



THE DORKING GRAPEVINE

Dorking Quaker Meeting

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Quakers: Simple, Radical and Contemporary

Events for March – 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.

Sun 1 Mar	9 am	Preparative Meeting
Sun 1 Mar	10.30 – 11.30	Special session for Young Friends in addition to usual children's meeting.
Sun 1 Mar	11.45 – 12.30	Enquirers' Meeting, Quiet Room
Mon 2 Mar	8.30 – 9 pm	Healing/Upholding Prayer Group
Sun 8 Mar		Area Meeting (<i>see below</i>)
Sun 8 Mar	6.30 – 7.30 pm	MfW (<i>Park House, Leatherhead</i>)
Sun 22 Mar	12.30 pm	Friendly lunch
Fri 27 Mar	2.30 – 4 pm	Meditation/Spiritual Exploration
Sat 28 Mar	10.30 – 4 pm	Regional Meeting at Eastbourne MH
Sun 26 April		Leith Hill Walk (<i>a date for your diary!</i>)

AREA MEETING on Sunday 8 March at Horsham MH.

Programme:

10.30 to 11.30	Meeting for Worship
12.15 to 1.30	Area Business Meeting
1.30 to 2.30	Lunch – bring your own
2.30 to 3.45 approx	Fellowship session

The **Fellowship Session** is an Important discussion on the Future of our Area Meeting, led by our Clerk of Trustees, Roger Wilson. See introduction to this Session on page 5.



The Elder's dilemma



Your Elders have a dilemma and hope you will bear with them while they try to solve it. They would appreciate any ideas you have.

We have a very welcome bunch of children who regularly attend Meeting. They join us quietly for the first 15 minutes of Meeting for Worship (MfW) and then leave us to enjoy the excellent children's sessions that our children's committee provide in the kitchen. Naturally they chatter cheerfully. Sound insulation between the kitchen and large hall was reasonable when we had the 2 doors in the screen closed but unfortunately

the fire safety officer has said the inner screen door should be left open and folded back against the screen, if there are more than 25 people in the large hall, in case of fire in the lobby. In that scenario everyone would need to leave via the double screen door and, as the inner door opens into the large hall, this could cause a serious hold-up if people were rushing to leave. We tried leaving it open and Elders added closing the kitchen hatch to their preparations for MfW, to help sound insulation, but it is not so effective as the extra door. Some Friends love the chatter and are not worried, but others find it makes it difficult for them to settle down into MfW.

So, we are going to try leaving the inner screen door open for the first 15 minutes but close it after the children have left when there are usually less than 25 people remaining. For this to be possible without too much fuss and bother, we will have to adjust the seating arrangements in the back row.

Anne Brewer

March's Collection – Quaker Social Action

Quaker Social Action has been taking action on poverty in East London and beyond for 150 years. They have wonderful original projects, designed to meet the needs of people on low incomes in the community. So what do they do? Three of their current projects are:



Homestore

Providing and delivering second hand equipment at a fraction of normal prices, to people who may have been able to get modest accommodation but can't afford to furnish it.

Down to Earth

An average funeral costs £3800, which is way beyond the means of many people, so it becomes a major worry. QSA helps to figure out what is essential and work out a budget, then will liaise with funeral directors to secure the best price, and find out what state or other benefits and funds are available.

Made of Money

Providing free workshops in East London to help families and vulnerable people to talk about money and develop skills to manage their money.

This is a brilliant charity and it makes me proud to see what QSA is doing in our name. We may not be able to give practical support but, if we have some money to help this charity, it will be really well used. One Friend was asked why they donate to QSA, and said "Because you are a small outfit, thoroughly accountable, feet on the ground, and yet brilliantly innovative".

Our March and April collection is for QSA, and forms for sending to them with a cheque or bank instruction are in the Meeting House. I have some if you need one.

Their address is 17 Old Ford Road, Bethnal Green, London E2 9PJ. If you prefer to pay online, their website tells you how to donate to their JustGiving page.

Colin Hope

Notes from the discussion on death and dying - Sunday 23 February

What would be a good death for you?

How can you put things in place to enable this?

What barriers would prevent you achieving this?

What practical steps can you take to ensure a good death?

Using the above questions, a group of 14 of us gathered to talk. These were some of the answers to what would be a good death. “A good death is to be at peace.” “Just go to sleep would be best.” Or to “have a sudden death”. Someone said they would definitely “Prefer not a shock so you have a chance to say goodbye.” Another said a good death would be to “Accept what’s happening, especially as those around you may be in denial.”

