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December 2016
 No 506

Dates for your Diary

Venue is the Meeting House unless otherwise stated.

Midweek Meeting	12.45-1.15pm	Every Wednesday , followed by simple lunch
Sun 4 December	9.30am	Reading QF&P – chapters 1, 4, and 24
Mon 5 December	8.30-9.00pm	Healing Prayer Group – in members' own homes
Sun 11 December	6.30pm	Meeting for Worship at Park House, Leatherhead
Sun 11 December	After MfW	Traidcraft stall
Fri 16 December	2.30-5.00pm	Meditation and Spiritual Exploration
Sun 18 December	12.00	Carols and mince pies
Sun 25 December	10.30-11.00am	Christmas Day Meeting for Worship
Mon 2 January	8.30-9.00pm	Healing Prayer Group – in members' own homes
Sun 15 January	9.00am	Preparative Meeting
Sun 22 January	time tbc	Area Meeting at Horsham followed by Fellowship session with Graham Taylor talking about Ada Salter.

Advance notice: our New Year Party will be on Saturday 25 February – a children's party to which all ages are warmly invited!



Appeal for help with Children's Meeting

As you know, we run a children's meeting in parallel with Sunday Meeting for Worship every week. The sessions are often run by the children's committee members but many of you have taken the children of a Sunday morning too. We are very grateful for this and urge anyone who is interested in taking *or helping* with a session to let us know. There are often gaps to fill in the rota and it is a great opportunity for the children to get to know you and vice versa, and for you to share your knowledge and experience. If you're not comfortable taking a session but might quite like to help, that would be brilliant. We need to have at least two adults out with the children and the more people we have who can be 'helpers' from time to time, the more often us Mums get to go in to Meeting for Worship... Speak to any of us (Gayle, Sophie, Alison, Katy, Romy) if you're interested, and thank you everyone for your ongoing support of our children.

Katy Nunn

Tenants in the cottage

We are pleased to report that a family is due to move into the onetime warden's cottage on Friday 2 December. It's been quite a task for premises committee to get everything ready in time and Judy Johnson in particular has worked very hard. I'm sure we are all very grateful for their efforts and hope that the tenants are comfortable in their new home.

Appeal for Photos – get snapping!

The plan is to update the photo board in the small hall so that newish members can remind themselves who is who in the Meeting. So please use your smart phones (or cameras!) to take photos of each other or selfies and email them to Colin Brewer (colin.brewer@phonecoop.coop)



who will select the most suitable photo of each member of the Meeting and turn them into standard size photos to mount on the board. They will be named with first name only plus initial in the case of duplicated first names. We have to be careful with photos of children apparently so the parents will be consulted about how or whether photos of the children will be included.

The picture is of an old photo board which showed the Meetings Elders and Overseers at that time. You may be able to make out some of the well-loved Friends who are no longer with us.

The December charity

The Children's Meeting traditionally suggests the Meeting's choice of charity for anyone wishes to make donations in December. This autumn has been especially busy for the families however. Discussion has narrowed the choice down to a concern for animals, both at home and overseas.

A final decision will be made by the Children on 3rd December. Information about how to donate by post or online will then be made available during Notices in the rest of December.



The children's *Please Give* poster made in their Sunday Meeting ready for the December collection.



As parents some of us feel keenly that there are pressing humanitarian needs that might need our support, this Christmas more than ever - and yet we fully respect our children's interest in the natural world and their concern that animals are not treated well and in some cases continue to be at high risk of extinction.

Researching materials to continue the discussion I came across the Quaker Concern for Animals website quaker-animals.co.uk/ (a 125 year old organisation!) and two

quotes seem worth sharing:

As a Society, we are opposed to war against man; and should not our testimony also be borne against the war that is constantly waged against animals?

~ Frederick B. Sainty, founder of the Friends' Vegetarian Society.

Quaker Faith and Practice states:

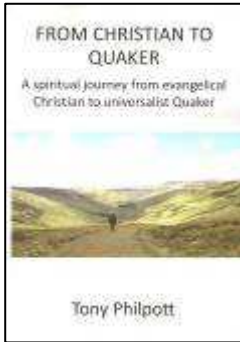
Show a loving consideration for all creatures and seek to maintain the beauty and variety of the world. Work to ensure that our increasing power over Nature is used responsibly, with reverence for life.

