



Editors: Anne Brewer and Sarah Freeman
 Publisher: Rachel Fardon
 Distributor: Mary Brooks

March 2012
 No 455

Quote for the month comes from the course being used by Lent Study Groups in Dorking – *Handing on the Torch: Scared words for a secular world.*

In 1925, the poet and theologian Charles Williams was asked what he thought it meant to live the Christian life. Williams replied: 'Love, laugh, pray and be intelligent.'

Dates for your Diary

Midweek Meeting	12.45-1.15	Every Wednesday , followed by simple lunch
Saturday 10 March	10.30am	Area Meeting at Oxted
Saturday 10 March	1.30-3.30	Elders & Overseers at Oxted
Sunday 11 March	6.30pm	Meeting for Worship at Park House, Leatherhead
Friday 16 March	7.30pm	Meditation Meeting at Meeting House
Saturday 17 March	11.15am	Regional Meeting at Meeting House. Ben Pink Dandelion on <i>Confident Quakerism</i>
Sunday 25 March	12-3pm	Shared lunch and talk at Meeting House on Quaker Service Memorial. Organised by P&SW Committee
Sunday 8 April	6.30pm	Meeting for Worship at Park House, Leatherhead
Sunday 15 April	12 noon	Creative Listening at Meeting House
Friday 20 April	7.30pm	Meditation Meeting at Meeting House
Saturday 21 April	10.30-4pm	Area Meeting Learning Day at Capel on sustainability

Notes from Preparative Meeting

Collections:

The **February collection** for Britain Yearly Meeting raised £105.

The **March collection** is for Quaker Service Memorial Trust (chosen by P & SW Committee), and the April collection will be for the Leaveners.

Advices and Queries read in February: at Dorking number 17; at Leatherhead none.

Our treasurer, Anne Brewer, presented the **accounts for 2011**, which were accepted with one small amendment. The Meeting had faced 'exceptional and unforeseen expenditure' and ended the year needing a £15,000 loan from Area Meeting to provide a buffer until our reserves are replenished. For the next few years expenditure will be restricted to essentials, as we need to repay the loan to Area Meeting as soon as possible, as they are also in financial difficulties.

Su Johnston and Richard Bass of the **fund-raising** group presented more details on their proposal that we organise a series of concerts in the Meeting House. Despite some support for the proposal, and much appreciation for the work put into the feasibility study, it was eventually decided that there was not enough energy and commitment amongst members at PM to justify going ahead with this idea.

On the subject of **armchairs**, it was agreed we purchase three of the style recommended by Premises Committee. Consideration was given to a suggestion that we install extra arms and a section of padded back on five of our benches to provide "armchairs" at a much cheaper price (about £15 each instead of about £80 per chair), starting with a prototype for Friends to consider. However, it was felt this would be a cause of unwanted delay, and an appeal for donations towards the chairs would be made instead (see below).

Are you sitting comfortably?

I remember a radio programme years ago, *Listen With Mother*. The presenter, just before telling the story to the children, always said "Are you sitting comfortably? Then we'll begin." At our Meetings for Worship at Dorking, the problem is that not everyone *is* sitting comfortably. We have our firm wooden benches that we know and love, but they don't suit all of us. Some Friends find it hard to get up and down from the benches, so would much prefer a chair that is more supportive, with two arms, and more comfortable to sit in for the hour of worship.

But help is at hand! At our recent Preparative Meeting we agreed to buy three new chairs for the meeting room, which we think will solve this problem, and these will be on order very soon. We do have to pay for them, of course, and the total cost will be a little over £250 – and our budget is rather tight at the moment. So we were thinking that some Friends might like to make some donation towards the cost of these, and I know that our Treasurer, Anne Brewer, would love to hear from you. Now, are you sitting comfortably?.....

Colin Hope

Be prepared!