There were several concerns about the pain suffered by those around you; I think that may be a predictable Quaker response. However, a more surprising but very true remark was that “however many people you have drawn into your plan you may, by chance, still be alone when the moment of death comes”

Other people had thought about three other questions that were asked about our own innermost thoughts about death; these included “What do you fear about death?” and “How can you overcome your fear?” Friends who had read a lot and experienced a lot about death recommended good books. Others expressed a fear of what is unknown.

We talked about the different kinds of documents you can write in advance of your death, letting your family and the medical system know your wishes. This was a subject many people knew more about and Anne Brewer will add some information – see below.

Our next afternoon discussion on Saturday, 25th April will ask people to think more about the question of assisted dying. If anyone wants to talk about the issues raised on Sunday, please contact any of the Elders and Overseers.

Books Recommended by Friends

Facing Death and Finding Hope: A Guide to the Emotional and Spiritual Care of the Dying by

Christine Longaker (1997)

Life after Life by Raymond Moody (first published 1975)

A Survival Guide to Later Life, by Marion Shoard (2004)

The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying by Sogyal Rinpoche (1992)

Sarah Freeman

‘Documents in advance’ of death.

Besides making a Will, there are other things you can do to prepare for your death.

- You can make an **Advance Decision (or Living Will)** to specify situations in which you want to refuse life-sustaining medical treatment.
- You can appoint a **Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) for Health and Welfare** to make decisions on your behalf if you are unable to make it yourself through serious accident or illness.

For details about these see compassionindying.org.uk/ and www.gov.uk/power-of-attorney or ask Anne Brewer for a paper copy. However, some Friends said that the medical ethic of keeping people alive as long as possible can cause health professionals to override requests to refuse treatment under certain conditions. So perhaps in April, when we consider the pros and cons of Assisted Dying, **we might also consider how we could ensure our wish to be allowed to die naturally in certain situations, is respected.**

- Finally, **Dorking Meeting’s** funeral form, available from Elders, enables you to set out your wishes re your funeral and whether you wish to be buried, cremated, have a green burial, donate your body for medical research etc. Ask an Elder (Anne B or Sarah) if you would like a copy.

Appeal from a Young Friend ...



Freya helps Anne with Margaret's wheelchair in 2007

Remember our lovely young friend Freya? Here are a couple of photos of her young self to remind you and here is her letter received a few days ago:

Dear Dorking Friends,

It has been such a long time since I was at home and around to attend Dorking Meeting, however I still think about you all.

This summer, myself and several other Edinburgh University students will be partaking on a Medical Brigade in a Refugee Camp in Greece. The current situation in Greece is at crisis point, with over 50,000 refugees seeking asylum, many being children. The

purpose of the brigade is to help provide desperately needed medical assistance to those who are especially vulnerable, for example, providing much needed medications and physical health checks. The current weather that we are experiencing up in Scotland and I'm sure down south too, is particularly pertinent as we are lucky to have a safe, warm bed to end the day in. Living in a refugee camp is something that is almost impossible to comprehend, and the experiences leading up and including living in a camp are unimaginable. Cold weather or rain in the UK means we put on an extra layer or the heating if we are lucky, these are things that we should never take for granted. This icy wind and seemingly never-ending rain in an already muddy, cramped and unsafe camp with no warm bed to end the day in would be life-threatening and make worse an already dreadful and terrifying experience.

I am fundraising for my trip, with a goal to raise £1000 to cover flights, accommodation and supplies. Any support, monetary or otherwise, towards the cause is greatly valued. Donations and spreading of the message help facilitate this vital humanitarian work. After my trip, I would love to come and share my experience with Meeting, as I did after volunteering at the warehouse in Calais, if that would be okay? To those who have taken time to read this, a huge thank you! Below are two links for articles about refugee camps in the winter and also the link for my fundraising page if people wish to donate - a huge thank you in advance.

As part of my fundraising I am running a 10K on Sunday March 1st in Edinburgh (currently in some rather heavy snow according to the forecast!).

Many thanks and love from Edinburgh,

Freya Martin

Link for my fundraising page: https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/freya-martin-2020-medical-brigade?utm_term=DEMGkaJEb

Links for articles: <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-europe-migrants-greece-snow/refugees-brave-snow-sub-zero-temperatures-in-greek-camps-idUKKBN14U28V?fbclid=IwAR2xVryEA5-bEIURMZVfiUXLAdmVkcukwOqwaHSOg6cZtQP7fgWpKfx-1So>

<https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2019/11/14/Greece-Moria-winter-refugees?fbclid=IwAR1J4QHZWRbM36R2S7BFySSJpDJbLcDAGt2TbcjOw8LzQmNzBMEwOBNrhX8>



Freya in 2006 at the summer camp

Background to the Fellowship session on Sunday 8 March

Quaker structures are designed to be supportive rather than hierarchical. Every Quaker Local Meeting is part of an Area Meeting. From time to time every Local Meeting may need support: advice, experience, finance, spiritual guidance and a linkage to Quakers nationally and internationally. This structure has sustained Quakers for over 350 years.