Children's Committee

Christmas gifts for Besom

Alongside the welcome boxes of regular foodstuffs from the Dorking Food Bank, Dorking Besom likes to give its clients a little collection of Christmas treats. Veronica, our rep on Besom has put a labelled carrier in the Meeting House lobby in which can be put anything you would like to donate for this cause. She will be taking the bag to Besom after Sunday 11 December.

Review of new library book



FROM CHRISTIAN TO QUAKER. A spiritual journey from evangelical Christian to universalist Quaker by Tony Philpott. Published in 2013 by the Quaker Universalist Publishing Group.

I needed to catalogue this book for our Meeting's library and have read it from cover to cover! Its an easy but very interesting read. The author has the knack of asking questions and exploring possible answers with humility but obviously a keen intelligence and a very well-read background. On his spiritual journey he traverses a wide territory covering many world views including, amongst others, paganism, atheism, non-theism, mysticism, humanism, Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism. I found his exploration of

these world views really helpful and felt for the first time that I had a bit of an understanding of Taoism!

Here is an extract from the blurb on the back by Andrew Clark, a former General Secretary of Quaker Peace and Service: *The author applies careful reason to the major spiritual questions which trouble us all. ... The result is engaging, convincing and helpful. ... Tony Philpott could be helping you to a spiritual understanding which best suits your condition.*

Anne Brewer

Local campaign against planned drilling for oil at Leith Hill

Permission has been given for a site within walking distance and visible from Coldharbour Lane to be drilled for oil in early 2017. This is against the wishes of many hundreds of local people and the council, and Sir Paul Beresford MP has commented that he is against it but powerless to intervene. It is certainly in line with central government support to allow planning permission for the extraction of fossil fuels.

A local campaigner writes that after a 7 year battle in the planning system and the courts, a consortium of oil exploration companies have been granted planning permission to drill an exploratory borehole there.

He says that there were 1,550 objections to the planning application from local people, and bodies that have opposed the proposal include the parish council, the district council and the county council, as well as the National Trust, the Woodland Trust, the CPRE and the AONB Board. The local water supply company have also objected strongly to the plans and have raised concerns about the risks of pollution to an aquifer that supplies drinking water to the local population.



The tower on top of Leith Hill
(from Wikipedia)

There are concerns about irreparable destruction of the sunken roads leading up to the village when heavy vehicles are using them repeatedly as part of the project, as well as the ecological impact on an area of important wildlife habitats. Campaigners have also said that this is the thin end of a wedge, and many more precious sites across the Weald are at risk of being exploited in future - the stated intention of the companies involved.

Campaigners are pursuing many routes to resisting the oil drilling, from writing to the council with objections to different pieces of planning permission which the drilling requires, to divesting from banks with holdings in the companies involved, to a hardy group establishing themselves in a camp in the woods in recent weeks, well supplied by local sympathisers with hot food, sleeping bags and moral support!

Friends and attenders who want to get involved can find more information online:

On Facebook, search for 'A Voice for Leith Hill' and 'Leith Hill Protection Camp'

On YouTube.com you can also find videos such as 'Supporting the Leith Hill Protectors'

For the long running local campaign: <http://www.surreycommunity.info/lhag/>

Sophie Dodgeon

Quaker Meditation and Spiritual Enquiry Group

The group had a lively meeting on the 18th November. In our discussion we drew on an article in Friends Quarterly comparing the beliefs and spiritual practice of the Eastern Orthodox Church and Quaker faith and practice; we plan to explore this further in our January meeting. The December meeting will be on the 16th December 2.30 – 5 and will include a meditative Xmas celebration with mindful eating and symbolic presents giving!

Catherine Carr

A gift

When I found I had a space I thought I would fill it with a poem about Quakers - *Something of God* by Matt Harvey, but realised I haven't time to check up on copyright, so here instead is a poem by me written as a result of a moving experience with an oak tree, which I pass regularly when walking our dogs – not so professional I'm afraid, but offered with love and very best wishes to everyone for a peaceful Christmas and hopes for a New Year where humanity focuses on nurturing and loving both each other, and the planet we live on.

Wisdom of the oak

Listen!

As fingertips caress rough grey bark

Deep silence.

Listen!

Silence potent with wisdom of long green years.

I am what I am and oakness graces my gifts.

Humanity struggles

Your load is heavy

But gift what you are called to gift

Nurture and love

And all will be well.



(Photo by Colin Brewer)

Anne Brewer

Reflection from our Elders

From a Celtic blessing:

And until we meet again may God hold you in the hollow of his Hand.

Rachel Hope on behalf of Elders