Sometime during the next few weeks you should be startled on Sunday morning to hear an alarm sounding. You should react at once as though the building was on fire, but it will probably be the Premises Committee carrying out a fire practice, which we are required to do annually! So what should you do when you hear the alarm?

Well, you should make your way immediately but calmly (i.e. don't run!) towards the nearest fire exit – these are clearly marked by the standard signs as illustrated. Have a look around next time you are in the Meeting House – you should also see in every room a useful A4 notice headed FIRE PROCEDURE. Don't try to collect your coat from the lobby or your favourite book from the library - after all it may be a real fire – just head straight for the exit taking care not to panic!! Assemble with everyone else on the grass at the front of the building. Members of Premises Committee will ensure everyone has left the building and, in the unlikely event of it not being a practice, will take any action needed, such as contacting the fire brigade and utilising any appropriate fire extinguishers.



Anne Brewer

Milk bottle tops



Friends are being very environmentally-friendly and bringing their bottle tops to Meeting for recycling. This is great, and Phyllis Russell tells me they go to support local scouts. They are eventually made into hard plastic toys for children, such as slides and other garden toys. They also go to make more bottle tops! However, she has to sort through them all as it is **only**



the plastic milk bottle tops that can be used. So it would be really helpful if only these are included in your collections. Please note they should be clean and free of any sort of label or foil insert. (See <http://www.ghsrecyclingltd.co.uk/10444/info.php?p=7&pno=0>)

New Library Books

We have two new library books: *I Shall Not Hate* (Code I.6.3, Shelf 14) – strongly recommended as an inspiring true human story, especially if you have an interest in the situation in Israel/Palestine - and *More Quaker Laughter* (Code LQ.29, Shelf 5)

QUAKERS and the OCCUPY Movement

Friends from Dorking Meeting joined other Quakers from the London area in a rain-drenched Meeting for Worship on the steps of St Paul's Cathedral on Sunday, 4th March. The Meeting was in support of the Occupy movement, protesting against the way capitalism has been applied grotesquely, resulting in a favoured few enjoying massive remunerations while the majority have been thrown out of work or, at best, have had their pay frozen. The peaceful Occupy protesters had, a few days earlier, been evicted from their temporary quarters by police and bailiffs. After Sunday's Meeting for Worship the following Epistle was agreed:

Epistle from the Quaker Meeting for Worship at Occupy the London Stock Exchange. 4th March 2012

To Friends & seekers everywhere,

For the past nineteen weeks Quakers have met on Sunday at 3pm on the steps of St Paul's Cathedral by the Occupy London camp for a Meeting for Worship. Friends of all ages from London have been welcomed as equals, as well as friends visiting from across the country and the globe. We have discovered a remarkable stillness and depth of worship amidst the clanging of the bells and the din of the city.



For a long time many of us have felt unease about existing financial systems and the consequences of the capitalist system we live in. The Occupy movement resonates with our Quaker testimonies, and above all shouts that there is a problem.

The quick and supportive response by so many in our Yearly Meeting, from the Recording Clerk to local Friends, has been amazing. We rejoice in the way our sometimes lengthy Quaker process managed to produce a Quaker statement about Occupy in a timely fashion. Joining with other denominations and faiths has been inspiring, and the "Sermon on the Steps" was a powerful example of this.

Members of the public who see us in worship have joined with us, and also we have been photographed, videoed and interviewed many times. We see similarities between the Occupy movement and early Friends, in that both speak their truth to power, and both are not afraid to engage in positive conflict, something Quakers today find more challenging. We were delighted to learn that the Quaker involvement in the Occupy movement has resulted in an increased number of enquirers.

We observe that Occupy has struggled to deal with many of the problems caused by the social and economic system which they seek to change; alcohol & drug abuse, male domination of meetings, homelessness, those suffering from mental illnesses, and other broken people living in a broken world. We uphold their efforts to deal with these problems in good faith and with compassion. Their use of consensus decision-making is close to our Quaker methods and has empowered many in the community. Occupy is an important forum, and we are grateful for its existence, with all its flaws and imperfections.

