



THE DORKING GRAPEVINE

Dorking Quaker Meeting

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 No. 500

Did you notice this is the 500th edition! Here's a little peep at issue no 1. The start:

"I have no name:
 I am but two days old."

No. 1

DORKING

January 1968

And the finish:

PRIZE-LESS COMPETITION

If you approve this new venture perhaps you know what it should be called. Any suggestions to the Editor, please.

The editor was Freda Barker. I wonder how many entered the prize-less competition, and who came up with the chosen title - The Dorking Grapevine! This first issue had a piece about the purpose of the newsletter: *This new venture should give us more opportunities to meet; to learn news of one another ..., to exchange ideas, to bring forward our concerns. This experiment, like so many others, depends on your co-operation: it cannot succeed unless YOU help with news items, reports, problems, what you will.* This is still true!!

A photocopy of the complete first issue will be available for Friends to look at in the Meeting House - for which thank you to the helpful Friends House librarian.

Dates for your Diary

Venue is the Meeting House unless otherwise stated.

Midweek Meeting	12.45-1.15pm	Every Wednesday , followed by simple lunch
Saturday 4 June	10.00am-12.30	Sale (cakes, produce, books) at Capel MH
Monday 6 June	8.30-9.00pm	Healing Prayer Group - in Friends' own homes
Sunday 12 June	6.30pm	Meeting for Worship at Park House, Leatherhead
Friday 17 June	2.30pm	Meditation Meeting (note: there is no meditation meeting in July)
Saturday 18 June	11.15am	Regional Meeting at Blue Idol MH. Harvey Gilman
Sunday 19 June (new date)	9.00am	QF&P reading group - Chapters 12, 17, 16 and 22
Friday 1 July	7.30pm	Study Group
Sunday 3 July	9.00am	Preparative Meeting
*Sunday 10 July	2.00-5.00pm	All-age garden party at home of Christine Bass
Sunday 10 July	6.30pm	Meeting for Worship at Park House, Leatherhead

***All-age Garden Party:** Richard's wife, Christine, has very kindly offered the use of their garden again this year. Those who went last year thoroughly enjoyed the swimming pool, tennis courts and lovely extensive grounds. Please bring contribution for the tea.

Richard Bass 15 June 1941 – 15 April 2016

As many Friends know, Richard Bass died quite unexpectedly and suddenly, from a streptococcus infection after feeling unwell three days before. Richard was just 74. He leaves Christine, his wife of over 50 years, his son, Roger, an entrepreneur, who lives in San Francisco with his partner and son, and his daughter, Harriet, a film producer, who lives locally with her husband and 4 children. Richard and Christine had a very happy and rich family life and it was a wish to move to be near Harriet and her family that prompted their move from Cheshire to Leigh on retirement.



When Richard arrived in Dorking Meeting some ten years ago he had already been Clerk at Macclesfield Meeting. In Richard's 10 years in Dorking, he was our Clerk, Treasurer, an Elder, and at the time of his death, Convenor of Premises and Finance Committee and Trustee, for Dorking, of West Weald Area Quaker Meeting. Richard was very much a Local Meeting and Area Meeting Friend rather than taking any national roles, but his service to the Meeting in 10 years across such a range of roles is almost unrivalled. All this, despite the fact that he was trying, rather successfully, to enjoy a well deserved retirement after an intense working life.

What did Richard bring to our Meeting in his ten years with us, apart from so much service? What also brought over 180 people to Richard's Memorial Meeting, packing the Meeting House, leaving standing room only? As those of you who were there will know, many people, including many young people, were touched by Richard's kindness and the genuine interest he took in them and what made them tick. People spoke of his warmth to those going through difficult times and his earnest enquiry, to those who had told him about a personal problem, of: "What are you going to do about it?" He was supportive and gave others confidence in their own ability to work through the issues that arose in their lives.

