on Zoom but later of course we hope to return to face to face meetings.

As our study times will alternate with Enquirers' meetings, we hope to hold our sessions at 1.30pm on the Sundays after our Meetings for Worship every other month. Our first Zoom meeting will take place on Sunday, 17th January and the topic will be 'Simpler Meetings'. This will be a chance for all the meeting to learn about the national movement which has begun to discuss how local Quakers can make their meetings simpler to run, less paperwork burdened, less business-meeting heavy, and with a greater emphasis on the spiritual. Such changes will require the whole meeting to be aware of how we maintain our traditions and think of small ways in which each one of us may be able to help.

To read more about Simpler Meetings you can go to <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/support-for-meetings/simpler-meetings> or just be sure to join us in January.

In March 2021, another Sunday, date to be confirmed, we will hold a long-postponed study group on the issues surrounding Assisted Dying. We made a start on this in 2019, responding to the Friends House request that local meetings sound out members on this matter <https://www.quaker.org.uk/news-and-events/news/quakers-to-discuss-assisted-dying>. During the past year Meeting for Sufferings have shelved the matter but Dorking meeting members have continued to study the thinking, practices and ideas happening around the world as well as in the UK. It is possible we are more ready to facilitate the ideas than we were before.

COLOURFUL GREETINGS FROM OUR CHILDREN

Gayle Banks writes: I did a session with the children on Diwali. Here are some pictures of the Rangoli they produced. Including Dorabella's pen artwork, Theo's watercolour artwork (Joe also did some, but alas I didn't get a photo), Pippa's chalk art, Rowan's genuine spice one and Thomas and Ewan's sand art.

(Diwali, a festival of lights, is one of the major festivals celebrated by Hindus, Jains and Sikhs. The festival usually lasts five days and is celebrated between mid-October and mid-November – in 2020 it started on November 14th. Diwali symbolizes the spiritual "victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance.

Rangoli is an art form, originating in the Indian subcontinent, in which patterns are created on the floor or the ground using materials such as coloured rice, coloured sand, quartz powder or flower petals.)



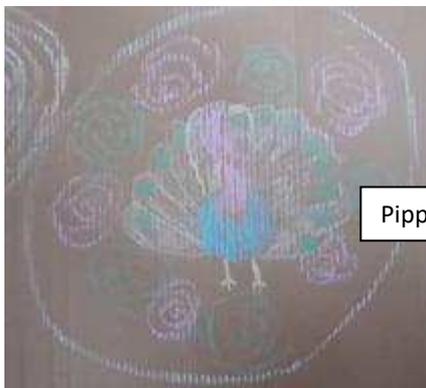
Dorabella



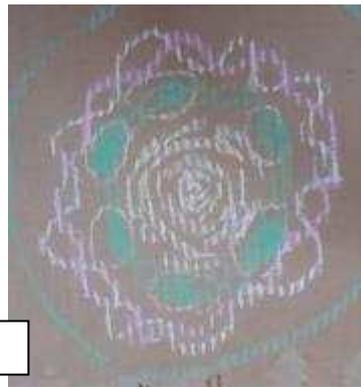
Thomas



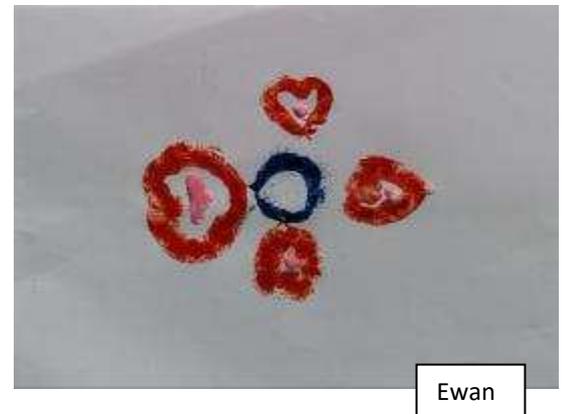
Theo



Pippa



Rowan



Ewan

A FINAL QUOTE from *Love For The Future: A journey*, by David Osborne

Faith is a relationship of trust in God. It is not a set of ideas about God or a trust in particular teachings about God. God is beyond all ideas. The words, the images, the symbols and the rituals can at best be windows onto God. And from any window what you can see is a limited view. But it is better than no view at all. All our words, images and symbols are limited, but they are still useful. Improving them, discarding ones that have ceased to be useful, and discovering or developing new ones is a part of life. We do it in art and science and we do it in religion.