During the eviction of the St Paul's site occupiers conducted themselves in a dignified and peaceful way, testimony to the progressive nature of the movement. In contrast, we believe the authorities of St Paul's Cathedral were absent and complicit in the police operation to clear the camp, including the steps to their building, which were not covered by the eviction order. We are saddened by their choice to stand closer to the City of London authorities, those who in Jesus's time were the moneychangers, and the wealthy 1%. We believe Jesus would have chosen differently.

Now that Occupy has been evicted from outside the stock exchange and St Paul's, we will continue to meet on the steps of St Paul's at 1.00pm for Meeting for Worship every Saturday, to be followed by Meeting for Worship for Business at 1.30pm prior to the Occupy General Assembly. We hope in this way to begin to broaden our witness and will continue to seek new ways to speak our truth to power.

As Quakers we have found it important to gather like this on the front lines of change for a more just and equitable world. Friends take so much action as individuals, but our worship can and should be brought out of our meeting houses and into the world where it is relevant. As our fellow seekers at Occupy would say: Occupy the Light! And let the light occupy you.

Signed on behalf of Occupy the London Stock Exchange Quaker Meeting for Worship

NB. Future **Meetings for Worship** at St Paul's will take place each **SATURDAY at 1.00 p.m.**

Bob Humphreys

Churches Together in Dorking

Lois Lodge attended the AGM on January 31 and shares the following information of interest.

- **Besom**, now in its 5th year of helping those in need in the Dorking area, hopes to build individual contacts in each church. Members of the team are always happy to visit churches to talk about the work. Details on <http://www.besom.com/local-besoms/dorking> - an extract from this website gives an idea of the work they do: *Since we started we have delivered a cooker, fridges, wardrobes, chest of drawers, desks and all sorts of good quality household items. Small groups from Church have got involved in decorating projects and garden clearance for those in need.*
- **Churches of Dorking Housing Association** has a new set of rules and is looking to extend its work by purchasing a one-bedroom flat in Dorking.
- **Christian Aid** is looking for new volunteers for house-to-house collectors for Christian Aid Week, 13 - 19th May.
- **B@titude** - their Dorking shop in St Martin's Walk hopes to be up and running soon. As in their Leatherhead shop, they aim to support families in need in the local community by offering, for example, good as new babies' and children's clothes, and providing a friendly meeting place with a small play area. See <http://beatitude.org.uk> for more details.
- **Youth Report** - 40 young people are attending Youth Alpha on Friday evenings at Crossways. Phil Sutherland gave a presentation and outlined the next steps to build upon Soul Connect.
- **Street Pastors** - there is interest in establishing these in Dorking, on the lines of those in Redhill, who work with some success with young people on the streets late at night, who are causing disturbance by, for example, their drunkenness. Churches will be informed of progress - the project would need at least 16 volunteers for a start.

What does your church feel like, what does it do?

Lois facilitated a session, including group work, on what churches were doing and how to improve communication. The information gained has been collated and shared with those attending.

Future United Services and events

- April 6 Good Friday march of witness and service
- April 8 Easter Sunday sunrise service - St John's are happy to organise this
- April 29 United Service - St Martin's have offered to organise a Taizé style service

The Quaker Tales

During the last twenty years or so Joan Macalpine has written and produced many plays on Quaker history for us. Most were written and performed at Heritage Open Days. In 2005 and 2006 we offered story-telling at the Open Days. There were twelve stories written about individual Friends, three of whom were from Dorking Meeting.

As we could use, or even possibly publish, both the stories and the plays, I am seeking the scripts. I have located the scripts of most of the plays but none of the stories. If you have any scripts please let me know - I would be so grateful for any of them.

Rachel Hope

Reflections ...

Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness, and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand.

Isaac Pennington 1667.

Offered by Richard Bass for the Elders.