Richard also brought us a very good brain and strategic thinking. One Friend said to me after the Memorial Meeting that he had not realised what a clever man Richard was, as Richard had been so modest in putting forward his ideas. Richard made various major suggestions to help the Meeting over the years, quite a few of which were rejected. He suggested replacing the meeting room benches, in order to make the seats more comfortable and the Meeting House easier to hire out (rejected by PM). He was on the fund raising committee instituted 4 years or so ago to address the Meeting's financial difficulties. He suggested organising a large concert (rejected by PM). He brought forward plans (designed by Christine) to make the garden more all weather for children's play, as the grass was not holding up to all year use (plans rejected). Perhaps Richard was ahead of our time. He thought through ways of solving problems we had, and was characteristically generous and charitable when his suggestions were rejected, bearing no ill will to those who disagreed with him, despite the work (and presumably time and thought) he and Christine had put into suggesting possible solutions. What he did do that was accepted was to push with the Churches Together in Dorking to get the Dorking Area foodbank set up.

So where did this strategic mind come from? Richard was born in Northern Ireland to a family who had been Quakers for generations and so was a so-called "birth-right" Quaker, and he remembered attending Meeting for Worship in the Meeting House in Belfast as a child. Richard was sent as a boarder to the single sex Campbell College, one of the very few private schools in Northern Ireland. Campbell College was in beautiful grounds in the leafy eastern suburbs of Belfast near Stormont and was very near to his home. He could easily have been a day pupil. Richard at that time found it quite painful that he was boarding so close to home, and by the puzzled enquiries from his friends as to why he wasn't a day pupil. It seemed that his parents wanted the best for him, and thought that the activities and rigors of boarding school life provided just that. After Campbell College, Richard read English at University College, Oxford. He knew Nigel Dower, Gayle Banks' father, there. Reading English was not really Richard's choice, but his father's. He seems to have enjoyed it despite that, and at Oxford became particularly fond of John Donne's poetry. After Oxford, Richard went back to Belfast to join the family box making firm. He met Christine in Belfast at this time and decided to propose to her after just going out with her for a month. Richard didn't stay at Nicholson and Bass very long, perhaps many of us would not enjoy working with our fathers. He had applied for the Diplomatic Service, and scored very highly in the entrance exams. Those present at his Memorial Meeting laughed when it was said that no one who knew Richard would have been surprised that he was not appointed. Diplomacy and Richard with his direct and blunt manner were clearly not an ideal match. After leaving the family firm, he then joined ICI in Cheshire and worked there for the best part of 20 years until he found the requirements of corporate life

irksome, and he left. The business he then founded with Christine was the tour operator, Headwater Holidays, which ran canoeing (their original, and perhaps, crazier idea) walking and cycling holidays. Richard was the business brain and Christine had complementary skills, including producing the most attractive brochures in the trade, and they explored likely hotels and routes together in France. After 20 happy, vigorous and successful years, the Basses sold the business. Headwater Holidays continues to flourish, with some of those who still work there speaking appreciatively at his Memorial Meeting of Richard as a supportive boss.

In retirement, Richard and Christine travelled extensively and adventurously. Earlier in 2016, he was going to Brazil, wondering whether arriving in Rio during Carnival was the best idea, but they enjoyed it tremendously. Richard sometimes brought his photos of his travels to Meeting, and I remember the photos from an Asian religious festival where men pulled heavy loads attached to their backs by pins through their skin. A rather difficult set of photos to view. Apart from travel, Richard loved opera and he was often out with Christine at the theatre and at concerts.

Apart from Richard's service at Meeting, he was a member of Leigh Parish Council. He chaired the Leigh Drainage Project, working on preventing flooding there, including putting together working parties. He was one of the three people pivotal in establishing the Dorking Area foodbank. Once the foodbank was set up, Richard was responsible for liaising with the Referral Agencies who issue vouchers enabling clients to use the foodbank. Richard also chaired the local branch of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, and he fished. Some of you will have eaten trout caught by Richard at Albury. He liked practical work and was particularly proud of his wood hacking and wood pile stacking skills.

One of the things that stick in my memory about Richard is why he came to Meeting. We all have a spectrum of needs or reasons that bring us to Meeting for Worship. Richard said he came because he valued Friends at Meeting and he felt valued by those in the Meeting. He came to be part of our worship and to be part of our community. We were important to him as he was to us. Rest in Peace Richard, you served us generously and we are glad you were part of our community.