Just as Local Meetings can need support, so can Area Meetings, and this can flow from both the component Local Meetings and from the regional or national structure. Discernment must always flow from a worshipping community. The organic decision-making that results differs strikingly from the 'top down' hierarchical structures found in many religious groups.

Quaker decision-making must involve as much of the community as possible, and thus cannot be rapid. When difficulties arise, the first process that must occur is an exploration of the difficulty, so that an understanding can be shared. Only when this has been done can the community move towards decision.



Our Area Meeting has fewer members than the average for AMs in Britain. In 2017, West Weald AM had 140 members, ranking on this measure 45th out of the 70 AMs (The biggest AM listed in the Tabular Statement that year had 505 members, the smallest had 31). It seems that Friends generally manage to make the basic system work over a wide range of sizes. But, given that we have over a number of years encountered difficulty in finding enough trustees to meet the Charity Commission requirements, it is right to consider if we should take steps to reform our structure. Basically, the choices we might consider are (1) do nothing, (2) amalgamate with another AM, or (3) split up and join each of our LMs to one of the adjacent AMs.

And so trustees are bringing to each of us the need to inform ourselves about ourselves.

Roger Wilson, Clerk to AM Trustees

Meeting House Garden Notes



Enjoying the garden in 2004

We have had an offer of help in the garden since the last notes were published and an offer of a potted Magnolia is being considered.

Two shallow steps down into the Laurel play area are almost completed with help from the Gardener. Thought is being given to the floor of the play area and the area immediately beyond the Laurel where the grass has been severely worn.

There remains a great deal of Ivy cascading over the South and East walls forming our boundary and we hope that we can deal with this soon.

Geoff Squire

Green idea from Russell – and appeal for a volunteer

Our family recently paid a trip to a shop in Cranleigh called **For Earth's Sake**. It's a new not for profit venture that provides refills on many household cleaning products and personal care stuff. Mostly organic and all natural. They also have many food staples, like pasta, rice, nuts, spices and lots more refills. They sell a lot of other things, like tinned products and some plastic packaged stuff. But they're making a big effort to be as low waste as possible.

We were made to feel very welcome. The woman who started it was so passionate and determined to win people over to refilling, that she has made it a lot cheaper than buying it anywhere else. For example, a container of ecover laundry liquid was £5, £1 cheaper than one from Waitrose, and that's when they are reduced there. She said, 'I want to leave people with no reason not to live sustainably.' They have a website, so do have a look. <http://www.forearthssake.co.uk> email is info@forearthssake.co.uk We have some hard copies of their order forms that we're happy to share for those who aren't net savvy, and Anne Brewer also has some.

The trouble is, Cranleigh is a good half an hour drive for us in Dorking. So, it's not very earth-friendly us tootling all the way there and back. Fortunately, she had the idea of making a 'satellite group', meaning if there are enough people in one area who would like to make an order, they could deliver to one location, and we could all collect it from there. This would require someone with quite a bit of space to store stuff for, I'm guessing, a couple of days while everyone collects it. Of course, it would be best if everyone could collect at the same time, to get that 'community feel', but that would depend on the needs of the hosts.

Anne already helps so much with the Suma order, and we're so grateful for this. Our place is a bit small and full of Theo's toys. Does anyone else feel like they could take this on?

Russell Clark

Sharing thoughts

As I have a spare space in the Grapevine, I would like to share something with you. Reading 'The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying' in preparation for the discussion last Sunday I came across a quote which spoke strongly to me on an issue I care deeply about – the, to me, unnecessary conflict between different religions, which causes so much violence and suffering.

The author, Sogyal Rinpoche, writes in Chapter 4, *The Nature of Mind*:

Saints and mystics throughout history have adorned their realizations with different names and given them different faces and interpretations, but what they are all fundamentally experiencing is the essential nature of the mind. Christians and Jews call it "God"; Hindus call it the "Self", "Shiva", "Brahman" and "Vishnu"; Sufi mystics name it "The Hidden Essence"; and Buddhists call it "buddha nature". At the heart of all religions is the certainty that there is a fundamental truth, and that this life is a sacred opportunity to evolve and realize it.

If only the fanatical supporters of religions would accept that all religions are an attempt by humans to put into words something which is beyond the ability of our logical brains vocabulary to describe and stop assuming their religion is the only 'right' one.

Anne Brewer