One of the thoughtful things that Richard did, unknown to his family, was completing the Meeting's Funeral Wishes form. It is a form that is simple to complete, that is put in a sealed envelope, locked away and opened on your death. In that form Richard said, among other things, that he wanted to be cremated and that he wanted a Meeting for Worship at Dorking Meeting House. When Richard died suddenly this information gave his family a useful start in making his funeral arrangements. If you haven't completed this form yet, and handed it to the Elders in a sealed envelope, please do so, it is a real help to whoever makes your funeral arrangements. You will find the form on the Meeting website at: www.dorking.quaker.eu.org/docs/FuneralForm1109.pdf, or if you would like a paper copy do ask one of the Elders or Overseers.

Romy Elias

Vision Quest – May 15th



The aim of the Vision Quest was to allow people to 'dream' about any potential usage of the Meeting House for future financial, outreach and community benefit; to that degree I think it was a very successful meeting.

I am currently wading my way through a lot of information collected on the day which I think will form the backbone of a project for a team of people (already emerging through volunteers) for a 'Task and Finish project' as suggested by Judith Martin on the day.

Things we might consider range from one-off fund-raising events, which may help us to avoid running into debt. Other things might be more sustainable such as purchasing pop up wi-fi to make community or even commercial use by a charity or small business possible.

I am always 'disappointed' when a single meeting doesn't change the world (or in this case Quaker finances) but I was heartened by people's enthusiasm, energy and creativity and preparedness to work at saving the building for future generations. A more detailed report will be given on July 3rd at Prep Meeting.

Sally Elias



A glimpse of the past

From grapevine issue 24 – thank you to Rachel Hope for this.

THE OLD MEETING HOUSE CLOCK

"THAT old clock seems to interest you," remarked Florence Marsh. She said that in the summer of 1937 while Peggy and I were in the Meeting room making arrangements for our wedding.

"Yes," I answered, "who was the maker?"

"Well, it was given to the Meeting by our great-uncle, Thomas Marsh — about 1855. He set up as a clock-maker about that time. His shop was on the High Pavement, close to the Red Lion Hotel."

His shop has gone now. It was demolished after the war, when the Red Lion site was redeveloped. And little is known about Thomas. He was a lad of sixteen when the present Meeting House was built in 1846. So he would have remembered sitting in the old Meeting House in West Street. He may have heard legends about Resta and Alice Patching who built that meeting place in 1709.

Thomas died in 1907. He's buried in our ground, close to Guli Marsh and her many relatives. The Burial Note reads: "Thomas Marsh of Dorking. Clock Maker. Aged 77½."

Yes, the clock has hung on our walls for well over a hundred years. How the seven Marsh sisters must have peeped at it, watching the slow-moving hands, yearning for Elders to close the Meeting. One hour with no interlude and only the Bible to thumb!

So, when you hear the familiar tick-tock, recall the generations of faithful Friends who have worshipped here.

"But where is the clock?, you may ask. It's with the repairers. "Wonderful piece of work," said the mender. "Worth at least £500, in ticking order."

It's one of our treasurers. Thank you, Thomas.

C. & M. Kohler

News and THANK YOU from the Dorking Area Foodbank

We celebrate our first birthday at the beginning of June this year! It has been a remarkable year for all of us involved in the work, but also an amazing year for the Dorking and Village Churches. I have just added it up – and in the first 10 months that we have been open, your Churches have given an astonishing **3.5 tons of food** to the Foodbank. For every tin that has been donated, every box of cereal, chocolate bar, toothbrush and all the rest- **Thank you so much**. And massive thanks go to all those who faithfully week in, week out, give according to our weekly shopping lists. We couldn't have done this without you.

We are always looking for people with a little spare time to give to the work of the Foodbank. If anyone in your Church is interested in volunteering for us, please do ask them to email me.

Finally, can I draw your attention to our new website at: www.dorkingarea.foodbank.org.uk
Ali Studley (ali.studley@btinternet.com), For Dorking Area Foodbank

Reflection from our Elders

At the end of May, the Royal Horticultural Society held the annual Chelsea Flower Show. The official RHS Garden for the show was intended to build awareness of the positive effect that gardening can have on people's health and happiness. Its designer said: "Gardens and gardening do more good to heart and soul than they are ever given credit for". Catherine Carr recently led a walking meditation in the Meeting House garden, asking what you were curious about or surprised by. I was surprised by the deep blue of the sage flowers and John Carr was struck by how peaceful and tranquil the garden was in its town setting. When you next walk round a garden, what strikes you, surprises you or makes you curious? Let being in a garden nourish your inner life.

Romy Elias, Elder